FOUR NATIONS APPROACHES TO MODERN 'BRITISH' HISTORY

A (Dis)united Kingdom?

Edited by
NAOMI LLOYD-JONES
MARGARET M. SCULL

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Editors

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The editors, Naomi Lloyd-Jones and Margaret M. Scull, are co-founders and organisers of the Four Nations History Network, which aims to connect researchers using four nations methodologies and studying England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

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Martin Wright lectures in history at Cardiff University. Originally from the English Midlands, he was educated at the University of Wales and has lived in Wales for all of his adult life. During the 1990s and early 2000s he worked at Aberystwyth University's Centre for Continuing Education, teaching history in the communities of mid-Wales and serving as the centre's manager. He now lectures at Cardiff University, where he completed his Ph.D. in 2011. His main interests are the history of socialism and radicalism, and the history of Wales. He is the author of *Wales and Socialism: Political Culture and National Identity Before the Great War* (2016).

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Methodology

A New Plea for an Old Subject? Four Nations History for the Modern Period

Naomi Lloyd-Jones and Margaret M. Scull

J.G.A. Pocock's famed clarion call for the recovery of the concept of 'British history' and the inauguration of a 'new subject' is now more than forty years old. Pocock lamented a lack of 'histories of Britain' and the dominance of what grievously amounted to 'histories of England', in which the Welsh, Scottish and Irish appeared 'when, and only when, their doings assume[d] power to disturb the tenor of English politics.' This unevenness was compounded by the parallel writing of 'histories of Wales, Scotland [and] Ireland' as 'separate enterprises' within 'separate historiographical traditions', encountered by 'limited and fragmented

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publics'.[1] He would later describe Anglocentric and Anglophobic histo-riographies as two sides of the same coin, which, if fused, would afford but a synthetic imitation of a true British history.[2] For Pocock, within its more immediate cartographical confines, 'British history' denoted 'the historiography of no single nation but of a problematic and uncompleted experiment in the creation and interaction of several nations.'[3] His chal-lenge was most comprehensively taken up in the 1990s by early modern-ists who emphasised the need to place given points in history into their 'British' context, to tease out 'forgotten' dimensions and establish more complete narratives. The edited collections generated by a flurry of sym-posia led to the emergence of what David Cannadine has called a 'school of self-consciously "British" historians'.[4] The Pocockian inheritance was conspicuous in these historians' vocabulary: where Pocock's suggested prototype had been for a 'pluralist approach',[5] proponents of the 'New British History' strove to achieve 'a multiperspectival history' and 'an *holistic* or *organic* account' of events in the isles.[6] This was, at last, the '"Britishing" of British history', as Keith Robbins deftly described it.[7]

The aim of this collection is not to reinvent the wheel that Pocock crafted and the New British historians spun. The 'British' 'turn' has already taken place. Crucially, it problematised a field of enquiry. It con-fronted our taxonomical presuppositions and encouraged us to think criti-cally about the criteria with which we establish the geographical breadth and margins of our studies, prompting both the decentring of historical accounts and the refashioning of a 'British' metanarrative. 'British his-tory' was to an extent a subject interposed between the discrete histories of England, Ireland, Scotland and (to a far lesser degree) Wales, designed primarily to interrogate the dynamics of their coming together. It was at the same time an endeavour to establish an overarching frame of refer-ence with which to describe a shared existence. The New British History replaced neither the practices of 'Scottish', 'Welsh' and 'Irish' histories nor Anglocentric readings of critical episodes and phenomena in which the non-English parts of the United Kingdom are unhelpfully, and often inaccurately, partitioned into a 'Celtic fringe'.[8] It has indeed been accused of discounting their dissimilarities and of sustaining a focus on a suspi-ciously 'English'-looking core. It took nearly twenty years for Pocock's historiographical and semantic experiment to be embraced with any urgency or consistency, and a further two decades for a collection such as this, with an explicit emphasis on the modern period, to emerge. The stop–start nature of this field of historical enquiry can in part be attrib-uted to fatigue: by the early twenty-first century, the debate over the New

British History and its nomenclatures had in one sense come full circle, culminating as it had begun, in a dispute over how *not* to write history.

Does this collection therefore represent a new plea for an old subject? In a sense, yes: fundamentally, its intention is not to totalise the histories of these islands, but to explore how polycentric narratives can be achieved. However, it also embodies a desire for a new 'new' subject: a practicable, sustainable 'four nations history' for the modern period. The disjuncture between modern 'British' and 'national' narratives is alive and well, with too few bodies of work concerned with both their multifaceted interplays and distinctive experiences. With the exception of an underutilised collection edited by Sean Connolly,[9] the application of Pocock's entreaty has been directed principally at understanding the mechanics of early modern state construction. If it is to be successful, 'British' history must be occupied by more than the making of Britain. Nor should four nations history by extension concentrate on how, once made, the state was maintained and administered. This collection is less a study of integration and more one of interactions, across and within national boundaries. It does not discount the importance of state formation but rather proposes fresh angles from which this process can be considered. The shift in periodisation makes new themes available, necessitates the asking of different questions, and presents distinct problems for the conceptualisation and analysis of that period's history. This collection encompasses the cultural, social, economic, intellectual and (low) political history of the United Kingdom in the period between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among other aims, we aspire to rebalance what Colin Kidd has called the 'lopsidedness' of the New British History,[10] in which Wales occupied but a tangential position. That said, we do not seek to impose a symmetry upon the United Kingdom. Although it has its shortcomings, by its very terminology, 'four nations' is less 'wholeistic'[11] and perceptibly more pluralistic than 'British history'.

If we are to construct genuinely polycentric narratives, there is not, and cannot be, a one-size-fits-all model. It is for this reason that we encounter a semantic minefield when attempting to define our subject. It is ironic that the absence of a categorical label—and indeed category of study— is indicative of precisely why we need multidimensional histories. The Union project, as Robert Colls has put it, resulted in 'a set of British peoples with a sense of their own nationality but never quite sure of how to talk about themselves as a collective of nations',[12] an awkwardness that somehow feels familiarly 'British'. As editors, we use the umbrella term 'four nations'—popularised by Hugh Kearney—as a heuristic device, in

recognition of the separate national histories and in acknowledgement of the complications arising from the fact of their forming a larger polity, represented in and governed by a united parliament, for the majority of the period covered by this collection. If Pocock envisaged 'British history' as archipelagic and diasporic in scope,[13] 'four nations' more firmly situates the parameters of study within the United Kingdom.

We view 'four nations history' as a methodology—a perspective with which our contributors agree to varying extents. From Kearney's point of view, 'The label "Four Nations" history is a reminder that the United Kingdom is a union of peoples'.[14] To this we may add that it is a prompt that we should recognise heterogeneities within the composite state. While its history is more than the sum of its parts, they should be considered in conjunction. The term's (un)satisfactory tidiness invites us to question how we ought to conceptualise the relationships between the nations and their peoples, which were in turns linear, binary and parallel. This is not to suggest that the study of one, two or even three nations affords but an abridged history; it is instead an attempt to offer inclusive narratives of coexisting nationalities and ethnicities. Their histories shaped and informed one another's—the extent to which they shared a 'British' history is interrogated, rather than assumed, throughout the pages of this collection. A 'four nations' history can be comparative, employed to study points of convergence, interaction and conflict, but it should also be capable of acknowledging that developments in the one were not always present in the other(s), and of asking why. In Raphael Samuel's words, such history 'widens the scope of scholarly enquiry', 'puts in question some of our more cocksure generalisations' and 'encourages us to think more geographically'.[15]

* * * * *

Pocock used the term 'British history' to 'denote the plural history of a group of cultures situated along an Anglo-Celtic frontier and marked by an increasing English political and cultural domination', while emphasising that the 'fact of a hegemony does not alter the fact of a plurality.'[16] If English history was the 'old subject', the new was sensibly presumed to consist of, and be familiar with (but not to synthesise), 'three modes of historical consciousness': English, Scottish and Irish.[17] And yet, in acknowledging that such history was 'remarkably difficult to write in other than English terms',[18] Pocock's examples of how a 'British history'

might be realised certainly revolved around how the English polity infil-
trated neighbouring societies and how the political and socio-cultural
entities within its orbit responded to successive attempts at integration.
It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that the New British History com-
prised two main thrusts: comparative and supra-narrative. For Joanna
Innes, the benefits of comparison were threefold: it presented the oppor-
tunity to highlight 'broader patterns of similarity and difference in the
governance societies of the four nations'; it could enhance 'our knowl-
edge of the form and character of intellectual and cultural exchange';
and, finally, it provided us 'with a richer context in which to assess and
interpret the choices made in each.'[19] Moreover, as Rees Davies sur-
mised, 'developments which are taken for granted in one country might
appear much more surprising—and therefore demanding of an expla-
nation—if we are forced to contrast them with what happened (or did
not happen) elsewhere'.[20] This should in turn facilitate something of a
'supra-national perspective',[21] wherein we are confronted almost with a
fifth nation: 'Britain'. If successful, this history would serve as a super-
structure for understanding how these collectivities operated as a whole;
the process of contextualisation is inadequate if conceived of as centralis-
tic with the introduction of peripheral 'add-ons' [22] when convenient.

Perhaps the most powerful critique of the New British History is
the allegation that it amounted to little more than an Anglocentric nar-
rative redux. It could be suggested that the field was ultimately tracing
the origins of institutions, structures and concepts that would come to
be understood as 'English', such as the state, parliament and constitu-
tion. Keith M. Brown, for instance, has warned that this 'risks taking us
back to a more sophisticated version of old-fashioned anglocentric con-
stitutional history.'[23] Nicholas Canny, one of its foremost critics, has
remarked that 'much of what appears as "new British history" is nothing
but "old English history" in "Three-Kingdoms" clothing.'[24] Ironically,
with state formation its 'unifying problematic',[25] the New British
History could thereby stand accused of perpetuating the very practice
Pocock denounced. If Ian McBride's chapter in this collection is correct
and Pocock's project comprised 'a more subversive agenda' that entailed
'provincialising England', then the New British History could be said to
have done the opposite: recentralising England and further peripheralis-
ing its neighbours.

That said, the roots of this historiographical axis cannot be said to be
uniquely English. As Kidd has observed, the '*de facto* continuity of the

historic English parliament validated the ethnocentric notion that Britain's political heritage resided in the history of English institutions.'[26] However, in tracing the strange death of Scotland's whig historical ideology, Kidd has illustrated how intellectual and literary elites reconciled themselves to Union and its attendant identity by essentially de-historicising Scotland's own past.[27] This did not involve the wholesale eradication of a 'Scottish national consciousness' but rather the creation of 'a national historical consensus' along what Kidd elegantly describes as 'Anglo-British contours'.[28] In turn, it can be argued that the nineteenth-century phenomenon of 'Unionist-nationalism' involved less a repositioning of this consciousness along Scoto-British lines and more the logical maturation of 'the Anglo-British suggestion that post-1707 Scots participated in the freedoms won in the long course of English history.'[29] Unionist-nationalism was thus a means of articulating Scotland's contribution to a partnership-based relationship, without recourse to the resistance-based, defensive nationalism practiced by the Irish.[30] Claydon has claimed that 'the persistent failure of the English to think in "British" terms' could serve to demonstrate that '"British history" is non-existent'.[31] If the English were indeed myopic in this respect, the Scottish dimension is nonetheless evidence that 'British' history, however Anglo-oriented, need not begin with or be thought up by the English in isolation.

A related, but parallel, concern is that such approaches, in imposing a metahistory upon the isles, presuppose 'a denial of those separate histories and separate identities of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales'.[32] According to Linda Colley, if 'pushed too hard or too exclusively', the methodology threatens to conceal 'the fact that the four parts of the United Kingdom have been connected in markedly different ways and with sharply varying degrees of success.'[33] Canny in particular has warned against assuming a comparability that simply did not exist and of 'emphasis[ing] similarity at the expense of difference'.[34] The implication here is that the teleological tendency of the New British History—however inadvertent—shores up rather than dismantles the edifice of homogeneity. The histories and historiographies of the four should not be subsumed under the monolith of the one whole. Glenn Burgess, who edited what was by far the most searching and self-critical of the New British collections, suggested how the discipline might correct itself. He asserted that if British history is to offer more than just explanations for 'the inexorable growth of English dominance', the individual histories of the four nations must 'constitute the necessary basis for constructing a

British history that pays attention to difference and mutuality as much as to English preponderance.'[35] There is a compelling case to be made for viewing this kind of history as most fruitful when conducted as a bottom-up rather than a top-down enterprise. When understood in this vein, it should be perceived less as a palimpsest—it is not advantageous to superimpose 'British' history atop layers of English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh histories—and more as the fusing together of multiform narratives.

The consequences of England's historical, political and territorial dominance are, however, evident in the scant treatment afforded to Wales by the New British school. Wales has been the least well incorporated into the field, essentially because it was the best incorporated into England. As Neil Evans has pointed out, the war of the three kingdoms narrative 'left little room for Wales'.[36] Indeed, in editing *Three Nations—A Common History?*, Ronald Asch justified Wales' omission on the grounds that it 'had no constitutional status of her own after the 1536 Act of Union'.[37] If Ireland and Scotland are more readily comparable examples of the limits of integration, neither constitutional continuity nor the apparent quietude of Welsh patriotism can paper over the singularities of the Welsh experience, least of all for the period covered by this collection. Pocock rather indelicately admonished 'the authors of histories of Scotland and Ireland' for writing 'as if they were addressing themselves to different reading publics'.[38] For him, it seems, recognition of plurality could not be permitted to descend into parochialism; these histories must be written and read together, not independently.

Yet if 'British' history precludes discussion of Wales on the proviso that it was constitutionally indistinguishable from England, it falls at the first hurdle. To invert Pocock, it appears that, in the case of Wales, the fact of a hegemony has to an extent denoted a homogeneity. We must turn to historians of Wales, writing for a Welsh audience, to fill in the gaps. For instance, if Colley is correct and 'it was their common investment in Protestantism that first allowed the English, the Welsh and the Scots to become fused together',[39] it was their antithetical brands of Protestantism that, particularly from the mid-nineteenth century, enabled expressions of national distinctiveness. Where Colley's 'Britons' regarded Catholics as the principal 'other', historians of Wales have illustrated that the Welsh nonconformist identity became increasingly exclusionist, juxtaposed against an 'alien' Anglican aristocracy.[40] How far we view the use of the Welsh language as a diacritical feature in the history of 'British' movements is also a subject ripe for exploration through the

four nations frameworks. Here, Martin Wright's chapter traces the formation of a 'Welsh-medium socialist discourse' by activists for whom, 'in a very real sense, their medium was their message'. It also raises questions as to the mapping of Welsh culture and the competing national (more so than regional) visions presented by north and south Walians.

On the other hand, we must acknowledge Robbins' very real concern that 'history's "English dimension" … is sometimes marginalised.'[41] Here, it would seem, there is a fine line between Anglocentric history and the explicit study of England. The slipperiness of English national identity conceivably reinforces this trend: if English history is not British history, then what is it? Determining how far we can disentangle the 'national' contributions to 'Britishness' perhaps affords a window into what was English about being British. For example, Paul Ward's chapter examines the transmission of 'British' identity through the Beefeaters, located in and deeply connected with the imperial capital. He shows that while their 'origins were associated with English history'—thus affording the imposition of 'an English historical narrative on the rest of the United Kingdom'—they were in fact 'ciphers for the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century'. We may then ask whether England had any icons or traditions, 'invented' or otherwise, that were uniquely its own. Likewise, what was 'English' about the experiences of people in England?

In reasserting the 'ultimate autonomy of English history when it comes to explaining events in England', Tim Harris has argued that 'we need to recognise that even when political actors in England appear to have been reacting to developments in Scotland and Ireland, they were reacting in ways that were structured by the context of their own historical experience and the distinctive character of English political culture'.[42] And yet the same rationale must assuredly be extended to dramatis personae in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and to their respective socio-economic circumstances. Indeed, it has traditionally been easier to pinpoint the character of Irish, Scottish and Welsh political culture than it has the English.[43] The need for what Harris has dubbed 'internalist explanation[s]'[44] is not exclusive to the history of England. For instance, Patrick Walsh investigates the extent to which the institutions of the fiscal-military state, transposed from an English model, took on characteristics in Ireland and Scotland coloured by their underlying economic, administrative and military infrastructures. On the other hand, Oliver Betts' chapter highlights the juxtaposition between an increasingly 'English', 'administrative' understanding of poverty and the actuality of

how poverty was experienced at a local level. Thus, both the 'national' and the 'British' contexts must be established.

Even where the full aspect of the 'British' dimension was not always present, the politics and cultures of the four nations did not develop or operate in a vacuum; events and ideas reverberated out from multiple centres and multiple peripheries. For instance, James Stafford's chapter shows that English advocates of Union with Ireland were happy to borrow from the political economy of the Scottish Enlightenment to suit their ends. Melanie Bassett considers how working-class migrants, in seeking to legitimise their presence and ingratiate themselves in a corner of southern England, sought out those with whom they had a geographically specific kinship. She demonstrates, in particular, the portability of their local, regional and national identities. This is a clear example of what Ward's chapter terms 'the fluidities of national cultural boundaries in the British Isles'. Four nations history thereby affords a nuanced framework with which to reveal multilayered patterns of internal and intra-national hybridity.

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The terminology used in this collection is intended neither to atomise nor to totalise the history of the United Kingdom. Apportioning the United Kingdom into suitable units for historical enquiry has long been a task fraught with semantic complications; this collection does not pretend to tender a definitive solution to this difficulty. What it does offer, however, are analytical tools for interrogating the methodological perspectives from which we enter upon our chosen subject. A newish 'new' subject, 'four nations history' is not an adjunct to 'British history', nor is it intended to serve as its replacement. It instead affords a different kind of territorial, and thus narrative, stratification: 'four nations' is in one very crucial respect a statement of intent as to the structure of the enquiry.

That 'four nations history' emerged as a descriptive and a problematic is emblematic of perceived shortcomings in the parameters of 'British' history. If Britain technically refers to England, Scotland and Wales, as Kearney has pointed out, the history of the 'larger island' was not 'self-contained'.[45] And yet, the juxtaposition of 'British history' and 'Irish history' implies both a homogeneity to the experience of the former and its separateness from the latter. As Pocock has noted, '"Irish history" is not "British history", for the very good reason that it is very largely

the history of a largely successful resistance to being included in it; yet it is part of "British history", for exactly the same reason.'[46] The two are entwined, with the points at which they interweave and detach dependent upon the nature of our inquiry, where we locate our 'core' and our 'periphery', and the 'cause' and 'effect' of our subject. Furthermore, as McBride elaborates, the undesirability of a Pocockian framework to certain Irish historians, who reject a reading which places Ireland too firmly in Britain's historical trajectory, poses the question as to whether there are '*any* logical divisions of mankind'.[47] Ultimately, like the United Kingdom, 'four nations' is a construct, the label in many respects a convenience. No one talks of practising 'United Kingdom history' or 'United Kingdomish history'.

As editors, we use the term 'four nations history' in full knowledge that it is not uncontroversial. Particularly when engaged as a 'disaggregating' technique,[48] it raises questions as to the divisibility of the United Kingdom, and as to the (in)appropriate lines of division. As Paul O'Leary explains in his chapter, the United Kingdom is, and has been, a state of multiple unions and multiple kingdoms. Its composition has shifted: the centralisation required at its inception in 1801, the partition of Ireland in 1922, the instability of successive Stormont administrations, and the asymmetry of late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century Scottish and Welsh devolution settlements have all resulted in imbalances of power. These transformations have implications for how one might arrive at a four nations approach. In 1989, Robbins observed that 'the history of the whole of Britain is so difficult to write precisely because there is no ideal vantage point from which to survey it'.[49] Indeed, our preferred observation deck arguably depends upon the type of history we intend to write and on what we hope to discover. For instance, are we searching for interactions or dissonance—and between or among whom?—or looking down upon a superstructure? The preoccupations of English historians are neither analogous to nor interchangeable with those of Irish, Scottish or Welsh historians (and vice versa)—their core and peripheral visions are undoubtedly shaped by where they write their history from.

A quarter of a century later, the 'paradox' identified by Robbins—that 'the "centre" of Britain is located in the South of England'[50]—has been supplanted by the normality of multiple, alternative and often rival centres. This is evidenced not only in the establishment and enhancement of devolved administrations but also in the backlash against the perceived ineptitude of an out-of-touch Westminster elite that contributed to the

June 2016 decision to leave the European Union (EU). This surely throws into relief Brown's objections to a 'core–periphery' model—that there existed more than one core, each with 'very different peripheries', 'sliding in and out of one another's vision depending on circumstances.'[51] Ian B. Stewart's chapter, on the dynamics of 'Celticism' in the long nineteenth century, contends that the notion of a 'Celtic fringe' is unsatisfactory and demonstrates that 'Celts' competed as much among one another as against the 'Saxon' English. If we are to move away from anachronistic dichotomies we must not only rethink our own taxonomy but also be aware of its etymology and past usages.

In dealing with boundaries of nationhood, we must ask what defines a nation or a national grouping. What are our categories for exploring and explaining space and place? Identities, ethnicities, cultures, relationships and ideas overlap, transcend, supersede and undermine borders. Nations are more than their governing bodies (or lack thereof); Acts of parliament are amended and repealed. The three kingdoms united in 1801 were arguably not coterminous with the nations contained therein. 'Three kingdoms history' must of necessity operate within different constraints—and chronologies—than four nations history. In its historical and historiographical senses, 'four nations' implies, and is usually taken to mean, England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In this respect, it is at least more satisfactory than 'British' history, which has more universalising connotations. However, what room does this nomenclature leave for pre-1922 Ulster and modern Northern Ireland,[52] or for the claims of, say, Cornwall[53] to nationhood? Although beyond the scope of this collection, more must be done to address where Northern Ireland fits into these complex and often territorialised understandings of national narratives. Should it be conceived of as a fifth nation? If so, from what date? Can a history come under the 'four nations' banner if it does not deal with each of the four or if each does not receive proportional treatment (and how ought we to determine these proportions)? By this logic, there are contributions to this collection for which the moniker 'four nations' may not be strictly accurate. Patrick Walsh acknowledges a deficiency of data concerning the impact on and involvement of Wales in the fiscal-military state, and James Stafford notes the virtual absence of Wales from the late eighteenth-century debate on union with Ireland. They come under the aegis of this collection because one of its core aims is to test the plasticity of four nations history as a conceptual framework.

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With the 'New British History' no longer new, this collection admittedly prompts the question: why now? The conference from which these chapters are drawn was announced prior to the Scottish independence referendum of September 2014 and long before the Conservative Party promised to hold a vote on the United Kingdom's membership of the EU. It was borne out of frustration at what we saw as stagnancy in the debate over how we research and write the history of these islands, and out of a desire to bring together historians of England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. However, the collection has since developed against a backdrop of heightened intra-United Kingdom tensions, radically altered patterns of socio-political allegiance and a reorientation of the country's international position. In the febrile atmosphere of 2017, the need for pluralistic histories seems more pressing than ever. It also reinforces the advantages of 'four nations' over 'British' history as a descriptive.

The historiographical interpretations of the New British History were unmistakably a product of its historical moment, the consequences of which Paul O'Leary teases out in greater detail in Chapter 3. The Victorian self-assuredness that had sustained whiggish visions of English progress and inevitability had dissipated in a post-war era defined by the loss of an empire, the decline of a once highly prized world standing, and the arrival of migrants from former colonies and Europe. In 1995, Cannadine could juxtapose an 'unprecedented break-up of nation-states' against 'the seemingly inexorable shift of power to the Strasbourg parliament and the Brussels bureaucrats'.[54] For Pocock—a New Zealander disquieted by the impact upon colonial 'neo-Britons' of what he identified as the 'Europeanization of Great Britain'—the 'double defeat' represented by the fading of imperial power and the 'perceived failure of the social democratic [experiment] Britain attempted in and after 1945', was key to understanding why the United Kingdom had from the 1960s decided 'to become European'.[55] This realignment, in turn, was crucial to problematising *where* British history should be positioned, geopolitically.

At a pre-election rally in 1992 (the same year as Pocock's article on Europeanisation was published), John Major, speaking 'as a Briton', denounced Scottish nationalism as a threat to the British constitution. He counselled against 'The exchange of Great Britain for a little Scotland and a lesser union' and maintained that were a Scottish parliament

established, 'We could be no longer a United, but a Disunited, Kingdom'. He concurrently branded the 'move towards a federal Europe, towards a United States of Europe', as a menace. Major's Britain, it seemed, would only be Europeanised in so far as it was possible to 'build a Europe of nation states'.[56] The message was unambiguous: sovereignty would neither be devolved from Westminster nor be ceded to Brussels. At the same time, the 1993 Downing Street Declaration placed the search for a peaceful solution to the situation in Northern Ireland front and centre of the political agendas of both the United Kingdom and Ireland. It was the Troubles and the resurgence of ballot box nationalism in Scotland and Wales that, according to Cannadine, 'helped to make us more aware of the "British" problem'.[57]

Writing in 2017, it is abundantly clear that the United Kingdom continues to possess both a 'British' problem and a European problem. The United Kingdom may include four nations but in this it is becoming ever more exclusivist; we see the othering of Scottish nationalists, and of European migrants, bureaucrats and institutions. We are conceivably witnessing the reversal of the trend detected by Pocock, although the de-Europeanisation of the United Kingdom as a polity appears increasingly incompatible with Scotland's attachment to and investment in its Europeanness, above and beyond its Britishness. Both the Scottish and the EU referendums have given politicians recourse to a four nations rhetoric—the main variation being that in contemporary political parlance Northern Ireland has replaced Ireland as one of the four. In the immediate aftermath of the Scottish vote in September 2014, David Cameron simultaneously christened himself 'Prime Minister of four nations in one United Kingdom' and vowed to transfer additional powers to the devolved administrations as a means of securing 'a united future'.[58] When in January 2017 Cameron's replacement, Theresa May, came to set out her Brexit objectives, she pledged her government to 'put the preservation of our precious union at the heart of everything we do.' Her vision for an ostensibly archipelagic 'Global Britain' rested on the hypothesis that 'A stronger Britain demands that we … strengthen the precious union between the four nations of the United Kingdom.'[59] There are obvious similarities in these speeches: they recognise a diversity of opinion and attempt to portray the United Kingdom as both drawing strength from, and greater than, these differences, the seeming contradictions reflecting the complexities of numerous Union settlements and resettlements.

This discourse is of especial value in portraying the Conservatives as the 'Party of Union' at moments of profound national crisis. If the Conservative electoral heartland is English, the party's identity has nevertheless been bound up with the preservation of the United Kingdom's unions—first the Irish and later the Scottish. In 1978, against the backdrop of the devolutionary Scotland Bill, Margaret Thatcher told the Scottish Conservatives that 'The four nations of these islands have long and glorious histories—but it was only when they came to form one United Kingdom that our full splendour came to fruition.' The punchline followed: 'None of this involved any sacrifice of distinctive national traditions. It was a Union, but absolutely without uniformity—a unity of the individual genius of the separate nations, into an even greater whole.'[60] This theme is precisely that identified in Colley's seminal thesis: that the 'the invention of a British national identity after 1700 did not obliterate … other, older loyalties', with 'Britishness' instead 'superimposed over an array of internal differences'.[61]

A further consequence of the 2014 Scottish referendum has been the reopening of the 'English question', with Cameron declaring that England had long been 'missing' from the 'national discussion'.[62] This is an intriguing counterfoil to the accusations of earlier nationalists that England, through an in-built Commons majority, was capable of overriding the voices of the other nations. Placing England at the centre, portraying it as acted upon, the 'English problem' involves in one respect a recasting of the traditional core–periphery dichotomy, with England subject to an inverse form of 'internal colonialism'.[63] The late Tam Dalyell's now well-rehearsed 'West Lothian question', as to how long English constituencies and MPs would tolerate 'members from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland exercising an important … effect on English politics while they themselves have no say in the same matters in Scotland, Wales and Ireland',[64] is the existential inheritance of successive attempts to solve the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century 'Irish question'. When William Gladstone proposed the creation of an Irish Home Rule parliament in 1886, it was regarded by some as 'intolerable to England and Scotland to have Irish members in Westminster using their influence in directing English and Scotch legislation.'[65] The roots of the modern Scottish National Party (SNP) can likewise be traced to 1886 and the establishment of a Scottish Home Rule Association (SHRA), which campaigned 'to have Scottish business transacted in Scotland by a Scottish Parliament and a Scottish Executive'.[66] If the lack of appetite for an

English parliament can in part be attributed to the direction of travel of centralisation, it is also a reminder that in England, as Colls has put it, 'the state came first, and the rest, whatever we call them—"nation", "people", "land", "country", "territory", "identity"—came second.'[67] The English Votes for English Laws process introduced from 2015 maintains England's place at the heart of the constitution, but distinguishing the 'English' polity in this manner has surely only been made possible by the neighbouring territorial and administrative distinctions afforded by Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish devolution.

The Brexistential crisis sparked by the referendum on membership of the EU likewise forces us to view the United Kingdom as divisible and, feasibly, dividable. The 'Leave' votes in England and Wales (53.2% and 51.7%, respectively) broadly corresponded with the UK average of 51.9%, while in Northern Ireland 55.7% and in Scotland a more resounding 62% voted 'Remain'. Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, has warned that Scotland faces 'being dragged out' of the EU against its will. Questions as to who speaks for Scotland and as to whether it should be treated individually or as part of a larger whole have, at the time of writing, given rise to calls for a second independence referendum. Sturgeon has asserted that the UK government's handling of the situation has exposed 'claims about Scotland being an equal partner'—that Unionist-nationalist chestnut—as 'nothing more than empty rhetoric'. She has alleged that 'the very foundations of the devolution settlement that are supposed to protect our interests … are being shown to be worthless.'[68] If the January 2017 Supreme Court ruling on the triggering of Brexit negotiations situates sovereignty in parliament and not the executive, then its rejection of the argument that the devolved assemblies should have a 'veto' reinforces the idea that sovereignty rests definitively in Westminster. The 'Anglo-British' configuration of 'Britishness' is, according to Kidd, 'dependent on a historical allegiance to England's evolving constitution of crown and parliament'.[69] If the nationalists are successful in portraying Westminster as overriding and delegitimising Scotland's 'democratic voice', that allegiance—and the British project with it—will unravel.

The referendum also has politically and culturally sensitive implications for Northern Ireland as the only part of the United Kingdom to share a land border with an EU member state. At the time of writing, the situation in Northern Ireland is unstable and unpredictable. Warnings

abound that Brexit could unleash the 'ghosts of Irish history',[70] with concerns for the agreed freedom of movement with the Republic of Ireland and the possible construction of a physical border, and questions around access to EU funds for peace and reconciliation efforts. As frustrations with the UK government have mounted, the rhetoric used by Irish politicians has shifted. Taoiseach Enda Kenny at first urged an 'all-island' approach to Brexit[71] but now openly talks of the need for a united Ireland clause in any negotiated UK-EU treaty. He has nevertheless been careful to couch the rationale for this argument in terms of safeguarding the integrity and 'language' of the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.[72] However, those who live in the North or work on Northern Irish history acknowledge that the Agreement rather than representing an 'end' to the conflict was just one step on the path to peace.[73] The March 2017 election placed Unionism in the minority in the Northern Ireland Assembly for the first time ever, creating still more uncertainty for the future of the power-sharing agreement.[74] Northern Ireland is in flux—one of the four contemporary 'nations' of the United Kingdom and yet apparently subsumable within a wider island nation. It exists in a state of low but constant fear that any misstep may plunge communities back into violence.

How, then, will historians respond to these contemporary developments? Will we instinctively place greater emphasis upon the uniqueness of each nation? One possibility is that Samuel's prediction as to the history of Scotland being 'told in an anti-unionist sense', in search of the 'roots of Scottish separatism',[75] will be borne out. Yet this enterprise risks imposing a new teleology; it should not emphasise Scotland's singularity at the expense of grasping its connections with the wider isles or archipelago. Nor must it fall into the trap of only looking for interactions when they impacted upon Scotland, mirroring and reversing the trend that so exercised Pocock in the case of English historians. If Scotland is no longer part of the United Kingdom, does 'British history' become an anachronism? No: British history will continue to be made and written; if the United Kingdom ceases to exist in its current shape, this does not alter the fact of its existing historically. On the other hand, if four nations history has been criticised as an inward-looking indulgence—if not Little Englandism, then Little Britainism—will leaving the EU reinforce our historiographical introspection? Or will it encourage us to write histories that emphasise not only the place(s) of the four nations within the United Kingdom but also their engagement with Europe (however defined) over

the centuries?[76] This might, finally, push against the Pocock-inspired resistance to Britain's inclusion within wider European narratives. Arguably, here too the historiographical trajectory will depend much upon *where* in the United Kingdom these histories are being written.

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This collection comprises two parts. The first is concerned principally with the historiographical and methodological groundings of four nations history, and the second offers seven rigorous examples as to its practicability and versatility. With certain topics, a four nations approach is intuitive; with others, the fit is looser. In some chapters, the subject matter is located across the United Kingdom, while in others, the authors take more of a deconstructive or four-nations-in-one-locality approach. What emerge are not only shared narratives but also distinct national and local experiences. The contributors discuss interactions between nations, regions and individuals; the reconfiguring of boundaries, identities and ideologies; and shifting patterns of intellectual and cultural transference. They pursue the fissures within and between the nations and national alignments as much as their commonalities. They bring together a variety of historiographical traditions, and they are candid in their assessments as to four nations history's ability to alternately expand and constrict our horizons.

The collection turns first to a biographical study of Pocock as the progenitor of 'British' history. Ian McBride's chapter is interested in the 'role of biography in shaping decisions about the spatial or territorial frame we adopt when we write about the past'. In Chapter 2 McBride places Pocock's call for the contextualisation of early modern cataclysms which paid no heed to geographical boundaries into its own broader context. He draws out the tensions between Pocock's writing, his New Zealand heritage, and his anxieties as to the gradual severing of the transoceanic imperial umbilical cord. McBride traces how Pocock's body of work has altered the shape of British (and English and Scottish) historiography, while underscoring the essential consistencies in Pocock's argument, the existential current running through his pursuit of a 'new subject', and his continued focus on macro-historical modes of enquiry. Just as Pocock's work has been predicated upon a situational awareness and interest in 'historical consciousness', its reception has been informed by the personal and intellectual circumstances of his readers. The extent to which cultural investment in 'Britishness' has been prioritised or has

proved historiographically relevant can help explain the varying degrees of interest in the 'British problem'. Indeed, McBride suggests that the ebbing of the New British tide can be attributed to its having been borne out of 'the exhaustion of English political history, as traditionally conceived', as opposed to any genuine commitment to 'Britishness'. In underlining Pocock's preoccupation with historical subjectivity, McBride reveals the underlying problematic not only of how British history was to be conceived but as to *whom* it should be 'done'.

In Chapter 3, Paul O'Leary argues that four nations approaches to British and Irish history 'have been overdetermined by a metanarrative of national decline'. He reasons that the field emerged in an intricate 'structure of feeling', the desire to rethink 'narratives of a unitary past' incubated in periods of perceived crisis. However, he warns that, in reaching back for explanations as to how something that now appears to be unravelling first came into being, we impose a polarity and a self-limiting narrative structure upon our historical enquiry. We should not be 'constrained by an opposition between integration and dissolution'. O'Leary advocates accessing the history of these isles from the perspectives of multiple centres, conceived 'in terms of a series of asymmetric developments rooted in uneven and shifting relationships and identities over time.' This chapter outlines three broad themes that have shaped and, in the latter two cases, could continue to mould the research agenda: the relationship between the professionalisation of History and the Anglocentric study of state formation; an interest in how far 'Britishness' existed as an overlaying and integrative identity; and the extent to which four nations history is compatible with, or an adjunct to, transnational historical approaches. O'Leary suggests that we might envisage the United Kingdom as a 'union state' (and scrutinise how applicable this idea is to each internal territory), interrogate the nation as a framework for analysis, and inspect 'how borders have been both created and erased over time'. This is a formidable task, but one he believes will add texture as well as context to our narratives.

The chapters comprising Part Two offer nuanced examples of how such multifaceted histories might be achieved. In Chapter 4, Patrick Walsh examines how the fiscal-military state—curiously absent from the New British History—served as an apparatus for the uneven incorporation of the four nations into a 'supranational' Hanoverian state, while also confirming their differences in practice. He not only deals with the export of English fiscal and power structures to the administrative

margins but also examines the significance of the contributions of Ireland, Scotland and (to a lesser extent) Wales to the composite state. In particular, he emphasises the 'processes of negotiation and cooperation between the centre and local … interests'. Walsh explores how successfully the different national experiences of the fiscal-military state can be compared and weaved into one account; here, the history of a supranational state requires both a supra-narrative and a holistic analysis of its relationship to and impact on its constituent parts. The territorialities of the fiscal-military state and its instruments, the varying speeds at which its institutions and structures became a reality, and the movement of people and money throughout the isles all speak to the need for a polycentric perspective. Furthermore, while arguing for an appreciation of separate national socio-economic environments, Walsh's chapter also has implications for how comprehensively local dynamics can be manifested in a four nations approach. The sub-national is uncovered through a discussion of the state's engagement with local residents, contractors and officials, affording a further tier to his multilayered methodological framework.

Chapter 5, by James Stafford, sheds fresh light on the intellectual interrelations involved in and necessitated by the process and experience of late eighteenth-century Union-making. Far from the mechanics of state formation involving linear absorption into an English core, Stafford illustrates that the 'Scottish Enlightenment' afforded the critical framework by which Irish poverty and unrest, and thus Union, could be conceived and justified. Drawing on a wealth of pamphlet literature, he examines the dissemination of and appropriation by supporters of Irish Union of what could be understood as recognisably 'Scottish' ideas. 1801 involved more than 'the simple repetition of the constitutional device of parliamentary incorporation'; it entailed the repackaging of concepts developed by Scotland's philosophers to suit Ireland's circumstances. Less a comparative study of the intricacies of the two Unions, Stafford's chapter instead investigates the ideological character of the Irish Union by situating it in its wider 'Scottish' and 'British' intellectual contexts. Crucially, he also argues that a four nations—or, more accurately in his case, three kingdoms—approach must in turn be contextualised by reference to events in Europe. In demonstrating that advocates of Union responded to events beyond the four nations, Stafford makes the case for a further decentring and reorientation of historical narratives.

Ian B. Stewart's chapter on Celticism throws into relief the plurality of both the United Kingdom and the so-called 'Celtic fringe'. The

particular alignment of Ireland, Scotland and Wales determines the axis upon which 'British' history turns, yet, as Stewart argues, 'Celticism was not simply reducible to non-Englishness', nor should Celts be crudely designated 'as a monolithic "other"'. In Chapter 6, he charts the advance of competing national claims upon the genealogical and linguistic heritage of the 'Celt', before turning to the development of racialised constructs of 'Celt' and 'Saxon', and then to the increasing articulation of pan-Celticism. The chapter emphasises the malleability of the 'Celt'—concurrently and varyingly a self-classification and a totalising Saxonist imposition—contrasting the privileging of Celtic ideas by eighteenth-century English antiquarians to the adulteration represented by Irishness in the nineteenth century. If Celticism was not always a stick with which to beat the non-English, Celts 'othered' fellow Celts as much as they were, as a grouping, othered themselves. Notions of kinship, Stewart maintains, were obfuscated by bickering over which nation was the most authentically Celtic, pan-Celticism only taking root towards the end of his period. Even then, the nation was prioritised over any sense of trans-national ethno-linguistic commonality. In de-marginalising the 'fringe', Stewart stresses that ideas of the Celt are 'less about separateness or similarity' and should instead be understood as pliable, contingent 'on the nation, era and intellectual backdrop'.

In Chapter 7, Paul Ward contends that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much depended upon the location in and perspective from which Britons viewed symbols of the nation. He shows how the curating of a cultural icon—the Beefeater—could serve as a mechanism for the expression of a range of identities. The image of the Beefeater could be packaged to represent the imperial metropole, or England, or the United Kingdom; it could be used to transform an 'English' into a 'British' identity. The Beefeaters became an attraction, a symbol of the pageantry of the modern monarchy. They became the cultural property of the nation—but, as Ward asks, which nation? His chapter confronts the notion of 'for Englishness see Britishness', and, by exploring how an elite crafted a narrative for mass consumption, reveals the complexities of a manufactured popular culture. As a cultural construct and living monument, the Beefeaters represented the intersection between and entanglement of English and British identities. Acknowledging where these lines are blurred is as valuable an exercise as shifting away from Anglocentrism. It is curious that, as David Armitage has observed, 'England has rarely been considered as one of the objects

of comparison' within the 'British' geographical schema.[77] England is, as Paul O'Leary neatly remarks in his piece, the four nations elephant in the room; Ward's chapter brings England back into the fold.

Chapter 8, by Melanie Basset, focuses on regional variations in the conception, negotiation and expression of collective patriotisms and identities. Four nations history should be capable of more than comparing the nations as units—it should also facilitate the study of how they interacted on a micro, as well as on a macro, level. Bassett charts the activities of self-promotional national and county societies in the English naval town of Portsmouth at the turn of the twentieth century. Sought out by workers drawn from across the four nations, this associational culture fulfilled a need for community and conviviality symptomatic of 'the alienating effects of increasing industrialisation, economic migration and urbanisation'. The societies enabled migrants not only to take succour from their common heritage but also to emphasise the contribution of their respective birthplaces to the wider British and imperial nation. The region was, perhaps unsurprisingly given the scale of internal migration, the preferred territorial unit for societies formed by workers from elsewhere in England, whereas the 'Caledonian' and 'Cambrian' associations were, according to Bassett, 'a way of harking back to a pristine Scottish and Welsh identity'. The organisation of social relationships along geographically familiar lines and the mediation of specific local expectations upon the British 'imperial citizen', Bassett argues, show how 'unique and shared characteristics … were fluidly prioritised and hybridised to suit a myriad of circumstances'. This four-nations-in-microcosm approach to identity-making demonstrates the importance of the local, regional and national to these histories.

Oliver Betts' chapter likewise investigates how far a four nations methodology can be both local and national. In Chapter 9, Betts examines the extent to which poverty was conceptualised and its relief organised within a common 'national' framework at the turn of the twentieth century. He reveals sharp contrasts between 'a centralising and increasingly urban and English understanding of poverty', with its broadly defined peripheries, and the lived experiences of the poor in these 'margins'. This vision was not merely extrapolated out from a London-centric core; it was actively contributed and subscribed to by those in charge of administering relief in the four nations. Betts' detailed attention to the utility of the 'comparative element of four nations history' is a reminder that it is not just historians who look for similarities; for contemporaries,

understanding the local nature of poverty was the essential prerequisite for establishing the generalisations necessary for 'national' solutions. However, this process and the predominance of the 'outside expert' tended to sideline the voices of the poor. In seeking to access how the poor comprehended their predicament, Betts analyses the testimonies given as part of contemporary investigative studies, with particular reference to the Scottish islands. In reincorporating 'the very fringes' of the four nations into the 'British' narrative, his chapter has important implications for how we frame the geographical scope of our enquiry.

The final chapter, by Martin Wright, closes the collection on an experimental note. Using Wales—simultaneously at the 'margins and core' of British socialism—as a prism through which to view the movement's early development, he deliberates on how we might arrive at a four nations history of socialism. Wright probes what was 'Welsh' about socialism in Wales, and contends that in locating the points of convergence with 'British' interests, the 'trans-national interplay' between Wales and England was critical. Attention is drawn to frictions over whether to organise as 'Welsh' (however understood by north or south Walians) or 'British' socialists, the linguistic peculiarities and practicalities of socialist discourse and communication in Wales, and the relationships between 'indigenous' socialists and those imported from England. Wright not only illustrates the particularisation of socialism within the Welsh national context but, by paying close attention to Wales' social and physical geography, also uncovers irregular patterns of ideological engagement with, and the 'linguistic and cultural pluralism' of, British socialism. We see the uneven pace at which the socialism of the south Wales coalfields—itself maturing through complex interactions between local activists and English thinkers—spread north and was mediated through the Welsh language, taking on diverse characteristics. This prompts us to ask what constitutes 'Welshness'—by whom it is constructed and to whom it belongs—and also to inquire as to the cores and peripheries of major 'national' political and ideological movements.

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This collection offers not a prescriptive definition of a four nations methodology but rather a range of interpretations and templates for its practical application. The authors test the flexibility of these models—and, we anticipate, provoke debate as to how far their schemas are transferrable beyond the pages of this book and the extent to which

alternative national, regional and local configurations could be proposed. Toby Barnard has surmised that one of the reasons why the 'British' approach has at the beginning of the twenty-first century appeared to afford diminishing returns is that 'problems with which historians of England have been wrestling … are being taken up by analysts of Scotland and Ireland.'[78] One way to 'renew' (Barnard's word) the old 'new' subject would be to foster greater collaboration between historians of the individual nations. This is less a case of going through one another's historiographical laundry and more a suggestion that it is through dialogue between often disparate historiographical traditions that we can forge more complete narratives.

As editors, it is our aim for this collection to be read by undergraduate students as well as by academics. We believe that if four nations history for the modern period is to sustain its new-found momentum, more university courses must engage with the benefits and pitfalls of the methodology and embrace it as a teaching tool. It is a question of coverage—the token introduction of 'weeks' on each non-home nation will not suffice, nor will too narrow a focus on 'Britishness'. Here it seems appropriate to return to John Morrill's preferred word, 'holistic', to describe the framework we envisage. For instance, in treating the United Kingdom and its history as multicompositional, consideration should be given to how seismic socio-cultural movements reverberated and took on specific characteristics in different settings. Discussions of 'great' pieces of legislation should draw attention to the fact that such apparent watersheds required the implementation, at varying speeds, of separate Acts for England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland. Greater advantage should be taken of the wealth of regional studies—in the case of England especially, where regional approaches have arguably been a means for compartmentalising English history, of making its sheer scale manageable. The generalisations applicable to one corner of one nation may not be replicable at its opposite end—indeed, the phenomena they describe may be more readily comparable across territorial boundaries. Utilising an inclusive four nations approach to teaching affords the opportunity to enhance the breadth and depth of the material on offer, and to encompass historiographical traditions that students might otherwise only encounter in isolation.

We hope this collection will inspire critical engagement with such frameworks, renew old and spark new historical conversations. This is in part a search for a methodological grounding for modern

'British' history; 'four nations' is but one means by which it might be secured. A four nations peg cannot be forced into a three kingdoms hole. The position of Northern Ireland further complicates what neatness there is to 'four nations'. Equally, 'four nations history' must not insulate the United Kingdom from the European, Atlantic and wider imperial dimensions of its past. That said, the current fashion for transnational history represents more of a threat to the old new British history, with its focus on the state, than it does to the four nations model. Our apparent teetering on the brink of a disunited kingdom will nevertheless feed the 'structure of feeling' for this generation of historians at the very least.

We cannot write fast enough to keep up with the hurriedly changing political, social and economic global environment. In these tumultuous times, historians are confronted by the breathless reconfiguring of geopolitical allegiances and identities. Four nations history offers a conceptual framework which pushes against reductive generalisations and affords a viewpoint which is both inclusive and expansive. The challenge posed by this aggressive questioning must be met with a rich, multifaceted understanding of the past that enhances our understanding of the present.

March 2017

NOTES

1. J.G.A. Pocock (1975) 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *Journal of Modern History*, 47, 4, 603–4. This article opened with a stinging critique of A.J.P. Taylor's impatience with the word 'Britain'. Pocock's objection to the tokenistic inclusion of Ireland, Scotland and Wales in 'English' narratives should be understood in part as a direct rebuttal to Taylor's blunt avowal that 'Where the Welsh, the Scotch, the Irish, or the British overseas have the same history as the English, my book includes them also; where they have a different history, it does not.' See A.J.P. Taylor (1965) *English History, 1914–1945* (Oxford, 1st edn), v. Taylor, for his part, dismissed Pocock's protest as a storm in a teacup, countering that 'Everyone knows what we mean whether we call our subject English history or British history. It is a fuss over names, not things.' A.J.P. Taylor (1975) 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject: Comments', *Journal of Modern History*, 47, 4, 622.
2. J.G.A. Pocock (1982) 'The Limits and Divisions of British History: In Search of the Unknown Subject', *American Historical Review* (*AHR*), 87, 2, 314.
3. Pocock, 'Limits and Divisions of British History', 318.

4. D. Cannadine (1995) 'British History as a "New Subject": Politics, Perspectives and Prospects' in A. Grant and K.J. Stringer (eds.) *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London), p. 13. See, for example, R.R. Davies (ed.) (1998) *The British Isles 1100–1500: Comparisons, Contrasts and Connections* (Edinburgh); S.G. Ellis and S. Barber (2013) *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State, 1485–1725* (Abingdon, 2nd edn); L. Brockliss and D. Eastwood (eds.) (1997) *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c. 1750–c. 1850* (Manchester); B. Bradshaw and P. Roberts (eds.) (1998) *British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain, 1533–1707* (Cambridge); G. Burgess (ed.) (1999) *The New British History: Founding a Modern State, 1603–1715* (London); S.J. Connolly (ed.) (1999) *Kingdoms United? Great Britain and Ireland since 1500: Integration and Diversity* (Dublin).
5. Pocock, 'A Plea', 610.
6. G. Burgess, 'Introduction–The New British History' in Burgess (ed.) *New British History*, p. 21; J. Morrill, 'The British Problem' in Bradshaw and Morrill (eds.) *The British Problem*, p. 18.
7. K. Robbins (2004) 'British History and the Generation of Change' in H. Brocklehurst and R. Phillips (eds.) *History, Nationhood and the Question of Britain* (Basingstoke), p. 3.
8. See, for instance, Colin Kidd's commentary on the distortions created by this historiographical partition, C. Kidd (2003) 'Race, Empire, and the Limits of Nineteenth-Century Scottish Nationhood', *The Historical Journal*, 46, 4, 874.
9. *Kingdoms United*, published in 1999, identified 'cultural identity', 'law and administration' and 'economic development' as issues still in need of attention. See Connolly's 'Introduction', pp. 11–12.
10. C. Kidd (2010) 'Wales, the Enlightenment and the New British History', *The Welsh History Review*, 25, 209.
11. Morrill, 'The British Problem', p. 18. In advocating a 'holistic' history, Morrill stressed that 'Holistic does not mean wholeistic'.
12. R. Colls (2004) *Identity of England* (Oxford), p. 377.
13. According to David Armitage, Pocock had 'attempted the revivification of British history as an imperial history, both within Britain and Ireland and across the oceans', a quasi-Seelyan enterprise. D. Armitage (1999) 'Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?', *AHR*, 104, 2, 431.
14. H. Kearney (2004) 'Four Nations History in Perspective' in Brocklehurst and Phillips, *History*, p. 10.
15. R. Samuel (1995) 'British Dimensions: "Four Nations History"', *History Workshop Journal*, 40, xviii.

16. Pocock, 'A Plea', 605.
17. According to Pocock, Welshmen—like Orangemen and Orkneymen—had not 'developed complex historiographical traditions of their own.' See 'A Plea', 616.
18. Pocock, 'A Plea', 610.
19. J. Innes, 'What Would a "Four Nations" Approach to the Study of Eighteenth-Century British Social Policy Entail?' in Connolly (ed.) *Kingdoms United?*, p. 184.
20. R.R. Davies, 'In Praise of British History' in Davies (ed.) *The British Isles*, p. 19.
21. Davies, 'In Praise', p. 22.
22. K.M. Brown, 'Seducing the Scottish Clio: Has Scottish History Anything to Fear from the New British History?' in Burgess (ed.) *New British History*, p. 241.
23. Brown, 'Seducing the Scottish Clio', p. 242.
24. N. Canny, 'Irish, Scottish and Welsh Responses to Centralisation, *c.* 1530–1640' in Grant and Stringer (eds.) *Uniting the Kingdoms?*, pp. 147–8.
25. Samuel, 'British Dimensions', xiv.
26. C. Kidd (1993) *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689–c. 1830* (Cambridge), pp. 209–10.
27. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past*, p. 205.
28. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past*, pp. 272–3.
29. Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past*, p. 207.
30. See, for example, G. Morton (1999) *Unionist Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830–1860* (East Linton); L. Paterson (1994) *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh); R.J. Finlay (1997) *A Partnership for Good? Scottish Politics and the Union since 1880* (Edinburgh).
31. T. Claydon (1997) 'Problems with the British Problem', *Parliamentary History*, 16, 2, 222.
32. Cannadine, 'British History', pp. 25–6.
33. L. Colley (1992) 'Britishness and Otherness: An Argument', *Journal of British Studies* (*JBS*), 31, 4, 314.
34. Canny, 'Responses to Centralisation', p. 148.
35. Burgess, 'Introduction', p. 8.
36. N. Evans, 'The Changing Context of Welsh Historiography, 1890–2000' in Brocklehurst and Phillips (eds.) *History*, p. 28. See also Kidd, 'Wales'. An alternative avenue of inquiry has been suggested by Paul O'Leary, who, in a comparative study straddling late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Wales and Ireland, sought to 'reveal complexities not easily

accounted for by historical interpretations which see the one country as moving inexorably towards independence while the other renounced all pretensions of a distinctive nationality.' P. O'Leary, 'Accommodation and Resistance: A Comparison of Cultural Identities in Ireland and Wales, *c.* 1880–1914' in Connolly (ed.) *Kingdoms United?*, p. 134.

37. R.G. Asch (1993) '"Obscured in Whiskey, Mist and Misery." The Role of Scotland and Ireland in British History' in R.G. Asch (ed.) *Three Nations—A Common History? England, Scotland, Ireland and British History, c. 1600—1920* (Bochum), p. 15.

38. Pocock, 'Limits and Divisions of British History', 312.

39. L. Colley (2009) *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT, rev. 3rd edn), pp. 367–8.

40. See M. Cragoe (1998) 'Welsh Electioneering and the Purpose of Parliament: "From Radicalism to Nationalism" Reconsidered', *Parliamentary History*, 113–30; R.M. Jones (1992) 'Beyond Identity? The Reconstruction of the Welsh', *JBS*, 31, 330–57.

41. Robbins, 'British History', p. 9.

42. T. Harris, 'Critical Perspectives: The Autonomy of English History?' in Burgess (ed.) *New British History*, pp. 267–8.

43. For more on tracking English political culture, see R. Colls (2014) 'Englishness and the Political Culture' in R. Colls and P. Dodd (eds.) *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880–1920* (London, 2nd edn), pp. 61–90.

44. Harris, 'Critical Perspectives', p. 268. Cf. Michael Hechter's claim that, in some cases, 'there is no reason for the periphery to assume a position near center stage' (1975), 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject: Comments', *Journal of Modern History*, 47, 4, 626.

45. Kearney, 'Four Nations History', p. 10.

46. J.G.A. Pocock, 'Conclusion: Contingency, Identity, Sovereignty' in Grant and Stringer (ed.) *Uniting the Kingdom?*, p. 295.

47. See, for instance, Jane Ohlmeyer's discussion of Irish objections to the New British History. Ohlmeyer has herself suggested that Irish historians should embrace more fully the New British and Atlantic histories, asking, 'After all, what should scholars know of Ireland who only Ireland know?' J. Ohlmeyer (1999) 'Seventeenth-Century Ireland and the New British and Atlantic Histories', *AHR*, 104, 2, 462.

48. Samuel, 'British Dimensions', ix.

49. K. Robbins (1998) *Nineteenth-Century Britain. England, Scotland, and Wales: The Making of a Nation* (Oxford), p. 12.

50. Robbins, *Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 12.

51. Brown, 'Seducing the Scottish Clio', p. 241.

52. On the 'invention' of 'Ulster' and 'the attempt to establish a British identity for northern Ireland' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see J. Loughlin (1999) 'Imagining "Ulster": The North of Ireland and British National Identity, 1880–1921' in Connolly (ed.) *Kingdoms United?* pp. 109–22. See also T. Hennessey (1993) 'Ulster Unionist Territorial and National Identities 1886–1893: Province, Island, Kingdom and Empire', *Irish Political Studies*, 8, 21–36. For the earlier period, see P. Griffin (2000) 'Defining the Limits of Britishness: The "New" British History and the Meaning of the Revolution Settlement in Ireland for Ulster's Presbyterians', *JBS*, 39, 264.

53. For a discussion of the 'ambivalent position of Cornwall in the English imagination, and of England in the Cornish imagination', see J. Vernon (1998) 'Border Crossings: Cornwall and the English (Imagi)nation' in G. Cubitt (ed.) *Imagining Nations* (Manchester), pp. 153–72. Vernon argued that attempts from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century to 'represent Cornwall and England as discrete, centred, stable and homogeneous nations' should in fact be understood as 'symptoms of their very insecurity and instability'. According to Vernon, this reading of identity-making and internal 'othering' 'problematises the four-nations model of British national identity, one that tellingly ignores Cornwall or conflates its alterity within Englishness' (see pp. 168–9).

54. Cannadine, 'British History', p. 18.

55. J.G.A. Pocock (1992) 'History and Sovereignty: The Historiographical Response to the Europeanization in Two British Cultures', *JBS*, 31, 4, 361–3.

56. Speech 5 April 1992, http://www.johnmajor.co.uk/page2437.html, accessed 26 January 2017.

57. Cannadine, 'British History', p. 26. See also Samuel, 'British Dimensions', iv.

58. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/scottish-independence-referendum-statement-by-the-prime-minister, accessed 3 February 2017.

59. https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-governments-negotiating-objectives-for-exiting-the-eu-pm-speech, accessed 3 February 2017.

60. Speech 13 May 1978, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/103684, accessed 26 January 2017.

61. Colley, 'Britishness', 315; Colley, *Britons*, p. 25.

62. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/scottish-independence-referendum-statement-by-the-prime-minister, accessed 3 February 2017.

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64. Hansard, 5th series, volume 939, 14 November 1977, http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1977/nov/14/scotland-bill, columns 122–3, accessed 27 January 2017.
65. *Leeds Mercury*, 14 April 1886, p. 2.
66. For more on Scottish responses to Gladstonian Home Rule and the Scottish Home Rule Association, see N. Lloyd-Jones (2014) 'Liberalism, Scottish Nationalism and the Home Rule Crisis, *c.* 1886–93', *English Historical Review*, 129, 539, 862–87. On the parallels between the language employed by the SNP and the SHRA, see N. Lloyd-Jones (2014) 'Separate Scotland?', *History Today*, 64, 8, 34–6.
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70. I. McBride, 'After Brexit, Northern Irish politics will again be dominated by the border', https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/19/brexit-northern-irish-politics-border-eu-good-friday-agreement, accessed 19 February 2017.
71. Kenny speech at the All Island Civic Dialogue launch, http://www.merrionstreet.ie/MerrionStreet/en/News-Room/Speeches/Speech_by_the_Taoiseach_Mr_Enda_Kenny_T_D_at_the_First_Meeting_of_the_All-Island_Civic_Dialogue_on_Brexit.html, accessed 3 November 2016.
72. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/feb/23/irish-leader-enda-kenny-calls-for-united-ireland-provision-in-brexit-deal, accessed 23 February 2017; http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/enda-kenny-insists-on-united-ireland-clause-in-brexit-deal-35477171.html, accessed 23 February 2017.
73. See M. Power (2011) 'Introduction: Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland' in M. Power (ed.) *Building Peace in Northern Ireland* (Liverpool), pp. 1–17.
74. http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/ni-assembly-imminent-prospect-of-brexit-causes-shift-in-attitudes-1.2998278, accessed 7 March 2017.
75. Samuel, 'British Dimensions', xiii.
76. For the impact of incorporating 'British' history into a broader 'European' schematic on our understanding of what 'Europe' means, see Pocock, 'History and Sovereignty', 378. If 'Britain' is a product of multiple nations, then 'Europe', similarly, must 'consist of a number of distinct if interlocking communities with distinct if interacting histories'.
77. Armitage, 'Greater Britain', 432.
78. T. Barnard (2013) 'Renewing the "New" British history', unpubl. Dacre lecture, University of Oxford. Naomi Lloyd-Jones is grateful to Professor Barnard for providing her with a draft copy of the talk.

J.G.A. Pocock and the Politics of British History

Ian McBride

In *The Discovery of Islands* (2005), J.G.A. Pocock collected together the series of influential essays in which he made the case for a new kind of British history, one envisaged as archipelagic and later oceanic in character, and extending ultimately as far as his own native New Zealand. Most of the essays were written during the 1990s, but the original manifesto, 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', was first published in 1975, and an important sequel appeared in the *American Historical Review* in 1982.[1] That so many years passed between the formulation of the new British history and its highpoint in the 1990s is one of the interesting things about it. *The Discovery of Islands* also included several new pieces, including a memoir entitled 'The Antipodean Perception', in which the author, by now a remarkably energetic octogenarian, contextualised the contents of the volume autobiographically. Hence Pocock's unusual announcement in the book's preface: 'I am presenting myself as a piece of historical evidence'.[2]

This chapter will inspect this singular piece of evidence. My approach to the questions considered in this volume has always centred on

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J.G.A. Pocock because I am primarily a historian of eighteenth-century Ireland.[3] Early modernists speak of 'three kingdoms' history rather than 'four nations'. Pocock is the most influential and intriguing exponent of this approach—although Linda Colley, John Morrill and Conrad Russell have all contributed powerfully to transforming our understanding of Britishness and the British problem. It is largely thanks to these scholars that, in so many universities, courses on English history have given way to courses on *British* history, or the history of the British Isles. The 'three kingdoms' perspective of the early modernists, beginning with the union of crowns of 1603 and culminating in the parliamentary union in the period 1801–1921 is, incidentally, one reason for our persistent neglect of Wales. In contrast, medievalists such as Rees Davies, Robin Frame and John Gillingham have compared Wales and Ireland as zones of English cultural aggression and imperial ideology.[4]

In this chapter I explore the broader cultural politics animating Pocock's *Discovery of Islands*. The underlying theme is the role of biography in shaping decisions about the spatial or territorial frame we adopt when we write about the past. It might be equally pertinent to the transatlantic careers of Linda Colley or David Armitage, or, for that matter, Edward Said. The relevant biographical factors include our point of origin (social, cultural, political), and our intellectual environment and professional training, but also the usual accidents of an academic career, and the audiences we find ourselves addressing as teachers as well as writers. Pocock's personal ruminations, examined below, raise questions about what it means to make history, to write history, and to have history taken away from us. This existential dimension of the new British history has been a persistent element since Pocock first made his 'Plea for a New Subject'. What was at stake, as he recalled in 1999, was 'the need to affirm my own historical being'.[5] The following chapter attempts to identify more exactly the peculiarities of this enterprise, and to explain why it suddenly flared into life at the end of the twentieth century, stimulating interest in various forms of three kingdoms and four nations history.

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The impact made by J.G.A. Pocock on his field has been astonishing. His manifesto for the new British history was written as he was finishing the *Machiavellian Moment* (1975), one of the most influential history books of the post-war era. Pocock has significantly changed the way we think about Thomas Hobbes, James Harrington, Edward Gibbon and Edmund Burke, and about both the Scottish Enlightenment and

the American Revolution: a satisfactory historiographical study of any of these topics would have to accord him a prominent place. He invented the idea of an *English* enlightenment. He has written with characteristic breadth and insight about New Zealand, and in particular about the early encounters between the *pakeha* (the descendants of European, mostly British, settlers) and the Maori (the indigenous Polynesian inhabitants). He is famous as one of the two founders of the 'Cambridge School' of the history of political thought, having advocated the method of linguistic contextualism in a series of essays published between the 1960s and 1980s. His most important legacy as an intellectual historian has been to shift the attention of scholars away from the arguments of the canonical texts towards the broad vocabularies or 'paradigms' in which they were framed.[6]

Anyone who looks back over the six and a half decades between Pocock's first article and his valedictory lecture will be struck by the consistency of his central concerns and the connections between them. Most of them were already present in the Cambridge Ph.D. thesis he submitted in 1952 with what must now seem a rather modest title: 'The Controversy over the Origin of the Commons, 1675–88'. Regrettably, Pocock's prolific output has also been resented or simply ignored by many scholars, especially those who were hostile to intellectual history *tout court*, a depressingly large constituency in almost all history departments in the United Kingdom. Much of Pocock's work is quirky and idiosyncratic, as well as resolutely original. He specialises in panoramic macro-histories and meta-histories, identifying large-scale patterns in the history of ideas, often crossing centuries and continents, generating multiple dichotomies and typologies. His writing is playful and paradoxical, with gnomic tendencies. One unkind critic complained that '[t] he Pocockian prose style with its perplexing allusions, its involutions, convolutions and intricacies is the ultimate disincentive to skimming'.[7] Embarking on one of Pocock's grand synoptic articles is a bit like watching an acrobat spinning several plates whilst crossing a tightrope.

The argument set out in Pocock's 'Plea for a New Subject' has been summarised many times. The article was intended as a protest against the conventional Anglocentric arrangement of British history, in which Scotland, Ireland and Wales were largely ignored. The target was the introversion and self-satisfaction of the English, nicely exemplified in the response made at the time by A.J.P. Taylor, who declared that the difference between England and Britain was 'a triviality interesting only to

nationalist cranks'.[8] In contrast, Pocock sketched a scheme for British history that was centred on the interactions of a group of political cultures in these islands which moulded the United Kingdom as it took shape in 1603, 1707 and 1801. Inevitably the organising theme in this narrative was the increasing political and cultural domination of England. But English supremacy always co-existed with pluralism. The other partners in the United Kingdom, however disadvantaged, were never passive. The hybrid or hyphenated communities that resulted from English expansion held a particular fascination for Pocock. In early modern Ireland a number of 'intermediate and counter-reactive' societies were created along the frontiers of English expansion—what became known as the Old English and the New English. They also included the Scots-Irish (or Ulster Protestants), whom he neatly described as 'a settler nation which is at the same time an anti-nation'.[9]

The new subject advocated by Pocock in 1974 turned on the interlocking histories of the three kingdoms, and the relations between the various nations and sub-nations they contained. Beginning with his own period, Pocock noted that none of the great upheavals of the early modern era—the English Civil War, the revolution of 1688 and the American Revolution—had been confined to one or two of the kingdoms and colonies of the British Crown but were disruptions in the overall system that encompassed them. He anticipated the core components of Conrad Russell's billiard ball theory of the English Civil War—now generally conceptualised as a 'war of the three kingdoms'. His view of the American Revolution as a civil war in a shared British Atlantic world has also become commonplace.[10] Pocock then moved back to the first patterns of human settlement in the 'Atlantic archipelago', noting the variety of geographical, political and economic divisions that preceded the three kingdoms. Turning to the medieval period, and the emergence of the centralised kingdoms of the English and the Scots, he focused on the creation of a variety of marcher lordships or debateable lands between these two polities and along the 'Anglo-Celtic' frontier that bisected both islands. His aim was to demonstrate that the expansion of England had never been a unilateral process but had involved processes of negotiation in which the various parties had 'interacted so as to modify the conditions of one another's existence'.[11]

One aspect of the 'Plea for a New Subject' has generally been overlooked, although it was pivotal to Pocock's purpose. The article sketches out a typically elegant and ambitious typology of the dominant modes

of historical awareness within the three kingdoms. Historical subjectivity had been a preoccupation since his Ph.D. thesis, and he remained fascinated by the schemes employed by different cultures for ordering temporal experience, by the functions of what we now call social memory, and by the fact that written archives and therefore our histories are shaped by particular institutionalised settings. In 1962, for example, he published 'The Origins of the Study of the Past: A Comparative Approach', surveying the constitutional myths of England, Scotland, Ireland, Naples and France, with comments on classical Athens, pre-Qin China and Evans-Pritchards' study of the Nuer.[12] His attempt to show that the study of historiography should be approached 'as part of the history of social man's awareness of his past and his relations with it' provides a valuable context for his attempt to rethink Britishness a decade later.[13] The 'Plea for a New Subject' was, as its concluding words remind us, 'an exercise in mapping the historical consciousness', something few readers appear to have noticed.

Pocock's fundamental point was that, throughout the British world, the historical values and paradigms established by the English were dominant, so that a historian in New Zealand would find it impossible to escape them. The English enjoyed a sense of identity so secure as to be almost subconscious. Rather like Americans today, they tended to conflate the condition of being English with that of being normal, so that the problem was to explain why so many neighbouring nations had diverged from their allegedly orderly processes of constitutional development. As Herbert Butterfield (Pocock's supervisor at Cambridge) put it in his wartime *The Englishman and his History* (1944):

> We do not have to set about the deliberate manufacture of a national consciousness, or to strain ourselves, like the Irish, in order to create a 'nationalism' out of the broken fragments of tradition, out of the ruins of a tragic past.[14]

For the (Catholic) Irish, on the other hand, union with England had been experienced as a form of conquest. The Irish master-narrative was therefore a 'romantic' and revolutionary one—'how a collection of premodern cultures were violently transformed … by an alien power acting on them from without, and how the emerging collectivity discovered the conceptual, political and social means to take charge of the process'.[15] Pocock observed regretfully that the resulting mental conflict

was resolved only 'by the death of the divided self' and its rebirth through the revolutionary struggle that began in 1916. The language here surely echoes Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), which had recently been translated. In 1998, Pocock similarly cited the Irish case as an example of a master-slave relationship: 'Patrick Pearse insists on taking by violence what might have been his by negotiation, because otherwise he cannot believe that it is truly his'.[16] Happily, as Pocock had learned from reading Conor Cruise O'Brien, a revisionist movement was now underway. Irish historiography had reached 'a point of maturity where it has been emancipated from, by recognizing, its own compulsions'.[17]

It was to Scotland, instead, that Pocock looked for creative inspiration. The Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707 had not been imposed but negotiated, albeit it on drastically unequal terms, leaving room for a mode of historical consciousness that Pocock called 'tangential'. The point here was that since the sixteenth-century Reformation there were political writers north of the border who believed that their future lay in closer integration with England rather than independence. The Scots were free to move between different avenues of self-determination and, in doing so, to appropriate and reinterpret English institutions and norms for themselves. Enlightened Scotland consequently provided the template for the 'pluralist and multicultural' approach to British history that Pocock now urged his fellow New Zealanders to adopt.[18]

To understand better what Pocock meant by tangential history, we might turn to his 1979 article 'Hume and the American Revolution: The Dying Thoughts of a North Briton'. The central theme of the piece was David Hume's anxiety that the rebellious colonists and their radical supporters in London were destabilising the British constitution. But the article also presented an incisive analysis of what the enlightened Scots actually meant when they described themselves as 'North Britons'. (This was the century when Scots produced many icons, symbols, and other expressions of Britishness, including the words to 'Rule Britannia', the figure of John Bull, and the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.) Throughout his life Hume conversed in broad Scots, despite his well-known efforts to purge Scotticisms both from his own and from his friends' writings. His cultural context therefore involved a form of bilingualism. When Anglo-Scottish relations were reconfigured after 1707, so that Edinburgh became a provincial satellite of metropolitan London, Pocock explained

that the Scottish literati 'had no alternative to outplaying the English at their own games'. This involved polishing their linguistic and literary style, hence Hume's decision to bring Thomas Sheridan, the Irish elocutionist, to Edinburgh. But it also necessitated the reconstruction of both the English and the European past along 'philosophical' lines. Hume's well-known boast that 'This is the historical age and this [Scotland] the historical nation' should be read alongside his conviction that 'the English have not much excelled in that kind of literature'.[19] In the second half of the eighteenth century it could be argued that anyone who sought a sophisticated analysis of English political culture would have to turn to Scotland. A North Briton, Pocock concluded, was 'a Scotsman committed to a restatement of English culture in such terms that it would become British and that Scotsmen would make their own way in it'.[20]

By the time he wrote this, Pocock had been consigned to 'outer darkness' by Britain's turn towards Europe, and he consequently adopted his own analogous 'strategy of rewriting British history' in a form that would make sense of his own experience.[21] Before scrutinising this strategy, however, we might note that Pocock's tangential angle on Englishness was fundamentally different from Hume's position. Hume's response to the provincialism of his surroundings was to become as cosmopolitan as possible: when he contemplated leaving Edinburgh, it was Paris rather than London that attracted him.[22] His novelty lay not in the spatial framing or ethnic definition of the subject but in the psychological and sociological insights of what he called the 'science of man'. In historiography, as in moral philosophy, Hume was an 'anatomist' rather than a 'painter', whose ambition was to discover the 'secret springs and principles' of human behaviour.[23] There was nothing so iconoclastic about Pocock's work, although the method of linguistic contextualism certainly challenged both liberal and Marxist narratives of seventeenth-century England. Just as Pocock admitted 'a certain sympathy' for the republican tradition examined in *The Machiavellian Moment*, he also treated the myth of the ancient constitution—which Butterfield had identified as central to the English political character—with respect.[24] Anyone interested in seventeenth-century political thought, the revolution of 1688 or the Enlightenment will discover that nobody has written more insightfully and sensitively about the Englishness of English politics than Pocock.

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The 'Plea for a New Subject' was occasioned by the United Kingdom's entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) in January 1973 and the consequent demise of the system of imperial trade preference that discriminated in favour of British producers—even if the British in question lived on the other side of the planet. The manifesto was originally delivered as a lecture at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, just four months later, and the political context was made explicit:

> The British cultural star cluster is at present in a highly dispersed condition, various parts of it feeling the attraction of adjacent galaxies; the central giant has cooled, shrunk, and moved away, and the inhabitants of its crust seem more than ever disposed to deny that the rest of us ever existed.[25]

Feelings of disorientation, abandonment, and even disbelief were felt keenly throughout the white dominions. In Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the monuments and symbols of nationhood and the commemorative rituals that bound citizens together were all derivative. To the extent that they thought of themselves as a people with distinctive cultural attributes and a shared history, the inhabitants of New Zealand were Britons. Indeed, they were 'better Britons'—the embodiment of essentially Anglo-Saxon virtues which had been heightened by the challenges of life on the frontier. A good example of this creed appears in *The English as a Colonizing Nation* (1903), a textbook by James Hight, lecturer in political economy and constitutional history at Christchurch, the same university where Pocock studied and later taught:

> The successful colonist must be of sturdy character, persevering, unflinching in the face of difficulty, steady of nerve at those moments when he is exposed to terrible dangers, willing to endure hardship, and not too proud to labour with his own hands; he must love the land, as the old Teuton forefathers of the English love it; he must be active, enterprizing, eager to take advantage of new opportunities for bettering his position in the world, moved by the trading as well as the farming spirit; he must delight in the sea, which is to bear him to his new home, and upon whose bosom he will entrust the fruits of his labour at home. All of these qualities are present in the national English character.[26]

Australian attitudes were similar. C.E.W. Bean, the primary creator of the ANZAC legend, believed that 'Australia is as purely British as the people of Great Britain—perhaps more so'. Only in Australia and

New Zealand, he reasoned, had the separate peoples of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales been blended together by intermarriage.[27] But the complacent assumption that the inhabitants of the white dominions were—as the *Sydney Morning Herald* put it—'simply the British overseas' was shattered by the prolonged negotiations that took place between 1961 and 1963 following Harold Macmillan's decision to apply for British membership of the EEC.[28] As the Canadian philosopher George Grant expressed it in his *Lament for a Nation* (1965), they were 'like fish left on the shores of a drying lake'.[29]

Even more than the Australians or the Canadians, the New Zealanders (the *pakeha*, at any rate) had invested heavily in Britishness. James Belich's *Paradise Reforged* (2001), the second volume of his authoritative history of New Zealand, adopts the concept of 're-colonization' to express the *intensification* of links between London and its antipodean outposts between the 1880s and 1960s. Emotional ties between New Zealand and Britain were strengthened by the islands' unique reliance on the export trade with Britain. Hundreds of thousands of tons of refrigerated mutton and dairy products were sent to Britain annually by steamship. In return, ships from Britain carried books, newspapers and mail to the dominions. More than ever before, the dominions were cultural provinces of London, 'co-owners—not mere subjects—of the world's largest empire'.[30] This transoceanic economy was shattered by Britain's entry into the EEC in 1973, which demanded the UK's membership of the Common Agricultural Policy.

This crisis was rooted in structural changes rather than English mindsets. It was anticipated by the fall of Singapore in February 1942 (when Pocock, it should be remembered, was already eighteen years old). The enthusiastic commitment of Australian and New Zealand troops to the imperial war effort had been based on the assumption that British seapower would continue to protect their homelands. Now they glimpsed a new world order in which the British connection might have to be supplemented or subsumed.[31] This was a key moment in the disintegration of the 'British world system', analysed by John Darwin, which underpinned the chaotic jigsaw of colonies and dependencies in Asia, Africa and the Pacific. The conditions which enabled the imperial system included wider geopolitical and economic forces—not simply the industrial and naval pre-eminence but also the huge military resources of India, the international financing and trading networks centred on London, and the loyalty of the white dominions. There were also vital

negative conditions—the factors that inhibited potential competitors in East Asia, the US and the European mainland. The collapse of this world system, like its rise, was 'largely determined by geopolitical forces over which the British themselves had little control'.[32] The wider manifestations of post-war contraction included the devaluation of the pound by the Wilson government in November 1967, which disrupted the sterling currency area, and, above all, the decision taken earlier that year to terminate the United Kingdom's military presence 'East of Suez'. The US was already replacing Britain as the military focal point in South-East Asia, just as American popular culture was beginning to reshape the way New Zealanders looked at the world.

The aim of Pocock's new subject was not to perpetuate imperial sentiment and allegiance in the face of metropolitan indifference, and in the absence of the material interests and institutions that had created and sustained it.[33] It was not the reconstruction of some form of political association that Pocock proposed, although it sometimes sounded like that, but rather 'ways of re-imagining [British history] and making it our own, so that we were equals in its practice'.[34] It must be stressed that this was a highly individual reaction. A variety of alternative responses were open to abandoned Britons in the South Pacific. At the University of Auckland, the Department of History was dominated by Keith Sinclair, whose writing focused on the cultivation a more distinctive sense of New Zealandness. In 1963, the year that began with Charles de Gaulle exercising his veto over British entry to the EEC, Sinclair urged that 'for us to want to be British is a poor objective, like wanting to be an understudy or a caretaker—or an undertaker'.[35] The attempt to construct some kind of New Zealand exceptionalism was at least as likely as Pocock's reassertion of his British birthright. In launching his assault on English introspection, Pocock was simultaneously fighting another, neglected battle *within* New Zealand, which he depicted as a struggle between Canterbury and Auckland. Two other Canterbury graduates included Namierite historians of eighteenth-century England, N.C. Phillips and J.B. Owen, both of whom studied at Oxford. Phillips returned to become Hight's successor as Head of Department. He was still there when Pocock first taught history in the late 1940s, and again when he the held the chair of political science in the 1960s.

As a critical admirer of J.R. Seeley's *The Expansion of England* (1883), Pocock might have chosen instead to embark upon the historical reconstruction of 'Greater Britain'. The belief that the United Kingdom and

its overseas settlements in Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand formed a single global political community was particularly strong between the 1870s and 1890s. During those decades the perceived threat from the rising superpowers of Germany, Russia and the United States stimulated intense interest in schemes for imperial federation. The ideal was popularised in Charles Dilke's bestseller *Greater Britain* (1868). It appealed to the historians Seeley and J.A. Froude, but also to politicians as diverse as Lord Rosebery, Joseph Chamberlain, James Bryce and Cecil Rhodes, and to the New Liberal intellectuals L.T. Hobhouse and J.A. Hobson. What connected the settler colonies was the English language, representative political institutions, and the Anglo-Saxon 'race' (a term then carelessly conflated with nationality). Bryce believed that Irish Home Rule was a necessary concession in order 'to maintain our English citizenship and nationality over the whole world' by some kind of federation, which he hoped would involve 'some sort of permanent relationship' with the Americans.[36] But the association with Home Rule on the whole damaged the cause of imperial federation. As Duncan Bell observes, the imagined community of Greater Britain had no place for many of the British Empire's subjects. The scramble for Africa was largely ignored, and most advocates took the view that neither India nor Ireland constituted a 'nation'.[37]

When historians of New Zealand eventually found a distinctive voice, it owed little to Seeley or even to Sinclair. If a single, compelling paradigm has replaced the development of British constitutional practices and social democracy in New Zealand's historiography, it is surely that of settler colonialism, discussed at the end of this chapter. This outcome could hardly have been foreseen when Pocock left for Cambridge. As Pocock observed half a century later, New Zealand's history was not yet 'central to our self-formation', its social and cultural forms were considered dull, and it seemed clear that 'history that excited the intellect and imagination had happened elsewhere'.[38] Even in the 1960s, 'race relations' remained a relatively recent and minor topic—although Pocock himself had sketched out a characteristically ambitious model of Western expansion and indigenous reaction as a framework for the New Zealand experience.[39] The voguish work on colonisation at that time was *The Founding of New Societies* (1964) by the American political scientist Louis Hartz. It was the target of an angry paragraph in Pocock's 'Plea for a New Subject' where it was presented as the antithesis of his vision of a British past characterised by reciprocity and interaction.[40] New

Zealand was a 'fragment society' according to Hartz—a settler community that had remained frozen in its cultural development since the time of its settlement. (This theory would later be applied to Ulster Unionists too.) It was concerned with the reproduction of European societies, however, and it had nothing to say about indigenous peoples.[41]

I have briefly rehearsed these alternatives and counterfactuals to demonstrate that there was no necessary connection between the realignment of the Commonwealth and the enlarged conception of British history in which 'three kingdoms' or 'four nations' was the defining feature. Indeed, Pocock seems to have been unique among antipodeans in promoting this extraordinary act of imaginative repossession. The ethnic composition of *pakeha* New Zealand, in which Scots and Ulster-Scots were more significant than Irish Catholics, is no doubt a background factor.[42] More important, however, is the simple fact that Pocock's own area of specialisation was seventeenth-century England, a field he transformed just as David Hume had done. Until the 1970s, the revolutions and civil wars of the Stuart era remained key battlefields for liberal and Marxist historians throughout the Anglophone world. Moreover, Pocock's essays consistently reveal a synoptic, synthesising mind. As Jack Hexter once complained, for Pocock 'the making of connections and the exploring of relations is a vocation verging on an addiction'.[43] We should bear in mind that there are usually several things going on simultaneously in Pocock's major essays. Any satisfactory attempt to analyse Britishness would have to begin with the core foundation myth of England's ancient constitution, and to demonstrate that a dialectic between metropolitan and provincial Britons, involving collaboration and competition, had existed almost from the start.

Generational factors also matter. When Pocock embarked on his Cambridge Ph.D. in 1948, he travelled to England as a 'British Subject'. It was only in that year that legislation was passed creating a separate category of New Zealand citizenship.[44] Two short articles written for the *Cambridge Review*, following a period as research fellow at St John's College, show that New Zealand's relationship with Britain was already experienced by Pocock as a predicament. 'On Living in a Mediocracy' (1960) was a report on the New Zealand university system. Pocock explained that his native country had a small population— then just 2.5 million people—and an economy based on the export of

sheep and dairy cattle. Although they enjoyed a high standard of living, and a greater sense of egalitarianism than in England, the cultural life of New Zealanders was restricted and derivative. The administrative class was small and unsophisticated, hence his title. Life in Canterbury came as something of a shock after his doctoral and post-doctoral studies in England:

> 'What we are doing in Cambridge', said somebody to me once, 'is training a ruling class'; and though the English have carefully arranged matters so that any statement you can make about them sounds unbearably naïve, one did have the sensation that one was helping to run an promotion machine of an enormously complex and peculiar type, and that the values and qualities one took seriously as an academic were, in no matter how extraordinary a way, related to the promotion machine and part of the qualifications for promotion.[45]

England was a kind of meritocracy; New Zealand a rather dull mediocracy. (Pocock was presumably nodding towards *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, the satirical essay by the British politician and sociologist Michael Young published in 1958.) Even more intriguing is the earlier essay, 'Antipodean Comment'. This was a meditation on the relations between Oxbridge and the new redbrick universities of Manchester, Reading, Southampton and elsewhere—a common theme in English literary and journalistic writing. Once again, the life of the New Zealand academic was presented as a dilemma, an extreme case of the provincial problem of participating in a 'U-culture' which had developed in a different physical and social environment from that in which Pocock found himself, 'so that while [the antipodean] can never emancipate himself from a high degree of dependence on this culture, he can never altogether be a sharer in it'.[46]

These essays take us back to the vanished New Zealand of the 1940s and 1950s, when poets, writers and painters still gravitated towards London, when the intellectuals who remained in New Zealand were divided between internal expatriates and rival hard-drinking 'blokerati' such as the historian (and poet) Keith Sinclair.[47] They demonstrate how instinctively Pocock psychologised his situation as a scholar, a situation already experienced as tangential. They also remind us that, for Pocock, the writing of history always entails a broader attempt to make sense of

one's place in the world, and that the exercise of self-determination is as much an existential effort as it is a political good.

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In the 1970s Pocock had been 'a voice crying in the wilderness'—as he later acknowledged.[48] Judged on its own terms, as an exhortation to New Zealanders to reclaim their British past, the 'Plea for a New Subject' was largely a failure. Why was it, then, that twenty years after Pocock's original prospectus, the new British history suddenly blossomed—in Britain itself? During the 1990s, collections of essays on the three kingdoms poured from the university presses.[49] Textbooks appeared, making explicit their debts to Pocock. They included works by Scottish historians, such as Alex Murdoch's *British History 1660–1832: National Identity and Local Culture* (1998) and by Irish scholars, for example Jim Smyth's *The Making of the United Kingdom 1660–1800* (2001).[50] But neither this explosion of interest in Pocock's vision nor its subsequent dissipation owed much to his own antipodean priorities.

One explanation for this sudden efflorescence was the fact that during the 1990s the British problem began once again to disturb the English. Nationalism was apparently resurgent elsewhere too—in the former USSR, in Eastern Europe, in Yugoslavia, Spain and Canada. But historiographical trends have their own internal dynamics, which are at least as important as the external drivers. Some of these were anatomised in David Cannadine's seminal article, 'British History: Past, Present—And Future?', which appeared in *Past & Present* in 1987. The question mark in Cannadine's title signalled his fear that British history was in rapid decline, a victim of its own self-absorption as much as of the contraction of British influence in international affairs. The nub of the problem was revisionism—the startling proliferation of Ph.Ds, monographs and articles, all 'mainly concerned to show that less happened, less dramatically than was once thought'.[51] This situation provided a sharp contrast with the halcyon days of 1945–1970, when it was still assumed that British experience was unique, full of drama, and at the same time capable of offering privileged access to world-historical developments. The representative books of the post-war era were Geoffrey Elton's *The Tudor Revolution in Government* (1953), Lawrence Stone's *The Cause of the English Revolution* (1972) and Phyllis Deane's *The First Industrial Revolution* (1965). Cannadine complained that researchers were no longer illuminating the central themes of British history, although he refrained from specifying what exactly these were. Seven years later,

however, he had found the answer, albeit an incomplete one. In an upbeat keynote to the annual Anglo-American Conference, with Pocock as a guest of honour, Cannadine related how the making and breaking of the United Kingdom had supplied a new agenda for British historians.[52]

Not everyone was convinced. Forceful criticisms of Pocock were made by historians of early modern Ireland, and in particular by Nicholas Canny. One common objection was that the islands of Britain and Ireland never formed an integrated unit, a point also raised by English critics.[53] Tony Claydon, for example, protested that the British Isles do not constitute 'a natural or logical division of mankind'.[54] Canny denounced Conrad Russell and John Morrill for conferring upon 'these islands' an integrity they never really possessed. He preferred to pursue comparative history, by building up a detailed knowledge of 'one society' and relating it to others.[55] But these strictures could equally be applied to the historiography of Ireland itself. Are there *any* logical divisions of mankind? Did the inhabitants of Ireland *ever* comprise 'one society'? The new British history was also lambasted for not being inclusive or multicultural enough. It tended to obscure the presence of other ethnic groups—Germans in the American colonies, the French in Canada, the Boers in the Cape and, of course, Native Americans and Africans. The most decisive rejections of Pocock's proposals, however, stem from an opposition among social historians to *all* political boundaries—to the very notion of the state as an organising principle for the study of human experience in the past.[56]

It was inevitable that some Irish historians should see the new British history as another manifestation of the colonial mind, or as a denial of Ireland's ownership of its national or proto-national past. But what about the other nation in the North of Ireland that is simultaneously an 'anti-nation'? The Ulster Protestant is surely a perfect specimen of *Homo Britannicus.* What other community has experienced so repeatedly the psychological consequences of British contraction and the consequent feelings of abandonment? It is interesting, then, that so many of the foundational figures of Irish historiography have come from northern Protestant backgrounds, including T.W. Moody, J.C. Beckett and R.B. McDowell; among the succeeding generation there are many prominent northerners such as George Boyce, Paul Bew and Henry Patterson. But none of these scholars has confined his research to the North or has aspired to write history from a specifically Unionist standpoint. If anything, they have drawn inspiration from nonconformist or socialist

counter-currents within Protestant culture, or, like Beckett, they have cultivated a patrician distaste for both Orange and Green. The literary prestige of the Anglo-Irish elite inhibited the development of a distinctive Ulster-British movement in historiography and helped to ensure that a sense of a common enterprise was maintained among Ireland's historians in spite of the partition of the island. Scholars educated in Protestant institutions would instead play a disproportionate role in professionalising and revising the *Irish* national narrative. One reason for this is surely the felt need to re-imagine the Irish past to allow room for those excluded from the dominant Gaelic-revivalist and Catholic ethos of the Irish state.

For the reasons outlined above, the flurry of books and essays in the 1990s on three kingdoms history did not reflect a new commitment to Britishness so much as the exhaustion of English political history, as traditionally conceived. This helps to explain the sudden loss of momentum in what promised to be a lively new sub-field. The New British History was just one of several movements during the 1980s and 1990s attempting to escape the confines of the nation-state by writing history around, over or across its borders. Perhaps the most obvious of these was the appearance of the 'British Atlantic World'. Among Irish historians this option was energetically promoted by Nicholas Canny. In a series of recent survey articles Canny continues to separate the Atlanticist sheep from the British goats in a peremptory fashion. Canny's harsh verdict is that three kingdoms history transpired to be 'no more than traditional English political history in mufti'.[57] Atlantic history is primarily concerned with the movement of people and things rather than political ideas or institutions—with wind currents and trade patterns. Canny stresses the limits of the nation-state as an actor; his Atlantic is rather a world created by mariners, traders and migrants. This approach certainly allows for greater inclusivity, accommodating the existence of black Atlantics and perhaps even green ones. Ironically, however, it sits uneasily with Canny's magnum opus, *Making Ireland British* (2001) which charts the brutal transformation of Irish society between the 1580s and the 1650s. The Atlantic is noticeably absent from *Making Ireland British*, which focuses instead on state formation and the impact of the Protestant reformation in the British Isles and their European context.[58] Perhaps political boundaries are not so easily transcended after all.

Simultaneously, the post-colonial turn prevalent in literary and culture studies began to attract the notice of historians. Whereas the Atlanticists dissolved political structures into the larger study of social and economic processes, the Foucauldian models of power and resistance adopted by post-colonial scholars redirected attention to subaltern groups who were excluded from formal politics altogether and whose histories, therefore, are concerned less with their own material and cultural resources than with the mechanisms of exclusion. Their impact on British scholarship intersected with the broader reaction against the privileged historiographical status of the West, perhaps the most fundamental historiographical shift of all—although Asian and African scholarship has generally been mediated through American universities, like almost everything else. The discovery that Britain does not mean the same thing as England still comes as a revelation to many undergraduates, but is unlikely to excite them as much as the realisation that the world is not the same thing as the West.

Finally, there have been ramifying varieties of global and transnational history flourishing everywhere, particularly visible since the beginning of this century. Some of these agendas were formulated in part against the excesses of post-colonialism, with its overwhelming concentration on questions of representation and otherness. An early example was Tony Hopkins' call for a transnational approach to the British Empire. Hopkins accepted that it was outmoded to view the experience of empire from the metropolitan centre, thus 'perpetuating a form of Eurocentrism and possibly covert racism that has no place in a post-colonial world'. He nevertheless favoured a return to the 'hard' political and economic questions that were the staples of imperial history.[59] One of the most remarkable, big-canvas books to take up this challenge is James Belich's *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World* (2009). Belich combines technological and economic forces with cultural factors in order to explain the 'explosive' expansion of English-speakers during the nineteenth century, both in the American West and in the dominions of Greater Britain. Whereas Pocock proposed to rewrite British history from an antipodean angle, Belich produced a major work of global history structured around the four great cities of London, New York, Chicago and Melbourne, but driven by research questions formulated in Auckland and Wellington.

Replenishing the Earth reconstituted the territory of Greater Britain, including its ambivalent relationship with the United States. (One of

its provocative verdicts is that it was only in the 1890s that the United States began to decolonise, by outgrowing its 'junior partnership with British culture and economy'.[60]) But Belich's most distinctive achievement was to isolate the phenomenon of 'settlerism' from the broader narratives of colonialism and imperialism, and to contrast processes of British settlement with the Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese and Russian cases. As with other historiographical trends, diverse scholars have arrived at the emerging sub-field of settler colonialism from quite independent starting points. In a recent survey of imperial historiography, Stephen Howe highlights the prevalence of the frontier massacre as a recurring focus of research. 'Before the 1940s,' he points out, 'most genocidal episodes in modern world history were in colonial settings, and a very high proportion of these were in areas of British settlement'.[61] In an attempt to explain ethnic cleansing, the sociologist Michael Mann juxtaposes Australia and the United States with Spanish Mexico and German South West Africa as examples of 'genocidal democracies in the New World'.[62] Australians have been particularly prominent in elaborating paradigms for settler colonialism, beginning with the anthropologist and ethnographer Patrick Wolfe. But early American historians also became fascinated by frontier massacres, the *locus classicus* being the revenge killings of Indians carried out by the Scots-Irish Paxton Boys in Pennsylvania in the 1760s.[63]

The narratives of dispossession and atrocity central to the literature on settler colonialism take us a long way from the British world as Pocock envisaged it. In this chapter I have tried to place the new British history in a richer context than it is usually accorded and to delineate some of its more neglected features. Perhaps, in closing, the obvious point should be made that in the third quarter of the twentieth century Britishness really mattered. Even in 1973 it was possible to take for granted that British history was a scholarly field of global significance, widely studied throughout the English-speaking world. It was the core of the curriculum in New Zealand just as in Northern Ireland. At the University of Melbourne, right up to the 1960s, students who wanted to enrol for Australian history had to complete British history first. This arrangement was entirely logical, since it was assumed that Australian history was primarily about the relocation of English political institutions and notions of liberty; it was consequently a comparative subject already, with reference to New Zealand and other settler colonies.[64] When Pocock moved to the United States in 1966 it was not uncommon to find three or four

British specialists in the established universities. Much of the direction and continuity of Western history was supplied by narratives of modernisation and secularisation; the key themes of representative government, religious toleration, industrialisation and class struggle all prioritised Britain—or rather England. The Imperial School had always regarded the American Revolution as part of English political and social history as well as a rejection of it, a view shared by historians of 'Colonial British America', the term favoured by Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole.[65]

Since then British historians in the United States have been forced to reinvent themselves, and their colleagues on this side of the Atlantic have followed their example. While it is true to say that history in the United Kingdom has been globalised, it is also true that the British past has been Americanised.[66] It is no coincidence that many of the most influential exponents of global, Atlantic and imperial turns are English historians based in US universities—Linda Colley, David Cannadine, David Armitage and Tony Hopkins are among the most brilliant. The dramatic resurgence of empire as a topic was underway in the 1990s but it was the controversies over American hegemony after 9/11 that really energised scholarship.[67] In Canada, Australia and New Zealand, indigenous protest movements have transformed historical sensibilities, but once again American influences have been decisive in pushing multiculturalism and the analysis of cultural encounters to the centre of the academy.[68] In Pocock's home territory, the history of political thought, John Locke's *Two Treatises* are less likely to be encountered as an attack on absolute monarchy than as a justification of English colonialism and by extension American racism.[69]

Is it possible to glimpse in these trends a victory of sorts for Pocock's new subject? Although he always insisted that his reconfigured British history was designed to complement English history rather than replace it, a more subversive agenda—what might be described as 'provincialising England'—was clearly implicit. Like many historiographical programmes, the new British history came in both soft and hard varieties. It could be read simply as an injunction to rethink the confines of our national and territorial boundaries, or as a more forceful argument that the British polity and the wider forms of allegiance it produced should be our ultimate unit of study. In the first sense, it could be said that many aspects of the new British history are now simply taken for granted. Both the Union of 1707 and the American Revolution are viewed as dramatic

reverberations in a wider British world: these are just two examples of the remarkably fruitful effects of Pocock's insights.[70]

But the new British history was also designed to be *done to* somebody, and that somebody was the English. Pocock's manifesto was conceived to avenge an 'insult'. It was crystallised by England's willingness to dismiss New Zealanders as 'faithful servants no longer needed, who might now be pensioned off and forgotten'.[71] Viewed on this level, the affronted loyalism of the dominions now seems a rather parochial issue among the immense readjustments that have taken place between 'the West' and 'the rest'. The English are a good deal less complacent than they were in the 1960s; the New Zealanders are less bothered about the remains of the Commonwealth or the broken covenant that once underpinned it. Anglocentricity has been discredited, among academics at any rate; but I have argued here that this victory belongs to the wider forces that have undermined the privileged historiographical status of Europe as a whole, and to the Americans who dominate the international academic market. One indication of recent trends is Tony Ballantyne's *Orientalism and Race* (2002), a book 'Conceived in New Zealand, based on British, Indian and Australasian archival material, drafted in Cambridge and Galway, and finally reworked in Illinois'. Ballantyne reconceptualises empire as 'a complex agglomeration of overlapping webs', drawing attention to horizontal connections between different colonials; the web is designed to replace the metaphor of the wheel, where ideas seem to radiate out from the metropolitan centre to each part of the periphery. Ballantyne's post-colonial politics have little in common with Pocock's liberal humanism. On Pocock's map of historical consciousness we might place him closer to Patrick Pearse than David Hume. But pondering his webs of empire, or indeed Belich's 'anglo-world', is it not tempting to suggest that there is a *new* new British history waiting to be born?[72]

NOTES

1. J.G.A. Pocock (1975) 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *Journal of Modern History*, 47, 4, 601–21 (first published in the *New Zealand Journal of History* in April 1974); J.G.A. Pocock (1982) 'The Limits and Divisions of British History: In Search of the Unknown Subject', *American Historical Review* (*AHR*), 87, 2, 311–36.
2. J.G.A. Pocock (2005) *The Discovery of Islands: Essays in British History* (Cambridge), x.

3. I. McBride (1996) 'Ulster and the British Problem' in R. English and G. Walker (eds.) *Unionism in Modern Ireland* (Basingstoke), pp. 1–18.

4. R. Frame (1990), *The Political Development of the British Isles, 1100–1400* (Oxford); R.R. Davies (2002) *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093—1343* (Oxford); J. Gillingham (2000) *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge). For a sixteenth-century comparison of Ireland and Wales, see B. Bradshaw (1996) 'The Tudor Reformation and Revolution in Wales and Ireland: The Origins of the British Problem' in B. Bradshaw and J. Morrill (eds.) *The British Problem, c. 1534–1707* (Basingstoke), pp. 39–65. D.G. Boyce (1987) makes interesting comparisons between South Wales and Northern Ireland in his 'Brahmins and Carnivores: The Irish Historian in Great Britain', *Irish Historical Studies*, 25, 99, 225–35.

5. J.G.A. Pocock (1999) 'The New British History in Atlantic Perspective: An Antipodean Commentary', *AHR*, 104, 2, 493.

6. The other founder, of course, was Quentin Skinner. Mark Bevir (1992) points to the divergences between the two in a series of critiques including 'The Errors of Linguistic Contextualism', *History and Theory*, 31, 3, 276–98 and (2011) 'The Contextual Approach' in G. Klosko (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy* (Oxford), pp. 11–23.

7. J.H. Hexter (1979) 'Republic, Virtue, Liberty, and the Political Universe of J.G.A. Pocock', J.H. Hexter (ed.) *On Historians: Reappraisals of Some of the Makers of Modern History* (Cambridge, MA), p. 263.

8. A.J.P. Taylor (1975) 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject: Comments', *Journal of Modern History*, 47, 4, 622.

9. Pocock, 'A Plea', 33.

10. See C. Russell's (1991) *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637–1642* (Oxford) and more accessibly in (1987) 'The British Problem and the English Civil War', *History*, 72, 395–415; C. Russell (1990) *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford), p. 26–57; Pocock's thoughts on the American Revolution were brilliantly elaborated in J.G.A. Pocock (1980) 'The Revolution against Parliament' in J.G.A. Pocock (ed.) *Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776* (Princeton, NJ), pp. 265–88 and J.G.A. Pocock (1993) 'Political Thought in the English-Speaking Atlantic, 1760–1790' in J.G.A. Pocock (ed.) *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500–1800* (Cambridge), pp. 246–82.

11. Pocock, 'Limits and Divisions of British History', 311.

12. Reprinted in J.G.A. Pocock (2009) *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge), pp. 145–86.

13. Pocock, *Political Thought*, p. 145.

14. H. Butterfield (1970) *The Englishman and his History* (North Haven, CT), p. 114.
15. Pocock, *Discovery of Islands*, p. 36.
16. J.G.A. Pocock (1998) 'The Politics of History: The Subaltern and the Subversive', *Political Thought and History*, 6, 3, 251.
17. Pocock, *Discovery of Islands*, p. 36.
18. Pocock, *Discovery of Islands*, p. 39.
19. E.C. Mossner (1941) 'An Apology for David Hume, Historian' in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* (Hull), p. 660.
20. J.G.A. Pocock (1985) 'Hume and the American Revolution: The Dying Thoughts of a North Briton' in J.G.A. Pocock (ed.) *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge), pp. 128, 130.
21. J.G.A. Pocock (1999) 'The Four Seas and the Four Oceans' in G. Lucy and E. McClure (eds.) *Cool Britannia: What Britishness Means to Me* (Lurgan, County Armagh), p. 183.
22. For Hume's acute awareness of English condescension and hostility towards Scots, see A. Broadie (2007) *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Historical Age of the Historical Nation* (Edinburgh), pp. 59–60.
23. As he told Francis Hutcheson in 1739: J.Y.T. Grieg (ed.) (1932) *The Letters of David Hume* (2 vols, Oxford), I, p. 32
24. J.G.A. Pocock (2004) 'Quentin Skinner: The History of Politics and the Politics of History', *Common Knowledge*, 10, 3, p. 542.
25. Pocock, *Discovery of Islands*, p. 42.
26. Quoted in D. Bell (2007) *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton, NJ), pp. 142–3.
27. J. Curran and S. Ward (2010) *The Unknown Nation: Australia after Empire* (Carlton), p. 12; for Bean see D.A. Kent (1985) '*The Anzac Book* and the Anzac Legend: C.E.W. Bean as Editor and Image-Maker', *Historical Studies*, 21, 84, 376–90.
28. Curran and Ward, *Unknown Nation*, p. 41.
29. Curran and Ward, *Unknown Nation*, p. 21.
30. J. Belich (2009) *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World* (Oxford), p. 462.
31. J. Darwin (2009) *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830–1970* (Cambridge), pp. 494–513.
32. Darwin, *The Empire Project*, p. 649.
33. For Pocock's insistence on this point see his 'The New British History in Atlantic Perspective', 491–2.
34. Pocock, *Discovery of Islands*, p. 13.
35. Curran and Ward, *Unknown Nation*, p. 20.

36. C. Harvie (1976) 'Ideology and Home Rule: James Bryce, A.V. Dicey and Ireland, 1880–1887', *English Historical Review*, 91, 359, 313.
37. Bell, *Greater Britain*, pp. 171, 174, 205.
38. Pocock, *Discovery of Islands*, p. 10.
39. J.G.A. Pocock (1965) 'Introduction' in J.G.A. Pocock (ed.) *The Maori and New Zealand Politics* (Hamilton), pp. 1–13.
40. Pocock, 'A Plea', 620; omitted from the version in *Discovery of Islands*.
41. L. Hartz (ed.) (1964) *The Founding of New Societies: Studies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada and Australia* (San Diego, CA).
42. J.M. MacKenzie (2010) 'Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English Worlds? The Historiography of a Four-Nations Approach to the History of the British Empire' in C. Hall and K. McClelland (eds.) *Race, Nation and Empire: Making Histories, 1750 to the Present* (Manchester), pp. 1244–63.
43. Hexter, 'Political Universe of J.G.A. Pocock', p. 303.
44. As explained in J.G.A. Pocock, 'The Four Seas and the Four Oceans', pp. 181–2.
45. J.G.A. Pocock (1960) 'On Living in a Mediocracy', *Cambridge Review*, 425–8, quotation at 427.
46. J.G.A. Pocock (1958) 'Antipodean Comment', *Cambridge Review*, 504–5.
47. I am borrowing terms here from J. Belich's (2001) *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Honolulu, HI), pp. 332, 337.
48. Pocock, 'New British History in Atlantic Perspective', p. 490.
49. Among many others, see A. Grant and K. Stringer (eds.) (1995) *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London); Bradshaw and Morrill (eds.) *The British Problem c. 1534–1707*; L. Brockliss and D. Eastwood (eds.) (1997) *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c. 1750–1850* (Manchester).
50. Most important of all were two books by C. Kidd (1993), *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689–c. 1830* (Cambridge) and (1999) *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600–1800* (Cambridge).
51. D. Cannadine (1987) 'British History: Past, Present—And Future?' *Past & Present* (*P&P*), 116, 183.
52. D. Cannadine (1995) 'British History as a "New Subject": Politics, Perspectives and Prospects' in Grant and Stringer (eds.) *Uniting the Kingdom*, p. 12–28.
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55. N. Canny (1995) 'Irish, Scottish and Welsh Responses to Centralization, *c.* 1530–*c.* 1640' in Grant and Stringer (eds.) *Uniting the Kingdom?*, pp. 147–8.

56. This is certainly the case with Nicholas Canny, whose somewhat oracular pronouncements on historiography take the superiority of social over political history to be self-evident. See, for example, N. Canny (2003), 'Writing Early Modern History: Ireland, Britain, and the Wider World', *HJ*, 46, 3, especially 739, 740, 746.

57. Canny, 'Writing Early Modern History', 273.

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65. D. Armitage (1999) 'Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?' *AHR*, 104, 2, 437.

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'A Vertiginous Sense of Impending Loss': Four Nations History and the Problem of Narrative

Paul O'Leary

This chapter seeks to argue that four nations interpretations of the modern history of Britain and Ireland have been overdetermined by a metanarrative of national decline or disintegration. Raphael Samuel captured this succinctly and eloquently in 1995 when he discussed the circumstances surrounding the emergence of four nations history in terms of 'a vertiginous sense of impending loss'.[1] That sense of something important slipping away—whether it was the UK's place in the wider world or the loosening of cohesive ideas of national identity at home—has motivated attempts to chart the complex historical relationships between the different parts of 'these islands'. Understanding the origins of British institutions and identities in the past has never seemed more urgent than when they appeared to be in decline or undergoing dissolution in the present. This chapter questions the terms of that discussion by focusing on three areas that have been central to research in the field: the nature of

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the British state, how national identities are understood, and the ways in which transnational history presents opportunities for situating this history in an international and, indeed, a global context. It suggests that more systematic recognition of a metanarrative of decline has the potential to open up other avenues of enquiry and alternative interpretations.

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This argument requires a brief excursus into the circumstances that shaped the emergence of this field of enquiry, the reasons for the emphasis on decline, and an explanation for its enduring influence. A four nations approach to the history of Britain and Ireland arose out of a period of political uncertainty, institutional change and cultural dissension in the 1960s and 1970s. It occurred as a concerted response to a complex of developments that included decolonisation, the re-emergence of 'the Troubles' in Northern Ireland, the UK joining what was then the European Economic Community (EEC) and the abortive plans for devolution to Scotland and Wales. J.G.A. Pocock's 'plea for a new subject' in 1975 occurred against that background. Particularly relevant in his case was the United Kingdom turning away from the old settler colonies.[2]

The broad outlines of this context are well known and well-rehearsed, but their consequences for subsequent historical enquiry have not been fully explored. Most historians who responded to the plea for a more plural history were shaped by what Christopher Harvie has characterised as 'the moment of British nationalism', spanning the years between 1939 and 1970.[3] Harvie's 'moment' began with the Second World War, an experience that provided a new impetus to older ideas of British identity that were forged in opposition to an external threat, while the peacetime settlement reinforced pan-British solidarities through the welfare state.[4] It was a perception that such feelings of common interest were unravelling that provided the underlying rationale for four nations history. Locating historians who embraced a more plural interpretation of the British and Irish past in this context should not be taken to mean that they embraced nationalism, but rather that they had acquired a heightened awareness of the British dimension to the past in a discipline that, to a large extent, had been unreflexively Anglocentric.

A challenge to that entrenched view of the past was also made possible by the effects of institutional reconfiguration. University expansion and changes to the culture of academia in the 1960s and 1970s began to

transform the character of historical studies and created an environment conducive to experimentation with new approaches and methodologies.[5] Such changes both destabilised an existing paradigm and energised those who wished to work outside its frameworks. To use a concept devised by the cultural critic Raymond Williams, four nations history emerged in a particular 'structure of feeling', an idea he also formulated in more general terms as 'the culture of a period'.[6] These developments inspired some historical studies that focused on the formation of the United Kingdom in the eighteenth century, whereas during the 1990s 'dissolution' emerged as a new metanarrative of modern British history.[7]

This was demonstrated by the titles of a number of books during the 1990s, all of which ended with question marks. These included an important collection of essays called *Uniting the Kingdom?*, published in 1995, *Kingdoms United?* and *A Disunited Kingdom?*, which appeared around the time a devolved parliament and assemblies were being established.[8] These question marks clearly reflected uncertainty regarding the relationship between the apparently disintegrative tendencies of the present and how they might have consequences for interpretations of the past. Samuel summed this up in lyrical fashion by channelling Hegel: 'History notoriously takes wing at dusk, that twilight hour when shadows lengthen, silence thickens and when (according to believers in the numinous) thought flies heavenwards and ghostly presences makes themselves felt.'[9] Such uncertainties about British state development have continued. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, tensions over the UK's relationship to the European Union (EU), the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and the rise of Scottish nationalism raise the question of whether separate national traditions of writing history in Britain and Ireland will be reinforced. Alternatively, new spaces for re-appraising four nations history in a more holistic way might emerge.[10] The historians who seek out those spaces have not been shaped by Harvie's 'moment of British nationalism' but by a post-imperial moment of sustained contention over the nature, size and shape of the state—politically, economically, militarily and culturally—that began in the 1970s and continued through the re-structuring of economic relationships and civic identities that took place between 1979 and the end of the twentieth century.[11] This is a different (albeit related) 'structure of feeling' to that which gave rise to four nations history in the first place, and it is one that has implications for the three themes considered below.

Feelings of 'crisis' and dissolution have influenced historical interpretations, albeit not always in a straightforward or linear fashion. Richard Weight's study of national identity in Britain in the sixty years after the iconic date of 1940, for example, is 'about why the people of Britain stopped thinking of themselves as British'. He argued that England, Scotland and Wales were 'locked together'—a significant phrase—over four centuries, in 'an uneasy relationship'.[12] In this interpretation the partition of Ireland in 1921 and the unilateral declaration of a republic in the south in 1949, together with the imposition of direct rule in Northern Ireland in 1972, underline an uncompromising emphasis on dissolution as the guiding theme of recent British history. It is about how the unifying experiences of the Second World War and the post-war welfare state unravelled over time: by the closing decades of the century the 'moment' of British nationalism was decisively over.[13] This is an example of how a perception of national decline since the 1960s has over-determined the framework for discussion, rather like the debate about British economic decline since 1945. The validity of conceptualising post-war Britain in terms of a stark polarisation around 'growth' and 'decline' has been the subject of debate, and a discussion of the British state and Britishness in terms of an opposition between integration and dissolution is also needed.[14]

This brief discussion of the origins and development of four nations history (its 'structures of feeling') alerts us to two things: first, that contemporary events have been central to its emergence and development; and, second, that there now exists a body of work in the field whose achievements can be evaluated. Consequently, it is possible to reach some conclusions about the intellectual 'shape' and direction of four nations history as it applies to the modern period and the key areas of enquiry that have attracted historians' attention to date.

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One interpretation of a four nations approach to British and Irish history is that state formation should be the main focus of enquiry,[15] and that (implicitly) a centralised form of historical enquiry should take precedence after Great Britain was established in 1707.[16] It is perhaps in this area that the application of four nations history to the British state faces one of its biggest challenges, having to confront a deeply embedded view of English state development that restricts its attention to the emergence

and establishment of centralised institutions. The challenge for historians lies partly in the fact that there is an older structural problem deriving from the relationship between the study of the state and the professionalisation of History as a discipline in British academia at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The chronology of that professionalisation meant that it had a distinctive relationship to the study of state structures, which in turn reflected a particular interpretation of the 'English' state. This is important because at the time, the development of state institutions was considered the 'proper' subject matter of history. According to Michael Bentley, 'The British state congealed, in political terms, before the professionalisation of history began in Britain', whereas the processes often went hand-in-hand in other countries.[17] It might be said that no new national narrative was required for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland because central state institutions appeared to be largely unchanged following the parliamentary Unions of 1707 and 1801. Bentley argued that 'British historians assumed the existence, in a fit of absence of mind, of a British state as an extension of an English one; and it was this state that they tended to consider.'[18] The study of English state structures became the metanarrative of professional history in its formative years in the nineteenth century, and its echoes can still be heard in the interpretations of both professional and popular historians.[19] Establishing History as a discrete subject in the universities meant policing disciplinary boundaries; privileging the study of the state was part of that process.

Rather than being a product of the period of the state's formation and growth, therefore, a four nations approach to the history of Britain and Ireland has arisen as a response to the perceived decline or potential dissolution of that state. In other words, it is a response to what is seen as an existential structural crisis in the fabric of the state, and this has determined the terms of debate. For some commentators, it is only the apparently disintegrative tendencies in contemporary life that have exposed the 'hiddenness' of territorial relationships that have always been present but which have been concealed by the ideology of English constitutional development.[20] It is recognition of the 'hiddenness' and anomalies of the condition of being a state with (at least) four nations that make an historical interpretation based on plurality so significant.

The nature of the state and its relationship to territoriality is often neglected in accounts of its development, such as conceptions of Britain changing from a fiscal-military state in the mid-eighteenth century to a

laissez-faire state by the mid-nineteenth.[21] However, a comparison of the Scottish and Irish unions, and the way in which some political scientists now think of the United Kingdom as a state with different types of union, suggests that there is more to be said about the territorial dimensions of centralised state structures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[22] The idea of the UK as a unitary state in which territorial questions were considered irrelevant or of marginal importance once dominated political science, but a new formulation in terms of a 'union state' has taken its place. This view insists on the continuing salience of territorial politics in spite of the existence of centralised state institutions.[23] According to the political scientist James Mitchell, the UK is 'a centralised and pluri-national state'.[24] Mitchell has taken this way of conceiving of the state a step further with the suggestion that the term 'a state of unions' captures more effectively the dynamic nature of the different types of union that co-exist in the UK and the different relationships that have developed over the centuries in Wales, Scotland and Ireland.[25] The nature of what might be characterised as 'union politics' was not fixed but protean, a feature that can be counted as one of the key reasons for its continued strength, especially in Scotland but also in parts of Ireland.[26] The study of such phenomena indicates that an opposition between centralisation and 'disintegration' is not the only leitmotif of histories of the state and its institutions. Instead of seeing a break-up of Britain, Mitchell describes a 'Scottish Question' that is about how Scots have negotiated their position in the Union over two centuries. This is a deeply historicised analysis and one that points in the direction of alternative ways of understanding the development of the British state. Thinking about the UK as a union state, or a state of unions, questions both a linear narrative focussed on the growth of central institutions and one that portrays such institutions as unravelling over time.[27] Approaching the history of the British state from the perspective of more than one centre permits a consideration of those aspects of the British state and its activities that have had deeply territorial dimensions over a long period; against that background, the creation of devolved legislatures for Scotland and Wales at the end of the 1990s can be seen as a transitional phase in British state development rather than necessarily being a crisis arising from a process of disintegration. Centralisation and diversity have always been in tension, albeit to different degrees at specific times.

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If there is one particularly well-developed field of enquiry associated with an attempt to write a plural history of Britain and Ireland it is how historians have tackled the emergence of Britishness as an identity and the extent to which it has lain on top of or displaced older identities. This is an important area of analysis partly because of the multinational character of the state and partly because of the widely held view that Britishness is a civic identity, in contrast to the supposedly 'ethnic' identities of the sub-state peoples. In 1975 Pocock identified nationality as one of the central methodological problems of the new field. Much of the debate on this question has centred on Britishness and the study of events and ideologies that have been responsible for national integration; however, in practice this has been a 'three nations' history.

In her landmark book, *Britons*, Linda Colley charted the creation of Britishness between the Act of Union with Scotland (1707) and the accession of Queen Victoria (1837): during this period Britishness was 'forged'.[28] In one sense, her conclusion parallels that of E.P. Thompson's iconic study of the English working class, which (he argued) was 'made' by the 1830s.[29] While Colley focused primarily on the making of a truly British elite and Thompson analysed the working class, both approaches to this formative period can be characterised as portraying the United Kingdom, and especially England, as precociously modern. However, neither process—nation building nor class formation—can be considered finished by the early nineteenth century and in both cases continued to be negotiated (glaringly so in the case of the late 1830s and 1840s, when the combination of Chartism and the Irish Repeal movements challenged the state in fundamental ways).

Colley's emphasis on the centrality of a Protestant identity to official British patriotism has tended to obscure the denominational fractures that sometimes took an ethnic character or were formed along national lines. The bitter split in the Scottish kirk over church patronage and, by implication, ownership of the 'nation' in 1843 (the 'Disruption') was one example of the tensions within Protestantism, whereas from 1847 the struggle between nonconformists and Anglicans over who spoke for the Welsh people emphasised further divisions. Protestantism might be more usefully seen as a marbled identity, with internal fissures and fault lines that caused cracks in public unity.

Colley's analysis of the cohesive nature of Protestantism and an engagement with empire was complemented by an insistence on the shaping of Britishness in opposition to external enemies, and in particular around war with continental 'Others'.[30] To this extent, it can be seen as being complementary to the argument concerning the existence of a fiscal-military state to 1815, although it fits less easily with the picture of a laissez-faire state in the Victorian era. Colley insisted that the creation of Britishness did not entail the undermining of other national identities in Britain but rested on top of them. She contended that a blending of identities did not take place, and we should see the creation of Britishness in terms of the coming together of nations rather than their integration into a new identity.[31] The extent to which such interpretations are applicable outside periods of war is more debateable. Keith Robbins, for example, in his study of the nineteenth century has taken a different line by emphasising that integration involved to some extent the erosion of the identities of the constituent nations of Britain, as well as reducing regional differences.[32]

The terms of the debate about the emergence and cultivation of British identities relied to a large extent on whether elites or popular identities were prioritised. In some ways, these different views of Britishness simply reflect the extent to which a sense of national identity was mobilised in European society as a whole in the two periods under discussion by Colley and Robbins. In others, however, they reflect different approaches to historiography: the one allowing for a complementarity between Britishness and the subordinate nationalities of the United Kingdom as distinct entities, the other emphasising that Britishness involved the creation of a hybrid identity. These characterisations not only matter as historical questions but also because they have implications for discussions about Britain in the present. Considerations of national identity in the twenty-first century frequently turn around similar polarities. During the referendum campaign on Scottish independence in 2014 even the Scottish National Party (SNP) recognised the existence of a 'social union' between Scotland and the rest of the UK, consisting of 'connections of family, history, culture and language', a formulation that implies acceptance of the idea that there had been some blending between countries over time. This was based on an historical understanding of the nature of Union and the intertwined relationships and identities it had created.[33] Here is an example of how contemporary events have helped shape a research agenda and, in turn, of how the products of that research inform how we frame current political debate.

Much of the work about Britishness can be summarised as being about how the successful integration of Britain (rather than the United Kingdom) took place, and on what terms. Consequently, this debate revolves around an opposition between integration and diversity. One notable feature is the tendency to exclude Ireland from the discussion of Britishness.[34] This exclusion has tended to produce teleological histories that emphasise the increasing success of Britishness as an umbrella identity in the modern period, almost as an antidote to the perception of dissolution in the present. Such an interpretation can be sustained only as a result of the prior decision not to take full account of the problematic consequences of the Union with Ireland. It must be recognised that this decision to separate the histories of Ireland and Britain is one that is apparently welcomed by some (though by no means all) Irish historians; the fear is that the 'new' British history is 'an attempt to assert at the level of culture and history a structure that has begun to crumble in the real world of politics'.[35] Such tensions appear at the interface between the metanarrative of dissolution and the invention and development of Britishness as a national identity from the eighteenth century onwards.

The inclusion of Irish experiences in the historical discussion changes our view of the emergence and development of British identities in the modern period by introducing an internal 'Other' following the Act of Union of 1801. Because loyalty to Britain was a minority phenomenon in Ireland, Britishness inevitably became a site of contention there. Historians such as Christine Kinealy have used the Irish case to address the broader question of integration and diversity in the UK, arguing that 'Ireland became a catalyst for change'.[36] The idea that union with Ireland produced conditions that precipitated change in the UK—as opposed to being a 'problem' lying outside, or in opposition to mainstream British narratives—is an important one, both because it raises questions about a linear interpretation of British national development and because it encourages a centred approach to understanding how a centralised polity managed increasingly intractable territorial problems within its borders. How the Union was negotiated in the Irish case had consequences for the otherwise different cases of both Scotland and Wales by focussing discussion on a variety of grievances in those countries that might not have gained traction in British politics had the 'Irish Question' not prised open spaces in which they could be discussed and validated. For example, nineteenth-century campaigns for land reform in Scotland received a major fillip from Irish agitations and legislation that was designed to deal with distinctive Irish conditions. The success

of Church disestablishment in Wales (achieved in 1919) was inconceivable without Irish disestablishment in 1869, which set a precedent for breaking the link between Church and state for a specific territory within the UK. Such developments underline the significance of conceptualising the UK as a state of different unions with asymmetric relationships. This situation produced cultural and political dynamics that are difficult to accommodate in a model of core-periphery relationships that starts from a consideration of conditions at the centre and treats different experiences as a largely uniform 'fringe'.

The inclusion of Irish Unionism further complicates the idea of what British national identity means, and it presents the paradoxical picture of a form of Britishness that was both loyalist and destabilising to existing political conditions. An emphasis on the particularity of the historical conditions that produced such a situation is appropriate but in the same way that Irish nationalism had echoes in the politics of Scotland and Wales, Irish Unionism created alliances in Britain.[37] Furthermore, the connections between Unionist Ireland and Britain are underlined by Irish Protestant migrants to Britain who ensured that the Orange Order thrived in some British towns and cities. Its activities in these places illuminate patterns of religious sectarianism in towns and cities on both sides of the Irish Sea, thus collapsing the conventional divide between the histories of the two countries.[38] At some points in modern history, it can be argued, the Irish Sea area makes a more compelling cultural-geographical context than one based on nations, whether Irish or British. This is particularly true of the connections between Ulster and Scotland.[39]

This brings us back to the influence of ideas of dissolution in the present. One curious consequence of an agenda driven by a debate over national decline as a result of devolution to the Celtic countries is the way it has produced few sustained discussions about how England relates to a wider British context. If including Ireland in accounts of Britishness creates problems for unitary narratives of British history, then so does the history of England, for different reasons and in different ways, and it presents challenges for attempts to write a plural history of Britain and Ireland. This is the elephant in the four nations room. Any attempt to construct a four nations narrative immediately comes up against the demographic and political weight of England, thus raising the question of the extent to which England and Englishness can be separated from a broader British identity since the eighteenth century. Recognition of

the fact that 'Englishness was the core of Britishness, even if it was not synonymous with it'[40] has led to the accusation that four nations history is little more than the old English history dressed in new clothes. As the dominant constituent part of the UK, England is difficult to accommodate within this perspective precisely because in population terms it is so large in relation to Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and it became progressively so during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In that context, how does the idea of the British state as one composed of different unions—a state of unions—apply to the territory at its core—England?

An indication of the challenges can be seen in the multi-volume New Oxford History of England. Reviewing Boyd Hilton's monumental study of the period from 1783 to 1846, Linda Colley asked how a history of England could be 'isolated and reconstructed' from the complex transnational and, indeed, transcontinental connections that shaped British history.[41] Hilton achieved this by largely focusing on elites and on southern English elites in particular. Another contributor to the series, K.T. Hoppen, took a different approach by including chapters on Scotland, Wales and Ireland in his study of the mid-Victorian decades.[42] As these contrasting examples demonstrate, defining how England relates to the polity it has dominated is no easy task. One way ahead would be to recognise that the UK has been an asymmetric multinational state and that a four nations history of that state and its peoples must be asymmetrical too. Perhaps we need to return to Pocock's formulation for inspiration here: that British history should properly denote the 'plural history of a group of cultures situated along an Anglo-Celtic frontier and marked by an increasing English political and cultural domination'.[43]

It is along this line of division, and sometimes of assimilation, that the connection of Englishness to Britishness can be most profitably studied. Studies of English identity become particularly relevant in that context.[44] Krishan Kumar argues that 'English national identity cannot be found from within the consciousness of the English themselves', a conclusion that points to the need for both a consideration of the boundaries of the varieties of Englishness in Britain and Ireland and of how they have been constituted by international interactions.[45] At the other pole to international dimensions to English identity is the construction and expression of regional identities and their complex relationships to Englishness. This is particularly evident in the tenacious binary opposition in popular culture and political discussion between 'North' and 'South', two categories that are as much about cultures and values as they are about geography

and economy. The extent of regionalism and the relationship between regions and southern elites is an uneasy dimension to this history. In other words, English identity is a contested discourse that fractures along the lines of region as well as social class; in some interpretations, the two intertwine. A more textured analysis of English identity can (and in some cases has) reveal the patchwork nature of Englishness in which not only the category of 'England', but also homogenising formulations of 'North' and 'South', is questioned.

Pocock's use of the term 'frontier' points towards how borders have been both created and erased over time, and the complicated ways in which administrative, cultural and linguistic boundaries have shifted.[46] However, this approach has yet to be fully developed as a way of addressing the complexity of interactions across the islands in the modern period. Key themes such as maritime trade, migration, technological transfer and material history are potentially rich and fruitful areas of enquiry, as shown by research on Irish migration to Britain which points to the possibilities of this approach.[47] Changing linguistic boundaries are not only features of the Celtic countries, although they have particular relevance there.[48] A study of regions and their relationships to other regions and nations, not just in England, is one way of problematising the idea of the nation;[49] perhaps a difficulty in applying a systematic regional model to Britain has deterred historians from embracing the region as a building block of analysis, favouring the older administrative unit of the county instead.[50]

Considered in the round, the study of Britishness has worked in well-worn historiographical grooves and has been methodologically timid. An obvious gap in approaches to the history of the twentieth century is the use of oral history and memory studies.[51] Biography also promises to supply new insights into the complexity, instability and malleability of identities. One example demonstrates the potential benefits. Although not in the front rank of labour leaders, Huw T. Edwards (1892–1970), known in the 1950s as 'the unofficial Prime Minister of Wales', has attracted scholarly attention for the way his life embodied both British and Welsh identities. His activities as a trade union leader and prominent figure in public life after 1945 make him an ideal vehicle for teasing out the complex intersection of class, region, nation and gender, and how the expression of such identities varied from one social domain to another.[52] What social anthropologists have called 'thick description' is relevant here. The self-fashioning of individuals like Edwards points

towards a complexity that goes beyond an opposition between integration and dissolution,[53] and biographical studies demonstrate that hybridity and overlapping identities are not exceptional.[54] Similarly, an interrogation of identity from the perspective of migrants and ethnic minorities complicates the picture further by posing the question of how identity formation has taken place in relation to internal 'Others'.[55]

An example of the paradoxical consequences of identity formation can be shown by a brief examination of the autobiography of Pat O'Mara, who grew up in Liverpool as the son of Irish migrants before the First World War. His autobiography is an act of self-fashioning as an 'Irish slummy', an ethnic identity rooted in precarious social and economic conditions and a particular type of working-class community. He described the 'intense religious atmosphere' of his Catholic school, where children were 'rather patriotised and Britishised', until they returned home where they were 'sternly Irishised'. He outlined his complex identity as an adult as 'something like this: ferocious, sacrificial Irish-Catholic (die for Ireland's freedom) first; ferocious sacrificial patriotic Britisher second; and patient, wondering dreamer third'. He claimed that 'what is true of me is true certainly of most slummy Irish-Catholic "Britishers".'[56] How individuals such as this negotiate contradictions in the different layers of their identities is often obscured in general narratives.

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If Britishness and national identity have been key threads of four nations history, then the transnational and global dimensions to that history have also been important. This is one way of moving an introspective discussion of national identity onto a broader canvas.[57] How such an approach might be mapped onto four nations history presents a number of different, albeit overlapping, paths, from a concern with 'Greater Britain' and the Atlantic, to empire, globalisation and the so-called 'British world', and it poses the underlying question of 'dissolution' in different ways.[58] Such concerns speak to a post-imperial malaise and a search for international relevance in a changing world; after all, the area where the metanarrative of dissolution most clearly applies is that of the empire, if only because the British Empire is definitively over.

The formulation of a research agenda for the 'new' British history in the 1970s initially looked in a different direction, emphasising Atlantic contexts, but while this has been a particularly productive area of study for early modernists, it is more problematic to situate the history of

Britain (perhaps less so in the case of Ireland) *primarily* in that context for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[59] To be sure, Atlantic interactions, migration and exchange have been integral parts of the modern experience,[60] while the idea of a 'Black Atlantic' has also gained purchase.[61] Transatlantic perspectives on the racial violence that broke out in Britain after the First World War, for example, have provided new insights,[62] and the themes of Americanisation and Atlanticism in the twentieth century are important areas of enquiry. However, for much of the modern period it is the empire that furnishes the main transnational context for understanding interactions with a wider world. This loops back to the earlier discussion of the nature of the British state by posing the question of whether we should think of it as an empire state as well as a union state and whether the end of empire precipitated a crisis in that state.[63]

Assessing the impact of the end of empire depends in part on the prior question of the extent of popular imperialism in the preceding centuries. A discussion of how far the British and Irish peoples embraced empire, or were affected by it, has often been viewed through the lenses of social class and gender. By contrast, the doyen of imperial historians, John M. Mackenzie, has argued persuasively for a 'four nations' approach to the history of the empire as well,[64] thus promising to reassess familiar themes of commerce, conquest, Christianity and decolonisation by adding nation and ethnicity to class and gender. For example, the distinctive Scottish engagement with empire demonstrates a layering of Scottish, British and imperial identities that can be traced through to the 1960s.[65] The impact of the end of empire on Scottish society is a matter of some debate, with Bryan S. Glass insisting that the rise of Scottish nationalism from the 1960s can be explained—at least in part—by the decline of Scottish engagement with empire.[66] This is another intersection of perceived disintegration in the present being reflected in interpretations of the past. If the United Kingdom and empire were mutually constitutive, then the decline of both can be seen as reinforcing developments. Furthermore, if such a relationship is accepted, it is clear that this operated in different ways and to different degrees in the constituent parts of the country.

The Irish and Welsh encounters with empire present distinctive ways of thinking of the imperial experience, whether such encounters were military, commercial or religious. Missionary activity brings this dimension out particularly clearly. As has been argued above, the outer shell of a common

Protestant culture in Britain papered over a diverse and often fractious set of denominational cultures that sometimes mapped onto national differences, and those differences were refracted through missionary engagements with empire. What it meant to be a Welsh-speaking Calvinistic Methodist missionary in the hills of Khasia, in what is now Bangladesh, was different to being a minister of the Scottish kirk in central Africa or an English Anglican vicar in Australia; yet all would probably have considered themselves British to one extent or another, and all were implicated in the geopolitics of empire.[67] Similarly, various forms of Irish engagement with the imperial venture have navigated the tortuous boundary between being both a coloniser and the object of colonisation.[68]

Discussing empire in this way prompts a consideration of how British legacies appear from the former settler colonies, such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand.[69] Awareness of being part of a new phase of globalisation—possibly a defining feature of the current 'structure of feeling'—has led to the promotion of the 'British world' as a subset of global history. This is intended to move beyond a study of links with the settler colonies, or even the formal and informal empires, to embrace a truly global perspective. At a time when the UK's place in the world is uncertain, this field boldly asserts 'Britain's central role as the proximate cause of the modern world configuration', thus making British history 'central, vital and irreplaceable to modern history'.[70] It is concerned with questions of diaspora, culture and identity,[71] and it implicitly rejects a narrative of dissolution. This conception of a plural and diverse British world has been facilitated by new technologies such as digitisation that have made empirical research on a transnational scale a practical proposition; it signals a move away from a feeling of post-imperial malaise to a more self-confident narrative of British success in shaping modernity. However, such a shift is not without its own problems. Modernity is not a value-free or one-dimensional concept, and the extent to which Britain shaped the world or the world shaped it remains a live question.

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While the themes discussed here are not the only ones of significance in four nations history as it relates to the modern period, they provide an indication of the challenges faced by historians. This chapter has situated the emergence of the field in a particular 'structure of feeling' and has discussed the metanarrative of national dissolution that has underpinned it.

It has argued that we need to pay closer attention to how contemporary events have influenced historical interpretations, in particular the unravelling of the 'moment of British nationalism', the re-constituting of the state along new lines in the late twentieth century, and the impact of another phase of globalisation. Grappling with the post-imperial implications of Britain's place in the world has been a significant backdrop to four nations history. To this extent, it mirrors the debate about British economic decline since 1945.

In 1990 Keith Robbins—one of the pioneers of 'four nations' history—reflected that there seemed to be 'an increasing recognition that a subtler and more variegated modern "British" history is necessary', although he added that 'no one would claim that there is a simple or single framework for it'.[72] Raphael Samuel alluded to a similar point when he wrote: 'Being polycentric it [four nations history] has no natural heartland or consecutive narrative.'[73] An overriding feature of four nations history has been a determination to question narratives of a unitary British past and to ask what a national past might mean. An integral part of this questioning has been the rejection of Anglocentric narratives of British history that were established in academia when History was first professionalised as a discipline and, according to some historians, a rejection of national narratives altogether in favour of a multi centred, more complex approach.[74] Although 'four nations' history (by its very terminology) can be seen as a way of replacing one form of nation-centred analysis with another, its disruption of existing narratives also creates spaces for interrogating the nation as a framework for historical analysis.[75]

Using the methodologies of, for example, comparative history is an obvious way around the homogenising tendencies of national frameworks, providing one way of capturing the totality of the complex historical relationships in these islands, and of addressing the asymmetrical nature of those relationships and their transnational dimensions. Scottish-Irish comparisons of the social, economic and cultural history of the two countries, for example, have been successful in de-centring British history by creating an alternative socio-geographical axis.[76] Similarly, comparative analysis of the Irish and Scottish Unions also challenges established ways of seeing British history from the perspective of the centre, while at the same time engaging with the state and its institutions.[77] Including the apparently anomalous position of Wales in that discussion complicates the position further because of that country's

absorption into English state structures in the sixteenth century and the gradual process of establishing a new national institutional framework and identity from the second half of the nineteenth century. Research on areas such as the land question,[78] monarchy,[79] social policy,[80] women's suffrage,[81] and schooling[82] has demonstrated how starting with what is perceived as the margins of the United Kingdom can change our views of familiar topics, thereby unveiling the 'hiddenness' of a plural and asymmetric history in the process. This has the advantage of enabling systematic cross-fertilisation of research from different national historiographical traditions in Britain and Ireland, and beyond. How the four nations' past was racialised and gendered remains to be fully explored.

This chapter began with a brief exploration of how the unravelling of post-war solidarities from the 1960s was a distinctive 'structure of feeling' that embedded the metanarrative of dissolution alongside that of perceived economic decline. This often resulted in discussions that revolved mainly around the opposition of integration and diversity. It has been supplanted by a different, but comparable structure of feeling among historians who have been shaped by a neo-liberal consensus about the state and globalisation. The referendums on Scottish independence in 2014 and the UK's membership of the EU in 2016 suggest that a metanarrative of dissolution will not be superseded soon: conflict and division in the present will undoubtedly continue to spur historians to discover comparable phenomena and diversity in the past. However, this is a restricting framework for understanding the full breadth and complexity of interactions across Britain and Ireland in the past. By contrast, Tom Nairn—a writer who did more than most to embed a perception that the UK had entered a period of disintegration by popularising the term 'the break-up of Britain'—asked in 2001 whether devolution had fashioned a new union, rejecting 'the gloomy prognosis of "four nations" doomsterism'.[83] If loss and a sense of impending doom have been the guiding lights of four nations history, it might be time to return to Pocock's emphasis on a plural British and Irish past that recognises and explores hybridity without being constrained by an opposition between integration and dissolution. Shifting cultural and political boundaries need not be the same as disintegration.

Moving beyond a polarity dictated by this underlying narrative structure entails embracing a research agenda that recognises the territorial dimensions of the UK state as an essential, rather than an incidental, feature of its composition and history. This means not only exploring the

different national cultures of the state but also working into that account an awareness of how the concentration of institutions of government in the south-east corner of England has often obscured centre-periphery relations, inside England just as much as between England and the other nations. A way of doing this is to conceive of modern British and Irish history in terms of a series of asymmetric developments rooted in uneven and shifting relationships and identities over time. A framework of this kind does not lend itself to obvious popular narratives but it does promise a richer and more textured history that takes fuller account of what is a complex past.

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Practice

The Eighteenth-Century Fiscal-Military State: A Four Nations Perspective

Patrick Walsh

The eighteenth century saw significant steps in the evolution of Britain and Ireland from a multiple kingdom united by the person of the monarch to a composite state governed by a combination of shared and separate parliamentary, fiscal and military institutions. This chapter utilises a four nations approach to analyse comparatively how the increasingly powerful and pervasive structures of the fiscal-military state impacted on the human, financial and economic resources of these islands. It reconsiders the significance of the roles played by the constituent parts of the composite British and Irish polity in the emergence of a powerful imperial state, challenging existing narratives that minimise the Irish and Scottish contributions to these processes, without losing sight of the fact that it was and remained after the Anglo-Irish Union of 1801 a 'composite state of unequal parts'.[1]

The concept of the fiscal-military state as developed in the work of John Brewer, Patrick O'Brien and others has been used to explain how innovations in parliamentary taxation, debt financing and bureaucratic

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organisation were essential to Britain's emergence as a 'modern' military and trading power in the century after 1688.[2] Theirs was largely an English story with scant attention paid to developments in Ireland and Scotland. Indeed, O'Brien argued that for financial purposes Ireland and Scotland were virtually irrelevant because of the paltry amounts of tax revenue collected there.[3] These revenue figures do not, however, tell the whole story. Ireland and Scotland each made significant contributions to the expanding fiscal-military apparatus, whether in financial and infrastructural resources in the case of the former, or in human capital in the case of the latter. Furthermore, adopting a four nations perspective reveals how the institutions of the fiscal-military state were not simply translated to the different political, economic and social landscapes of Ireland and Scotland; instead, their specific national contexts determined how these institutions were adapted to maximise local resources and conditions. Emphasis is placed here on the processes of negotiation and cooperation between the centre and the local Irish and Scottish interests that shaped their distinctive and vital contributions to the fiscal-military state, revealing how it acted as an agent for bringing together disparate national identities while also showing their differences in practice. In doing so, this chapter will highlight how a greater understanding of the experiences of those on the periphery can help us to rethink a key concept in modern British historiography.

Integrating the different national experiences of the fiscal-military state across eighteenth-century Britain and Ireland points us towards one of the perennial puzzles faced by four nations historians: how to fit together the overlapping and not quite interlocking pieces of the English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh jigsaw. While earlier generations of historians were, on occasion, willing to 'substitute Britain for the England and then continue to ignore Irish and Scottish developments', the advent of the New British History provided a framework, albeit one heavily weighted towards the conditions present in the turbulent sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to address such issues.[4] Its methodologies found greatest favour among historians of Ireland and Scotland, with eighteenth-century English historians often less appreciative of the possibilities it offered to recast their own historiography within a more comparative and nuanced perspective.[5] Indeed, as recently as 2006 Stephen Conway felt the need to justify his inclusion of Ireland (and even Scotland and Wales) within the rubric of his study of the impact of mid-eighteenth-century Anglo-French wars on British society by first

observing that not to do so 'would lop off some of the canvas', and, secondly, that the 'attendant awkwardness is outweighed by the advantages gained'.[6]

This awkwardness is especially evident when considering the fiscal-military state. Some, but not all, state institutions operated across territorial boundaries while differences in legal, political and financial structures make comparisons more complicated. Most obviously, Scotland no longer had its own parliament after 1707, although its distinctive legal system continued uninterrupted post-Union. Ireland, meanwhile, retained its own dependent legislature (until the 1801 Act of Union) and its own exchequer, and therefore its own taxation arrangements, until 1817, when the Irish revenue administration was subsumed into the British bureaucracy.[7] Religious, linguistic and demographic differences further complicate our understanding of how the institutions of the state—often modelled on English practices—permeated Irish, Scottish and Welsh society. Wales offers a pertinent example here. The greater integration of Welsh administrative and political structures with those of England over a much longer period of time make it difficult to speak of a distinctly Welsh contribution to the fiscal-military state. This is made more challenging by the technical difficulties of extrapolating reliable Welsh historical statistics on trade, taxation and official expenditure, essential for any full understanding of the workings of the fiscal-military state.[8] In the absence of better data it is reasonable to assume that the penetration of the institutions of the fiscal-military state, notably a professionalised tax-gathering apparatus, into sparsely populated Welsh-speaking north Wales mirrored the slow progression of the poor law infrastructure and parish government structures during the same period.[9] In this regard the Welsh experience of the changes wrought by bureaucratic state development, like that of Cornwall and other peripheral English regions, had more in common with that of the more marginal regions of both Ireland and Scotland.[10]

As late as 1755 the Irish revenue commissioners were still describing Ireland's Atlantic coast and its hinterland—an area stretching from Kinsale in the south to Killybegs in the north—as 'unreduced and uncivilised' and its inhabitants as 'yet by no means amenable to the laws of this Country'. Furthermore, they reported that the revenue officials under their command could 'not exert themselves, but at the hazard of their lives'.[11] This and other descriptions of the western parts of Connacht and south Munster, together with the paltry revenues yielded by these

areas, suggest the spatial limits of the eighteenth-century fiscal-military state. Longstanding variations in settlement patterns and in the religious and social makeup of Irish society led to particular challenges in the governance of certain regions up until at least the late eighteenth century. These internal differences within Irish society emphasise the risks attendant in viewing Ireland or indeed any of the four nations as homogenous territories. In Scotland, there were clear and recognisable differences between the Lowlands and the Highlands, where the revenue bureaucracy was equally slow in penetrating local power structures.[12] The state's presence in these peripheral regions, at least in the form of tax collectors, was for much of the eighteenth century tokenistic rather than especially effective. The challenges posed by such geographical disparities across Britain and Ireland were recognised by contemporary policy makers, who sought to work alongside established local interests while maintaining the option of utilising more coercive military measures.

The possibility of identifying such similarities and points of comparisons, as well as the contrasting experiences of the institutions of the fiscal-military state across the two islands, is one benefit of a four nations approach. Revealing the significance and subtleties of the contributions of Irish, Scottish and Welsh developments to the processes of state formation also allows the English model to be re-interrogated and its inner complexities and tensions to be explored. Too often we tend not to differentiate between the comparison of Irish and English experiences and the relationship between London and the 'metropolitan provinces' of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, assuming a misleading level of homogeneity across national territories. The challenge of moving from comparing the experience on the periphery and the reasons why Ireland, Scotland or Wales do not fit the English model, to understanding what these experiences bring to an integrated four nations history, is therefore an especially difficult yet potentially rewarding one. To achieve it, this chapter analyses how the institutions and processes of the fiscal-military state mutated as they crossed national and regional borders.

* * * * *

These institutions had their own distinctive characteristics owing to the very different experiences of the so-called 'Glorious Revolution', which in turn shaped political, fiscal and military developments well into the eighteenth century. The Williamite military successes at the Boyne, Limerick and Aughrim ensured that post-war Ireland would be ruled by a wholly Protestant landed elite. Although increasingly safe in their

dominant position within Irish society, thanks to the penal legislation passed by the Dublin parliament, anxieties about their collective security determined the distinctive Irish contribution to the imperial fiscal-military state. This came, as Ivar McGrath has made clear, in the form of the maintenance from 1697 onwards of the largest component of the British standing army on the separate Irish establishment, funded wholly by taxes raised by the Irish parliament and collected by the Irish revenue bureaucracy.[13] The presence of these English, Scottish and Welsh troops in Ireland (Irishmen of all creeds were barred from service in the ranks, if not the officer corps) served to buttress the security of the local Protestant Ascendancy, while also providing a convenient solution to intractable English parliamentary debates over the desirability of a standing army.[14] Fear of foreign invasion and domestic unrest meant that Irish Protestants shared few of their English counterparts' qualms about standing armies, while the distribution of the army in small detachments across Ireland was deemed acceptable to metropolitan public opinion.

Irish political opinion meanwhile remained remarkably tolerant of the financial burden imposed upon them by this arrangement, and legislators and officials in Dublin developed a robust fiscal system capable of meeting the increased expenditure demands of the state. Parliament voted for and levied to increase taxes, and from 1716 instituted a separate Irish national debt. In turn, regular sessions of parliament and its increased role in raising taxes and managing the debt strengthened its own position within the constitutional framework of the British/Irish polity. The primary purpose of the emerging Irish fiscal state was to support the Irish contribution to the military apparatus of the British imperial state, with over 80% of expenditure devoted to military spending, whether on soldiers' pay, barracks or supplies.[15]

If Ireland by 1720 had well-established institutions and structures that can be described as characteristic of the fiscal-military state, the Scottish situation was quite different. Initially the 1690 constitutional settlement had enhanced the powers and confidence of the Scottish parliament. This in turn led to a Scottish version of the financial revolution, with the creation of a national bank and a proliferation of joint-stock companies. Unlike in Ireland, the focus of Scottish financial innovation was concentrated on corporate and mercantile initiatives rather than the creation of public credit.[16] The absence of a funded national debt did not mean that there were no public creditors in Scotland. Instead, small numbers of the Scottish landed and mercantile elites, particularly

after 1707, invested in the Bank of England, the British national debt and the South Sea and East India trading companies. They were joined by small but growing numbers of Irish men and women who recognised the potential rewards and greater security available for their capital among the variety of options presented by the expanding financial needs of the British state. Their presence in the metropolitan capital markets, even in relatively small numbers, and the positive and negative impact of their investments on the provinces, forces us to rethink London-centric accounts of the financial revolution.[17] At times of crisis, English contemporaries demonstrated some anxieties about the participation of what were seen as unsophisticated provincials from across the four nations in the capital's money markets. Satirical playing cards produced in the aftermath of the South Sea Bubble of 1720 included images mocking Irish, Scottish and Welsh investors alongside those attacking more traditional scapegoats for financial disaster, the Dutch, women and the Jews.[18]

If growing proportions of Scottish investment capital flowed southwards after the Act of Union, then so too did tax revenues. After 1707, taxes raised in Scotland were not, unlike in Ireland, allocated to a specific Scottish element of the fiscal-military state; they were in any case insufficient to make this possible, partly but not exclusively thanks to a deliberate policy to lighten the tax burden in exchange for lower political representation at Westminster.[19] Military expenditure on Scottish soil, such as the barracks and associated infrastructural developments erected after the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, was thus funded from the central exchequer. Despite these important fiscal differences historians still speak of an identifiable Scottish contribution to the fiscal-military state, one characterised not by money but by men.[20] The extension of the bureaucratic state to Scotland created a semblance of the fiscal-military state but it was arguably the exploitation of human rather than financial capital which shaped its experience of the eighteenth-century state.

Before further exploring this distinctive element of the Scottish contribution to the fiscal-military state it is necessary to examine in greater detail how the fiscal system developed in England was translated to Ireland and Scotland. Central to Brewer's conception of the English fiscal-military state was the emergence of an efficient revenue-raising bureaucracy capable of extracting increasing amounts of taxation to pay for expanding military expenditures. Consumption taxes levied by parliament, either as customs or excise duties, formed the bulk of government income as politicians sought to transfer the funding of the state away

from the finite resources of the propertied elite to the more elastic ones of international trade and domestic industry. Historians have charted how an efficient countrywide network of customs and excise officers implemented policies that led to English taxpayers acquiescing in processes that made them the heaviest taxed population in eighteenth-century Europe.[21]

Ireland and Scotland each developed their own fiscal institutions along the lines of the English model but with varying degrees of success. In Ireland, seven revenue commissioners operating out of Dublin's custom house oversaw an extensive bureaucracy that gradually permeated every corner of the island. Between 1690 and 1720, the numbers employed as customs or excise officers doubled from approximately 500 to just over 1,000. By 1760 they had doubled again, reflecting both increasing volumes of trade and consumption within the Irish economy and the utility of revenue posts as a form of political patronage.[22] The success of this investment in building a nationwide bureaucracy can be measured by the rising revenues flowing into the Irish exchequer. These revenues, while displaying impressive growth in absolute terms (see Fig. 4.1), never amounted to more than 10% of the British total.
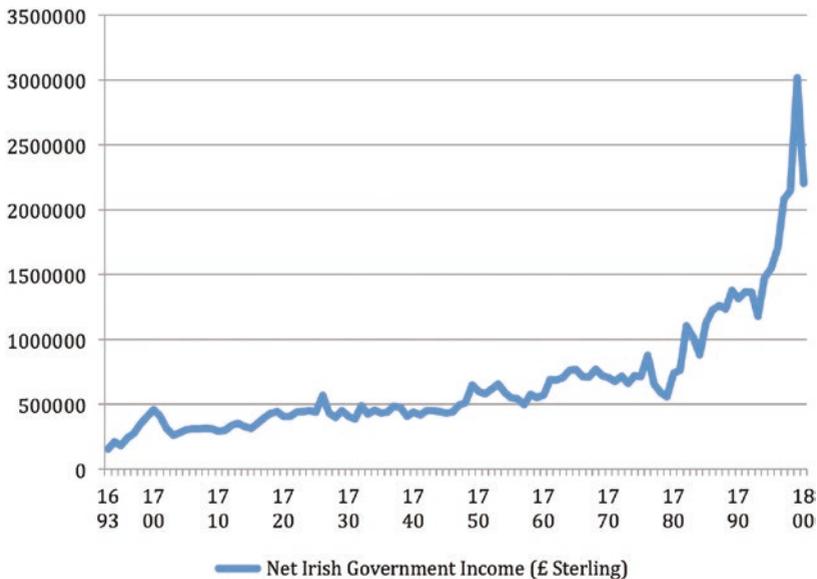

Fig. 4.1 Irish net revenues, 1693–1800[23]

Table 4.1 Gross British and Irish excise receipts, 1741, 1783

	1741 (£)	%	1783 (£)	%
England	2,592,000	89.2	6,486,000	91.9
Ireland	204,000	7.0	155,200	2.2
Scotland	54,000	1.9	276,000	3.9
Wales	54,000	1.9	138,000	2.0

I am grateful to Professor Julian Hoppit for the English, Scottish and Welsh figures, while the Irish figures are drawn from the Irish public accounts as cited in note 23

Table 4.2 Gross British and Irish customs receipts, 1710, 1750 and 1780

	1710 (£)	%	1750 (£)	%	1780 (£)	%
England	2,162,600	91.8	3,686,000	86.9	3,944,200	85.9
Ireland	157,000	6.7	440,000	10.4	491,700	10.7
Scotland	33,000	1.4	110,200	2.6	147,600	3.2
Wales	4400	0.2	3800	0.1	8200	0.2

Within Britain, meanwhile, English taxpayers contributed *c.* 95% of total government revenues. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 utilise fragmented data on customs and excise receipts from across the four nations to make tentative comparisons between the fiscal contributions of Welsh and Scottish taxpayers and their better-documented English and Irish counterparts at selected dates for which we have comparable evidence for all four nations. These figures reveal that the contributions made by Ireland and Scotland to the revenues of the fiscal-military state by the late eighteenth century, even if proportionally much smaller than the English totals, were not insignificant in monetary terms. Moreover, the Scottish figures for 1780 together with the general trend of Scottish customs receipts in this period add substance to arguments that the northern kingdom's reputation for tax avoidance and even evasion has been exaggerated both by contemporary observers and later historians.[24] It is noteworthy that Scottish excise revenues had passed out their Irish counterparts at this juncture, perhaps due to greater industrialisation, although the Irish figure for 1783 seems to be an outlier and reflects a period of severe if short-term economic crisis.

Table 4.3 Irish and Scottish taxation per capita compared

	1706 (£)	1753–5 (£)
Ireland	0.18	0.24
Scotland	0.10	0.17

Nevertheless, the Scots were still under-taxed compared with their southern counterparts. This becomes clear when the incidence of taxation as measured by revenue per capita is calculated. It was also much greater in England, with English (and Welsh) taxpayers paying ten times as much tax as their Scottish counterparts on the eve of the parliamentary union in 1706. Almost fifty years later English taxpayers paid on average three times more in excise duties alone than their northern neighbours paid in customs and excise taxes combined (£0.59 as opposed to £0.17).[25] The Irish population continued to carry a higher tax burden than their Scottish counterparts but as Table 4.3 shows, the gap between their respective per capita rates was narrowing.

None of these statistics tell the whole story. The per capita figures, while indicative of general trends, are somewhat misleading. Firstly, the greatest proportion of tax revenue in the pre-income tax era (before 1799 for Britain and before 1853 for Ireland) came from consumption taxes in the form of customs and excise duties, impositions that are notoriously difficult to calculate on a per-person basis. These duties were often imposed at the port of entry so that, for example, taxes on tea imported by the East India Company were levied in London or upon re-export in Dublin rather than across the country at the point of sale. Consumers did, however, pay these taxes in practice in the form of higher prices, but this does not show up in the official statistics, which just record the duties paid on arrival into port, making precise geographical comparisons difficult.[26] Moreover, the limited availability of comparable demographic and gross revenue statistics across what were separate taxable jurisdictions make sustained comparisons tricky. More importantly, the particular economic, social and political conditions pertaining in Ireland and Scotland meant that the transfer of the English fiscal model yielded different results. Customs receipts were much more important than those raised by the excise in both jurisdictions, at least in the first three quarters of the eighteenth century, leading to different emphases at the contemporary official level. When we add in property-based taxation, making comparisons becomes even harder. The land tax for instance, first introduced in England and Wales in the 1690s, was set at far lower

rates in Scotland after 1707, yielding only £42,000 per annum, or 2.4% of the British total. This followed a precedent previously established in Wales in recognition of the different demographic and economic conditions pertaining there.[27] Meanwhile in Ireland there was no land tax; instead the hearth tax continued long after its abolition in England. Together with another archaic property tax called quit rents, it yielded revenues of approximately £120,000 per annum throughout the eighteenth century.[28]

The translation of the English bureaucratic model to Ireland and Scotland was also complicated by political and social factors. The Scottish revenue board proved less effective than its Irish counterpart and was temporarily subsumed into the English administration between 1723 and 1742 in an attempt to arrest disappointing revenues.[29] Both the Dublin and Edinburgh revenue commissions were ostensibly answerable to the Treasury in London, but in reality they enjoyed relative freedom to manage and direct local affairs as they saw fit. This was especially true of the Irish commission, which came to be dominated by a series of local politicians, and in particular by three speakers of the Irish House of Commons, William Conolly, Henry Boyle and John Ponsonby from the 1710s to the 1760s.[30] English appointees to the board were rarely resident for long periods, and with the notable exception of Edward Thompson, who was tasked with introducing reforms to the Dublin administration in the 1730s, had limited impact.[31] Instead most external appointees to the Irish commission treated their posts as well remunerated sinecures. This aspect of the expanding structures of the fiscal-military state should not be neglected. The spread of institutions, whether in terms of the revenue bureaucracy or the burgeoning military administrations in Ireland and Scotland, offered opportunities not just for dedicated members of the elite to circulate between and across the nations but also, as Joanna Innes has noted in another context, to profit from newly created offices even while in absentia.[32] Such activities could of course be seen as 'rent seeking' and reflective of the structural inequalities that lay at the heart of the emerging composite centralising bureaucratic framework. On occasion, they could and did exacerbate tensions between the centre and the provinces, leading, for instance, to the implementation of an absentee tax on salaries drawn from Irish revenues by non-resident officials in the 1730s.[33]

The revenue boards employed greater numbers than any other civilian department of state, dwarfing those employed by the Treasury and the Navy Board, among others. Much emphasis was placed on finding

appropriately skilled staff for what were on occasion quite technically demanding posts.[34] This had to be balanced by the need to distribute government patronage, and in Ireland by the restrictions on appointing non-Anglicans to official posts—something that reduced the pool of potential recruits even further. The further one travelled from the metropolitan centre the greater the compromises that needed to be made when it came to official appointments. Local influence and an ability to resolutely represent the state's interests was sometimes more important than full technical competency.[35] This mattered because revenue officials in remote regions were often among the most visible agents of the state where it otherwise had very little physical or representational presence outside the deployment of military forces. The growing numbers of revenue officers operating in the countryside altered the ways in which communities interacted with the state.[36] The incursion of a more pervasive customs and excise infrastructure led to changes in customary practice, the erosion of traditional rights, the regulation of fairs, markets and religious festivals or 'patterns', all of which disrupted existing social relations and the established 'moral economy' that governed them.

In Ireland, the contested nature of the increased incidence of taxation is evidenced by the rising numbers of revenue-related riots and 'rescues' of seized goods and equipment reported in the commissioners' minute books. Assaults on and intimidation of customs and excise officers also rose in tandem with their increased activity.[37] Indeed, the more scrupulously an excise officer exercised their duties the more likely they were to be targeted, leading in some cases to gaugers coming to negotiated settlements with brewers and distillers within their district or 'walk'.[38] Such practices were frowned upon by the central administration in Dublin but reflected the reality of situations where revenue officers could find their houses—assuming they were able to rent one without intimidation—vandalised, their horses maimed or their families abused as a result of their duties.[39] The use of lethal force was rare, with officials more likely to be killed in accidents during the course of their duties rather than as a result of a violent attack.[40]

Violence or the threat thereof was nevertheless part and parcel of both resistance to and the enforcement of taxation across the four nations. The 1725 malt tax riots and the Porteous riots of 1736 are perhaps the best known Scottish examples, but they were part of a wider pattern.[41] In England, the activities of Sussex smugglers in the 1750s as well as the popular opposition to revenue measures, such as Robert Walpole's

proposals regarding the excise in the 1730s and the introduction of the cider tax in 1763, are well known. They have, however, tended to be treated as isolated examples, partly as a result of the historically divergent scholarly literatures on taxation and state formation on the one hand and popular protest and rioting on the other.[42] While there were obviously religious and political factors that were unique to Ireland, and to some degree Scotland, it is nevertheless worth wondering whether the English case might be profitably re-examined to construct a more layered study of the impact of the fiscal-military state than the current literature emphasises. Close analysis of the Irish source material, notably the voluminous records of the Irish revenue commissioners, suggests that this might again be a case where it is all too easy to fall into the trap of assuming Ireland (and indeed Scotland) as different. The Irish records are unique both because of their level of detail and because of their survival in greater quantities than their British counterparts (a very rare case where this is true).[43] The questions they raise about the incidence of tax resistance, its methods and its geographies could, however, be profitably explored in the future (the scale of the work involved means that it is outside the scope of this chapter) within a British context, allowing us to develop detailed comparisons that would serve to illuminate our understanding of state formation and its discontents across the four nations.

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Vital to any understanding of how the institutions of the fiscal-military state negotiated with and controlled communities across Britain and Ireland is an appreciation of the dual role of the army and navy as both beneficiaries and enforcers of the fiscal-military state.[44] This interdependent relationship between the fiscal and military arms of the state was greatest in Ireland. The 12,000 troops funded by the Irish parliament and stationed in over 100 barracks comprised the largest concentration of the British peacetime standing army. Their primary purpose was to function as a reservoir from which troops could be drawn for service elsewhere across the Empire, including within the four nations as the transfer of Irish-based regiments to Scotland in both 1715 and 1745 to quell the Jacobite rebellions demonstrates.[45] Their secondary function was to act as a defensive bulwark for the Protestant interest in Ireland, protecting the ruling ascendancy from domestic and foreign threats. Finally, they performed an important internal policing role, in particular by providing armed support for customs and excise officers to better exercise their duties. The regular calls for, and use of, military assistance

demonstrate that the Irish army was more than just a defence force or 'an army for empire'.[46]

Over time the army were used with increasing regularity by the revenue officers. Small detachments, often comprising as few as one officer and twelve men, were employed to effect seizures, break up illegal stills, and police market towns during busy periods. Indeed by mid-century, revenue officials were expected to bring military support when making seizures and were even reprimanded by their superiors when they did follow this protocol.[47] While soldiers were often marched from local barracks at the request of revenue officials for such duties, these deployments could also be extended, with soldiers housed in temporary billets such as local hostelries or private houses, especially where they were needed some distance from existing barracks and to avoid 'being obliged to travel a whole Winter's night'.[48] These billets could become more permanent with new barracks built specifically to support the activities of the revenue officers, such as those built at Kilrush County Clare and in the Mourne mountains in County Down, where the barracks replaced a temporary billet in a local clergyman's house.[49] As the demands for military support grew, strong preferences were given for the stationing of cavalry troops who could both cover greater amounts of ground much more efficiently in pursuit of smugglers and disrupt the activities of the 'mob'.[50] Such infrastructural developments altered the military geography of Ireland and contributed to the emergence of a network of small residential barracks, designed not just to house soldiers but also to support the civil power. The dispersal of troops into small purpose-built structures, while still embedding them in the local community, was an Irish innovation that would be copied across the archipelago.[51] A programme of barrack building was enacted in Scotland following the two Jacobite rebellions, although those built at Rutheven after 1715 and at Fort George after 1745 were much more defensive in character than their Irish counterparts, whose primary function remained residential. It was not until the 1780s and 1790s that an English barrack-building programme began, finally removing the responsibility for housing the army from the residents of England's towns.[52]

This barrack network had a multilayered effect on Irish society that has had repercussions for how we understand the impact of the fiscal-military state on eighteenth-century society more widely. It increased the representational role of the army as evidence of a growing state apparatus, strengthened by their participation in toasts, parades, firing of the

guns and church services in civic rituals celebrating local events as well as royal birthdays and foreign military and naval victories. Such military pageantry has been seen as important to fostering ideas of loyalty and national identity in Britain and it is possible to observe the same phenomenon on a much smaller scale in Ireland, at least in so-called 'garrison towns' like Derry and Kinsale.[53] More negatively, as Andrew MacKillop has astutely observed in a Scottish context, the arrival of even a small detachment of troops—and remember some Irish barracks housed as few as twelve men and an officer—served to demonstrate the intrusive powers of the state.[54] The disruptive capacities of soldiers stationed in both isolated rural areas and in well-populated urban areas is also well attested, with numerous examples of soldiers reneging on debts contracted in their host communities, as well as engaging in drinking, fighting and other forms of anti-social behaviour contrary to their official instructions.[55] All of this indicates that contemporary suspicions of soldiers, often associated with English anti-standing army ideology, were not just based on their coercive powers. These were important too, and the frequent appearance of soldiers in support of the civil power in the face of challenges to the state's authority from smugglers, riotous crowds and tax defaulters complicates our understanding of the consensual nature of eighteenth-century taxation.

The development of a countrywide barrack network brought significant economic benefits. The influx of soldiers into a town increased the circulation of cash as they spent their wages, in turn boosting local markets and commercial interests.[56] Furthermore, the building of new barrack buildings necessitated the acquisition, either by purchase or more commonly in the form of a long lease, of suitable sites. Awareness of the economic benefits meant that competition for barracks contracts was intense among the Irish gentry from the 1690s onwards and by the 1710s fed into decisions over the distribution of political patronage, with the announcement of new barracks contracts often delayed until the end of parliamentary sessions to ensure good political behaviour.[57] Politics helped to dictate the location of certain barracks, but it is noticeable that some of these installations were rarely used, especially in Ulster as military priorities shifted elsewhere, and particularly as the army took on a greater role assisting the civil power in its tax raising and law enforcement capacities.[58] The 'casting aside' of a barracks in such a manner could mean that landlords failed to accrue the profits they expected from their initial investment, particularly if they contributed to the building

costs. For instance, Michael Ward, a leading Irish judge, laid out significant sums on a barracks at Killough, County Down in anticipation of future rental income. It was rarely used, suggesting political connections remained subservient to military strategy; in this case the gradual consolidation of troops outside the more peaceable counties of east Ulster.[59]

Despite occasional financial losses, the building of a barracks and the prospect of guaranteed rental income from the government served to bind even closer the interests of the Irish gentry to the state. Not all barracks occupied new premises; sometimes existing buildings were repurposed to meet new demands, for instance an old manor house at Hamilton's Bawn, County Armagh becoming a cavalry barracks in the 1730s, while an 'old barracks' became the new County Donegal county hospital in 1785.[60] Indeed the leasing out of infrastructure, whether in the form of courthouses, hospitals, custom houses or barracks, together with the provision of food, fuel and fodder, created a distinctive Irish variety of the 'contractor state', a concept developed in the literature on England to explain how public and private interests coalesced to supply the complex needs of the fiscal-military state.[61] The provisioning and building of the Irish barracks by local contractors in partnership with locally appointed barrack masters mirrored the structures established in Scotland after 1745 to support the new military installations erected there.[62] In Ireland local entrepreneurs did not confine themselves to being suppliers of candles, hay, firewood and uniforms; they also developed specialisations in provisioning regiments destined for service across the Empire. The brewers, bakers, dairymen and graziers of south Munster became integral to the supply chain of both the army and the navy in this period.[63] Indeed, based on their increasingly significant role in supplying ever more victuals and 'dry provisions' to feed the expanding forces of the fiscal-military state, the contribution of the mercantile interests of Cork and Kinsale could be plausibly reinterpreted as providing an essential service to the British state.[64] Like the expanding utilisation of Scottish military labour discussed below, their activities freed up English land and labour for more productive uses in an advancing industrial economy.

The building and regular occupation of a barracks also had social and even demographic consequences. Toby Barnard has commented on the impact that military officers had on local gentry society, whether as prospective husbands or merely as interesting and novel dinner companions.[65] The presence of English, Welsh and Scottish officers in Ireland

provides another illustration of the ways in which elite servants of the fiscal-military state circulated around the four nations, bringing with them different practices and experiences. Furthermore, these military officers' subordinates, the ordinary English, Welsh and Scottish soldiers stationed in Ireland, also enjoyed extensive and complex interactions within the communities in which they were embedded. Their close relations with local brewers and alehouse keepers meant that soldiers were often unwilling to assist local excise officials in their clamping down on illegal brewers and distillers, adding to existing administrative tensions between the fiscal and military arms of the state.[66] These soldiers didn't just drink with their Irish neighbours, they also formed lasting bonds through marriage. This is clear from the marriage registers of Irish parish churches, and from the establishment of charity schools to educate the offspring, both legitimate and illegitimate, of soldiers in 1760s Dublin.[67] It also appears that the possibility of finding an Irish wife could be used as a recruiting tool. A 1770s Scottish recruiting poster for the 42nd Foot, the Highland regiment, better known as the Black Watch, described the attractions of the local women in the vicinity of the regiment's Irish base at Ballyclare, County Antrim in the following manner:

> *'S an bheil gach gne Dhaibhish (shaimh) & sholais air bith, Gar am faigh sibh Failte chroidheil o bhar Co-dhuchasaich fein * muirn o na hIanaghaibh Eirinneach'*

> (In which there is every kind of plenty (peace) and good cheer, where you will get a hearty welcome from our fellow countrymen and the affection of the Irish Lassies).

Interestingly this endorsement of local feminine charms was written in Scots Gaelic, providing a tantalising hint of another important form of four nations cultural mixing—the interaction of different linguistic communities—that was unintentionally sponsored by the military.[68]

This intriguing poster highlights another key element of the fiscal-military state that can only be understood within a four nations perspective, namely military recruitment. Innovations in finance, taxation and barracks were only necessary because of the desire to raise ever-increasing numbers of soldiers and sailors to meet the demands of modern warfare. Between 1689 and 1784 the number of sailors voted by the Westminster parliament in wartime doubled, from 40,000 to 80,000, increasing to

approximately 120,000 during the Napoleonic Wars.[69] The size of the British army also increased after 1660, when the number of soldiers in peacetime rose from 8,000 in all three kingdoms to about 26,000 after 1714, and to at least 57,000 by the 1760s. The number of civilians mobilised as militia, yeomanry, fencibles and volunteers likewise grew until, by 1783, at least one-sixth of all adult men across the four nations were under arms of some sort.[70]

These extraordinary numbers meant that the sinews of state power had to extend deep in the form of recruitment parties and, more coercively, press gangs. The latter did not always discriminate on religious or national grounds and prohibited groups often found their way into the navy. Indeed as early as 1704 Edward Southwell, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, was recommending the enlistment of Irish Catholics—'strong lusty fellows' as he described them—into the navy despite an ambiguous legal situation.[71] Official connivance at such a 'don't ask don't tell policy', as one historian of the Marines has described it, continued, especially during wartime and long before the controversial lifting of the prohibition on Irish Catholics enlisting in the army and navy during the American War of Independence.[72] This decision, while yielding greater access to largely untapped Irish manpower reserves, was bitterly opposed for political and sectarian reasons in Scotland and led to the most violent riots ever seen in London, the infamous Gordon riots.[73] If the active enlistment of Irishmen posed a threat to either the existing confessional equilibrium or to the Protestant character of the Forces, the recruitment of Scots proved simpler. There were no Irish-style legal barriers. Instead recruitment was encouraged, especially after the final military defeat of the Jacobites in 1746. Over the next three decades, between 18,000 and 20,000 men, or approximately one-eighth of the eligible Highland population, enlisted in the army.[74] This phenomenon has led historians to make convincing arguments that first the recruitment and then the military service of these regiments served to bind both nobility and the ordinary populations of these outlying districts of Scotland to the British state.[75] Kinship and clan networks formerly hostile to the Hanoverian state were integrated into a military economy that benefited both the centre and the periphery. This economic dimension was crucial, with enlistment bounties, soldier's wages, officer's salaries, and pensions providing a substantial, if difficult to quantify, monetary injection into Scottish society, much as the presence of military barracks did in Ireland. These benefits did not accrue to Wales, where, as Linda Colley has

described, recruitment to the army was proportionately much lower than in Scotland. This she attributes to the lack of a native military tradition and the failure of the eighteenth-century state to penetrate the monoglot Welsh-speaking north and centre in any meaningful way.[76]

Scottish military service did not just alter the society and economy of the Highlands, it played a fundamental role in the development of the imperial fiscal-military state. Indeed MacKillop has argued, in a direct challenge to my 2013 designation of Scotland as a 'subsidy state' on the basis of its limited contribution to the imperial exchequer, that the Scottish contribution of human capital, in the form of fighting men, should be seen as comparable to the revenues raised for the fiscal-military state in Ireland.[77] He makes a compelling case and this chapter, while not ignoring its different fiscal structures, has sought to depict Scotland's contribution to the fiscal-military state in these terms. It is important, however, to acknowledge that the costs of raising and maintaining the Scottish regiments were significant, and were made even more so by the negotiated conditions under which local contractors supplied their own and their tenants' labour and by the expensive uniforms which proclaimed their distinctive identity.[78] This expenditure was borne not by Scottish taxpayers but by revenues generated elsewhere in Britain and Ireland, reflecting the manner in which the different resources, whether economic, demographic or political, of the four nations were harnessed to create the imperial fiscal-military state.

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The integration of these resources to serve the military and foreign policy objectives of successive eighteenth-century governments was the product of a complex series of processes and negotiations across the four nations. Together they contributed to the emergence of a more powerful composite state. That this was not a composite polity of equals was clear to the eighteenth-century Scots, Irish and Welsh alike, something that was reinforced by the Anglo-Irish parliamentary union of 1801.[79] Indeed the comparative approach taken here has emphasised how particular strains of the fiscal-military state model were developed in each of the different constituent nations within the wider British and Irish polity. These models, whether based on the provision of money, men or agricultural produce, were shaped by, and in turn shaped, the economic and even social structures of each component part. Scotland's comparatively low tax revenues reflected not just the limits of the state's institutions in extending their reach into peripheral regions, a pattern after all repeated

in Wales, parts of Ireland and the remoter areas of England, but also the lower levels of economic growth witnessed there as compared with the more prosperous industrialised regions of northern and south-eastern England.

These of course can be disaggregated even further and it is not surprising that the economically disadvantaged Highlands became the dominant source of military manpower in Scotland. Similarly, the limited nature of Irish economic growth, evident in the poor performance of Irish excise revenues in comparison to customs receipts (an inversion of the English pattern), led to the emergence in the western kingdom of a comparative advantage in agriculture supported both by low wages and by local parliamentary support.[80] This was incentivised both by the growing importance of the English export market and by the growth of the provisioning and victualing trade. These developments in turn allowed English land and labour to be more productively deployed elsewhere in the economy. The impact of the fiscal-military state in stimulating Irish economic development was not confined, as we have seen, to demands for agricultural products. The maintenance of the greater part of the peacetime standing army in purpose-built Irish barracks led to expanding networks of credit, contractors and markets. The successful establishment of increasingly pervasive tax-gathering bureaucracy which allowed the Irish parliament to guarantee their financial contribution to the wider imperial project, as the first section of this chapter showed, cannot be ignored either when considering the finances and economics of the fiscal-military state.

Political considerations also played a critical role in determining the different varieties of the fiscal-military state visible across Britain and Ireland. The funding of the military establishment in Ireland partly owed its origins to the English political nation's aversion to standing armies. Meanwhile, the Irish political elite's willingness to vote taxes to maintain the army suggests not only the limits of libertarian ideology when faced with a more immediate threat—in this case potential violence and disorder from the Catholic majority population—but also their understanding of the power that demands for increased taxation would give them over their own legislature. This manipulation of the state's interests to increase the power of local elites was also evident in the Highland leadership's assimilation into positions of local and national military command. The lack of a strong local political elite or a position of real bargaining power between them and the centre may help explain the limited

impact of the fiscal-military state on Wales until the nineteenth century. Arguably it was only with the increased importance of coal to military power that such bargaining strength emerged, though the establishment of a Royal Dockyard at Pembroke in 1812 has also been seen as a significant development.[81]

This chapter has employed a four nations framework to develop a comparative perspective on the fiscal-military state and its domestic impact on Britain and Ireland. Central here has been a concern not just to illuminate the different 'national' contributions, in terms of revenue and/or resources, but also to emphasise the ways in which such a methodological approach can be used to view regional and local within nations within a wider framework. The similarities and differences in tax collection practices and the common patterns of resistance to them across the periphery of the British and Irish state have been stressed. Likewise, the changing role of the military as both beneficiary and enforcer of the fiscal-military state has been identified in both Scotland and Ireland, with common threads emerging in terms of barrack building and engagement with local contractors. Finally, this chapter has shown how elites as well as those lower down the social scale, particularly soldiers, sailors and their dependants, circulated within the four nations in the eighteenth century, shaping and being shaped by different linguistic, cultural, social and economic influences. Together they, and not the composite constitutional, legal, and revenue institutions, made up the four nations in the eighteenth century.

Notes

1. J. Hoppit (2011) 'The Nation, the State and the First Industrial Revolution', *Journal of British Studies*, 50, 329. There are important exceptions to this trend without which this chapter could not have been written. See especially A. MacKillop (2003) 'The Political Culture of the Scottish Highlands from Culloden to Waterloo', *The Historical Journal* (*HJ*), 46, 511–32; C.I. McGrath (2012) *Ireland and Empire, 1692–1770* (London); and C.I. McGrath and C. Fauske (eds.) (2008) *Money, Power and Print: Interdisciplinary Studies on the Financial Revolution in the British Isles* (Newark, DE).
2. J. Brewer (1988) *The Sinews of Power, War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (London); P.G.M. Dickson (1967) *The Financial Revolution in England: A Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688–1756* (London); and P. O'Brien (1988) 'The Political Economy of British

Taxation, 1660–1815', *Economic History Review*, 41, 1–32; P. O'Brien and P.A. Hunt (1993) 'The Rise of a Fiscal State in England, 1485–1815', *Historical Research*, 66, 129–76.

3. O'Brien 'Political Economy', 3.

4. Peter Dickson's rather prescient 1967 critique of his contemporaries is found in *The Financial Revolution*, xvii.

5. J. Innes (1999) 'What Would a Four Nations History of Social Policy Entail?' in S.J. Connolly (ed.) *Kingdoms United? Great Britain and Ireland since 1500: Integration and Diversity* (Dublin), pp. 198–9; A. Mackillop (2016) 'Subsidy State or Drawback Province? Eighteenth-Century Scotland and the British Fiscal-Military Complex' in A. Graham and P. Walsh (eds.) *The British Fiscal-Military States, 1660–c. 1783* (London), pp. 180–1.

6. S. Conway (2006) *War, State and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Oxford), p. 4. See also S. Conway (2000) *The British Isles and the American War of Independence* (Oxford).

7. On the Anglo-Irish Union see the chapter by James Stafford in this volume. The fiscal dimension is explored in T. McCavery (2000) 'Politics, Public Finance and the British-Irish Act of Union', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 10, 353–75.

8. H.V. Bowen (2011) 'Introduction' in H.V. Bowen (ed.) *Wales and The British Overseas Empire: Interactions and Influences, 1650–1830* (Manchester), p. 3.

9. Innes, 'Four Nations Social Policy', p. 184.

10. C. Evans (2011) 'Wales, Munster and the English Southwest: Contrasting Articulations within the British Atlantic World' in Bowen (ed.) *Wales and the British Overseas Empire*, pp. 40–61; S. Timmons (2006) 'The Customs Service in the West Country, 1671–92', *Mariner's Mirror*, 92, 148–67.

11. The National Archives, Kew (TNA), T1/361/21, Report of the commissioners of revenue in Ireland on running of wool, 29 January 1755.

12. P. Robinson-Rossner (2008) *Scottish Trade in the Wake of the Union, 1700–1760: The Rise of the Warehouse Economy* (Stuttgart), p. 39.

13. McGrath, *Ireland and Empire*, pp. 143–66.

14. On these debates see L.G. Schwoerer (1974) *'No Standing Army': Anti-Army Ideology in Seventeenth Century England* (Baltimore, MD).

15. McGrath, *Ireland and Empire*, pp. 169–70, 181–6.

16. P. Walsh (2012) 'The Bubble on the Periphery: Scotland and the South Sea Bubble', *Scottish Historical Review*, 91, 111–13.

17. P. Walsh (2014) *The South Sea Bubble and Ireland: Money, Banking and Investment, 1690–1721* (Woodbridge), pp. 59–64, 79–83.

18. H.J. Paul (2010) *The South Sea Bubble: An Economic History of its Origins and Consequences* (London), pp. 93–4.

19. MacKillop 'Subsidy State or Drawback Province', p. 189. Robinson-Rossner, *Scottish Trade in the Wake of the Union*, p. 40.

20. MacKillop, 'Political Culture of the Scottish Highlands'. M. Dziennik (2016) 'The Fiscal-Military State and Labour in the British Atlantic World' in Graham and Walsh (eds.) *British Fiscal-Military States*, pp. 159–78.

21. Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, pp. 199–218.

22. P. Walsh (2013) 'The Irish Fiscal State, 1690–1769', *HJ*, 56, 642.

23. This graph is based on the figures found in *Accounts of net public income and expenditure of Great Britain and Ireland 1688–1800*, (British Parliamentary papers, xxxv (1868–69), pp. 227–53). All figures in this chapter are quoted in pounds sterling rather than Irish pounds.

24. Robinson-Rossner, *Warehouse Economy*, pp. 38–40, 308.

25. Walsh, 'Irish Fiscal State', 638. On the Scottish figures see Julian Hoppit's blog at https://fournationshistory.wordpress.com/2016/06/13/a-taxing-union-1707-1800/ (accessed 12 September 2016). See J. Hoppit (2017) Britain's Political Economies: Parliament and Economic Life, 1660–1800 (Cambridge), pp. 277–305.

26. See Hoppit, 'a taxing union' at https://fournationshistory.wordpress.com/2016/06/13/a-taxing-union-1707-1800/ (accessed 12 September 2016).

27. MacKillop, 'Subsidy State or Drawback Province?', 188. For Wales see P.D.G. Thomas (1976) 'Society, Government and Politics' in D. Moore (ed.) *Wales in the Eighteenth Century* (Swansea), p. 22.

28. Walsh, 'Irish Fiscal State', 640.

29. A.L. Murray (1974) 'Administration and the Law' in T.I. Rae (ed.) *The Union of 1707: Its Impact on Scotland* (Edinburgh), pp. 33–4.

30. T. Bartlett (1979) 'Viscount Townshend and the Irish Revenue Board, 1767–73' in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C*, 79, 156.

31. National Archives of Ireland (NAI), Rev 1/1, 'Edward Thompson's report into the state of the revenue, 1733', n.p.

32. Innes, 'Four Nations Social Policy', pp. 184, 188–90.

33. The classic contemporary statement on this issue is Thomas Prior (1729) *List of the Absentees* (Dublin).

34. Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, pp. 79–85.

35. D. Fleming (2010) *Politics and Provincial People: Sligo and Limerick 1691–1761* (Manchester), pp. 178–81; T.D. Watt (2014) 'Order and Disorder in Ireland, 1692–1735' (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University Belfast), p. 139.

36. Walsh, 'Irish Fiscal State', 643.

37. P. Walsh (2016) 'Enforcing the Fiscal State: The Army, the Revenue and the Irish Experience of the Fiscal-Military State, 1690–1769' in Graham and Walsh (eds.) *British Fiscal-Military States*, p. 148.

38. NAI, Rev 1/1, 'Edward Thompson's Report'.

39. TNA, CUST 1/43, f. 55, 1/64, f. 130 & 1/82, 151, Minutes of the Irish Revenue Board (hereafter Rev. Commrs Min. Bk.), 19 April 1753, 6 June 1760 and 20 July 1764.

40. T.D. Watt (2015) 'Taxation Riots and the Culture of Popular Protest in Ireland, 1714–1740', *English Historical Review*, 130, 1418–48.

41. C.A. Whatley (2000) *Scottish Society 1707–1830: Beyond Jacobitism, Towards Industrialisation* (Manchester), pp. 9, 144, 171–72, 194–99.

42. W.J. Ashworth (2003) *Customs and Excise: Trade, Production, and Consumption in England, 1640–1845* (Oxford), pp. 69–84, 320; A. Randall (2006) *Riotous Assemblies: Popular Protests in Hanoverian England* (Oxford), pp. 53–66; and N. Rogers (2012) *Mayhem: Post-War Crime and Violence in Britain, 1748–53* (Yale, CT), pp. 119–30. See also Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, pp. 52–3.

43. TNA, CUST 1/3-110, Rev. Commrs Min Bks, 1696–1769; TNA, CUST, 1/3–110.

44. I have written about the navy in this context in P. Walsh (2016) 'Ireland and the Royal Navy in the Eighteenth Century' in J. McAleer and C. Petley (eds.) *The Royal Navy and the British Atlantic World, c. 1750–1820* (Basingstoke), pp. 51–76.

45. C.I. McGrath (2014) 'Securing the Hanoverian Succession in Ireland: Jacobites, Money and Men' in C. Holmes and J. Kelly (eds.) *Parliament, Politics and Policy in Britain and Ireland, c. 1680–1832: Essays in Honour of D.W. Hayton* (Edinburgh), pp. 140–59.

46. McGrath, *Ireland and Empire*, pp. 143–66.

47. TNA, CUST 1/46/103, Rev. Commrs Min. Bk, 3 April 1749.

48. TNA, CUST 1/79/150, Rev. Commrs Min. Bk., 9 January 1764.

49. TNA, CUST 1/64 f. 56, 65/80, Rev. Commrs Min. Bk., 15 April, 27 September, 1760; TNA, CUST 1/108/15, Rev. Commrs Min. Bk., 5 August 1769.

50. TNA, CUST 1/80/50, Rev. Commrs Min. Bk., 31 January 1764; TNA, CUST 1/81/119, Rev. Commrs Min. Bk., 5 May 1764; and TNA, CUST 1/82/60, Rev. Commrs Min. Bk., 20 June 1764.

51. McGrath, *Ireland and Empire*, pp. 69–106; A project based at University College Dublin led by Dr McGrath and myself involves mapping all known barrack sites, see https://barracks18c.ucd.ie/.

52. J.A. Houlding (1981) *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715–1795* (Oxford), p. 39; and J. Douet (1998) *British Barracks 1600–1914: Their Architecture and Role in Society* (London), pp. 18–23.

53. R. Caulfield (1879) (ed.) *The Council Book of the Corporation of Kinsale from 1652 to 1800* (Guildford), pp. 208, 210, 223 & 235; British Library (BL), Add. MS 6117, f. 71, Bishop William Nicholson to Archbishop William Wake, 6 October 1718; H. Smith (2011) 'The Army, Provincial Urban Communities and Loyalist Cultures in England, *c.* 1714–50', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 15, 139–58.

54. A. MacKillop (2011) 'Confrontation, Negotiation and Accommodation: Garrisoning the Burghs in Post-Union Scotland', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 15, 159–83, esp. 164–6 and 182–3.

55. See, for example, the cases detailed in J. Kelly and M.A. Lyons (2014) (eds.) *The Proclamations of Ireland, 1660–1820* (5 vols, Dublin), II p. 514, III, 75, 106, 110 & 131; and Fleming, *Politics and Provincial People*, pp. 212–15.

56. D. Dickson (2000) *New Foundations: Ireland 1660–1800* (Dublin), p. 83.

57. C.I. McGrath (2016) 'The Grand Question debated': Jonathan Swift, Army Barracks, Parliament and Money', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 31, 128.

58. For the shifting geography of Irish barracks see R. Wyse Jackson (1949–52) 'Queen Anne's Irish Army Establishment in1704' in *Irish Sword*, I, 133–5; TNA, War Office papers 78/419/16 'Moll, 'A new map of Ireland', 1714; BL, Tyrawley papers, Add. MS 23,636, f. 17; 'A List of Barracks, 4 March 1725', Anon. *Quarters of the Army in Ireland* (Dublin 1752); and TNA, MPF 1/315, 'Thomas Jeffrey's Map of Ireland in 1759'.

59. Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), Castle Ward Papers D2092/1–3, ff., 65, 90, 92, 102, William Montgomery to Michael Ward, 23 May 1726, same to same, 8 January 1728; Francis Lascelles to Ward, *c.* 1738; and Bernard Brett to Ward, 2 March 1728.

60. An example of the former is the barracks at Hamilton's Bawn, County Armagh which incorporated the old Hamilton manor house in its design while the Donegal country hospital re-used an 'old barracks' (PRONI, D623/A/46/10, James Hamilton to Abercorn, 17 May 1785).

61. For the development of new custom houses as private initiatives see Fleming, *Politics and Provincial People*, pp. 188–9. On the contractor state see R. Knight and M. Wilcox (2010) *Sustaining the Fleet 1793–1815: War, the British Navy and the Contractor State* (Woodbridge), pp. 7–10.

62. For exhaustive details on the supply of materials for Irish barracks see the annual financial accounts printed as appendices to the *Journals of the Irish House of Commons*. G. Bannerman (2008) *Merchants and Military in Eighteenth-Century Britain: British Army Contracts, 1739–1763* (London), pp. 103–20.

63. D. Syrett (1970) *Shipping and the American War 1775–83, A Study of British Transport Organisation* (London), pp. 41, 44–7, 143–7, 150–1; D. Dickson (2005) *Old World Colony: Cork and South Munster, 1630–1830* (Cork), pp. 157–9, 366–9.

64. I am indebted to Dr Aaron Graham for this point. See also Knight and Wilcox, *Sustaining the Fleet*, pp. 81–2.
65. T. Barnard (2004) *The Kingdom of Ireland, 1641–1760* (Basingstoke), pp. 54–8.
66. TNA, CUST 1/23, f. 46, CUST 1/24, f. 22, Rev. Cmmrs Min. Bk., 24 April 1731, 14 June 1732.
67. For the possibilities offered by parish registers see McGrath, 'The Grand Question Debated'. On the problems posed by children of soldiers see K. Sonneleiter (2016) *Charity Movements in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: Philanthropy and Improvement* (Woodbridge), pp. 54–6.
68. Quoted in M. Dziennik (2012) 'Whig Tartan: Material Culture and its uses in the Scottish Highlands, 1746–1815' *Past & Present*, 217, 117–48, at 141. For the suggestion that the presence of a military barracks could hasten language decline see N.M. Wolf (2014) *State, Religion, Community and the Linguistic Landscape in Ireland, 1770–1870* (Madison, WC), p. 101.
69. R. Morriss (2011) *The Foundations of British Maritime Ascendancy: Resources, Logistics and the State, 1755–1815* (Cambridge), p. 132; Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, p. 30.
70. Brewer, *Sinews of Power*, p. 30; J. Childs (1987) *The British Army of William III, 1689–1702* (Manchester), pp. 102–3; R.E. Scouller (1966) *The Armies of Queen Anne* (Oxford), pp. 345–9; Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence*, pp. 11–44.
71. TNA, ADM1/3864, Southwell to Josiah Burchett, 30 December 1704.
72. B. Zerbe quoted in Walsh, 'Ireland and The Royal Navy' p. 63.
73. L. Colley (1992) *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT), pp. 345, 352.
74. M.P. Dziennik (2015) *This Fatal Land: War, Empire and the Highland Soldier in British America* (Yale, CT), p. 5.
75. Colley, *Britons*, pp. 112, 312; Dziennik, *This Fatal Land*, esp. pp. 27–57; A. MacKillop (2000) *More Fruitful Than the Soil: Army, Empire and the Scottish Highlands, 1715–1815* (Edinburgh).
76. Colley, *Britons*, p. 312.
77. MacKillop, 'Subsidy State or Drawback Province', pp. 188–9.
78. Dziennik, *This Fatal Land*, pp. 86–95.
79. See James Stafford's chapter in this volume.
80. Hoppit, 'The State, the Nation', 328; E. Magennis (2001) 'Coal, Corn and Canals: Parliament and the Dispersal of Public Moneys 1695–1772', *Parliamentary History* 20, 71–86.
81. Morriss, *Foundations of British Maritime Ascendancy*, p. 143.

The Scottish Enlightenment
and the British-Irish Union of 1801

James Stafford

The Acts of Union incorporating Wales, Scotland and Ireland with England have long provided a leitmotif for 'four nations' history. As standing monuments to the composite character of the British state, they offer clear evidence for the two core propositions that gave rise to the field in the final quarter of the twentieth century: that 'British' and 'English' history should not be synonymous, and that the history of Ireland is entwined within both. Straddling the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and positioned between the fields of British and Irish history, the Union of Britain and Ireland can be seen, according to J.G.A. Pocock, as 'the hinge … marking the transition from early modern to modern "British history".'[1] This usefully highlights both its importance, and its elusiveness. The union that founded the modern United Kingdom lies outside the core period of early modern conquest and consolidation that preoccupied the 'New British Historians'. In subsequent Irish history, Union appears as the coda to the United Irish rising of 1798, or the backdrop to subsequent Irish struggles over Emancipation, land reform, Home Rule and independence.[2] Falling, as

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it does, between national histories and periodisations, the meaning of union at the moment of its inception remains surprisingly obscure.

The primary contribution of this chapter lies in the history of political ideas and their place in the making of the modern United Kingdom. The Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707 has been well-served by literature in the history of political thought.[3] The British-Irish Union of 1801, by contrast, has been left almost untouched by studies of the intellectual contexts for British state-building.[4] This chapter uncovers a new set of intellectual relationships between the Irish and Scottish unions. Studies have already shown that contemporaries used the Scottish example to make the case for parliamentary union in Ireland.[5] Among modern historians, comparison remains a fruitful approach for illustrating the successes and failures of the Unions of 1707 and 1801.[6] This chapter, however, suggests a new and deeper affinity between the historical experiences of Scotland and Ireland at the close of the eighteenth century. Union represented the application to Ireland of political ideas developed in the intellectual ferment of eighteenth-century Scotland, as part of what historians have termed the 'Scottish Enlightenment'. Arguments for Irish union drew not only on the example of Scotland, but also on modes of political argument developed by Scottish thinkers in Scottish institutional settings, in particular the universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. As such, the Union of 1801 represented more than the simple repetition of the constitutional device of parliamentary incorporation. It applied a range of Scottish ideas concerning the prerequisites for a stable government in a 'commercial society' to Ireland's distinctive circumstances.

This chapter therefore aims to restate and extend the value of a four nations approach to modern British history. It should be noted at the outset, however, that it is Pocock's 'three kingdoms', rather than Hugh Kearney's 'four nations', that best correspond the mindset of the thinkers and the politicians addressed here.[7] The Tudor incorporation of Wales is a striking absence from the eighteenth-century debate on Irish Union, although it did feature in popular Scottish 'philosophical histories' of what was still termed the 'English' constitution.[8] Pocock and Kearney's shared conception of Britain and Ireland as a de-centred, 'archipelagic' political formation, in which the affairs of England cannot be assumed to predominate, is shown to be of continuing importance to our understanding of Irish politics following the 1798 rebellion.[9] British state-building at the close of the eighteenth century did not proceed

from an English 'core' to an Irish 'periphery'.[10] Instead, understandings of politics, religion and society developed by Scottish philosophers during the eighteenth century were deployed to remodel British political authority in Ireland.

The fundamental arguments for union—the need for strong, centralised legislative authority; the dissolution of Irish religious differences within a 'British' civilisation—were outwardly simple, but were in fact complex and specific. They are reconstructed here as derived primarily from the political thought of Hume, Smith, Burke and Millar. The architects of the Union regarded religious conflict between Irish Catholics and Protestants as a form of political, factional competition, which could only be resolved by the removal of representative institutions to the imperial centre. State centralisation, which thereby guaranteed social peace, offered the only secure basis for an integrated market economy, within which Ireland could prosper on the basis of a diffusion of capital and investment from London, Europe's premier commercial and financial centre. Constitutional change would therefore create the framework for a remodelling of Irish society, diminishing the pernicious influences of French power and sectarian conflict alike.

Taking the example of the union debates, this chapter will additionally seek to problematise the relationship between 'new British' and European history. Historians of both the Scottish and Irish Unions have long observed that these were made necessary, above all, by the persistence of rivalry with France.[11] This necessitated fiscal consolidation and the neutralisation of security risks to the imperial metropole. Contemporaries, too, positioned the remaking of the British state within a European context, using this to validate and extend their own understandings of politics. Union was understood as a direct response to the French Revolution and a demonstration of the British constitution's capacity to adapt to unprecedented circumstances. It was perceived as a natural counterpart to the remaking of the European order following Napoleon's rise to power in 1795–1799.[12]

In seeking to analyse the ideological character of the Union, this chapter will mainly focus on the voluminous, and as yet only lightly explored, pamphlet debate on the measure. It was here, rather than in the ministerial correspondence examined by historians of 'high politics', that the character and aspirations of union were defined and articulated.[13] The British–Irish Union of 1801 was passed through

the British and Irish parliaments over a period of two years, due to the refusal of the Dublin parliament to even contemplate discussion of the measure alongside its British counterpart in the spring of 1799.[14] This gave rise to a lengthy and systematic attempt to win political support for the measure, with government-sponsored pamphlets and petitions seeking to wrest the initiative from the rowdy and well-organised Protestant 'Patriots' of Dublin.[15] Prominent among these were copies of speeches advocating Union given in the British parliament, distributed in Ireland using public funds at key points during the Union campaign.[16] The texts selected for discussion here are distinguished by various forms of state sponsorship, and by their authors' presence at the heart of the intellectual and political networks that lay behind the implementation of Union.

They were also dominated by the 'Scottish Enlightenment' and its legacies. It is the contexts, rather than the content, of eighteenth-century Scottish thought that warrant this anachronistic label, which only entered into common usage in the 1960s.[17] The preservation of an autonomous Presbyterian church under the terms of Union of 1707, combined with the presence of the most intellectually advanced universities in the British Isles, created the institutional context for a distinctive approach to politics and letters that enjoyed growing recognition by the end of the eighteenth century.[18] Thinkers including David Hume, Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith and John Millar offered sophisticated accounts of collective life in the 'commercial society' that Europe was becoming. They shared an interest in understanding the relationship of the 'passions' to politics, in developing new theories of political economy, and in producing historical accounts of the origins of the European states and their global empires.[19]

An important development in recent scholarship on this 'Scottish Enlightenment' has been a renewed interest in the development of this intellectual millieu beyond the period of the American War of Independence (1776–1783). There was a significant reappropriation and adaptation of Scottish philosophy among Whig and Anglican thinkers in England and Ireland, among whom the most notable examples in the closing decades of the century were William Paley and Edmund Burke.[20] The latter obviously occupied a distinctive intellectual space, but he too has been convincingly portrayed as an upholder of a theistic and sociable iteration of Enlightenment, in frequent dialogue with Scottish thought.[21] In the era of the French Revolution, the intellectual resources bequeathed by the Scottish Enlightenment were re-tooled to provide a

renewed framework of understanding and legitimation for the British state.

<div align="center">*****</div>

The Scottish Whig lawyer James Mackintosh's lectures on the 'Law of Nations' offer a striking example of the close relationships that existed between British politicians, Scottish thinkers and the politics of Irish union. Between February and June 1799, British parliamentarians including Pitt's key adviser on Union, Sylvester Douglas, came to debates on the union fresh from Mackintosh's morning lectures.[22] The jurist, an erstwhile supporter of the French Revolution, was a leading figure in the emergent Scottish Whiggism of the 1790s, and was ultimately to act as a crucial conduit between the thought of Hume and Smith and the Victorian liberalism of Thomas Babington Macaulay. His lectures, which referred to the 1798 Irish Rebellion to illustrate the dangers of insecure property holding and political violence, signalled an important moment of coalescence between English and Scottish varieties of philosophic Whiggism at the close of the eighteenth century.[23] Mackintosh's published introductory discourse contained a glowing eulogy of the Anglican bishop Jonathan Shipley's moderately reformist account of the British constitution, as well as repeated attacks on the radical thinker William Godwin's 'popular sophistry'.[24] His listeners received encomiums on the progress made by European civilisation in the course of the eighteenth century, which had diffused advanced forms of moral science amenable to a project of widespread popular Enlightenment. They were informed that it was the historical development of the law of nations between the civilised monarchies of Europe, as well as the historically contingent nature of the British constitution, that safeguarded such progress for the future.[25] This was an account of the 'law of nations' that legitimated Britain's defence of European civilisation against the Napoleonic threat, while also pointing towards the re-establishment of imperial authority in a fractious Ireland.

More personal connections can also be demonstrated between Scottish ideas and imperial politicians. The British ministers most active in their pursuit of Union—William Pitt, Henry Dundas, and Lord Castlereagh—all had significant personal and intellectual links to this evolving state ideology. Dundas was notoriously dominant in the political management of Scottish government patronage.[26] As Secretary of War in Pitt's cabinet, and an important ally on the question of Catholic Emancipation, he was the crucial link between the philosophy

of the Scottish universities and the formulation of Irish policy. Dundas had corresponded extensively with Smith on Irish affairs in the 1770s, wryly noting that the management of the Dublin parliament depended either on the implementation of a Union or 'the proper distribution of the loaves and fishes, so that the Legislatures of the two Countries may act in union together'.[27] As the subsequent discussion will illustrate, a hard-headed understanding of political realities could easily be reconciled with the sceptical moral precepts of Scottish philosophy.

Younger figures such as the Irish Chief Secretary Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh and Pitt himself, had begun their political careers as reformers encouraged by Enlightened conceptions of society and government. As John Bew has shown, Stewart's early education was influenced by the rational 'New Light' Presbyterianism of his 'Ulster Scot' family. This was an established zone of intellectual engagement that reached from Belfast up the Firth of Clyde to the Glasgow of Smith and Millar.[28] Pitt's career and self-presentation, meanwhile, was notable for its rejection of the Whig tradition of classical republicanism and its embrace of the sceptical vision of politics espoused by Hume and the Scottish historian William Robertson. His 1792 budget speech included a eulogy to Smith, who had died the previous year. As Jennifer Mori notes, the Prime Minister's frequent departures in practice from an undifferentiated principle of 'free trade' cannot be interpreted as stemming from a lack of interest in Smith's economic ideas, since this was not, in fact, what Smith himself had argued for.[29]

In line with their Scottish intellectual formations, the politicians who began to formulate proposals for Union at the close of 1798 took a different view of the causes of the revolt than most modern historians. Since the 1990s, a range of scholars have identified these as lying in a cycle of popular polarisation and politicisation in train since the American War of Independence.[30] Pitt and his allies, however, tended to emphasise the role of the United Irishmen's Francophile, aristocratic leadership. They perceived a dangerous interplay between the unrestrained factionalism of the Anglo-Irish elite and the poverty of the Irish countryside: the rising was made possible by the combination of elite political competition with the economic and sectarian discontent of the peasant population. This account was overlaid by a conspiratorial dimension, heavily indebted to Augustin de Barruel and John Robison's presentation of the French Revolution as an *Illuminati* plot against religion and social order. This system was extended into Ireland by means

of the secretive and hierarchical Society of United Irishmen, who had organised and colluded with the agrarian violence of Catholic Defenders to construct a revolutionary and democratic army.[31] A report from the Irish House of Lords outlined how, through 'the licentious abuse of the press' and their rigid command structure, the United Irishmen had constructed a nationwide 'system of treason' which roused the diffuse discontents of the 'lower orders' into 'tumult and outrage, as leading to the abolition of tithes, hearth and county taxes, and the reduction of rents'.[32] There was in Ireland, Dundas claimed in 1799, 'a spirit of clamour and dissention, of treachery and treason, which menaces the overthrow of the present Government'.[33] Ordinary Irish men and women were constructed as passive receptacles for the revolutionary ideology imbibed by the aristocratic and middle-class leadership of the United Irishmen.

Resisting conspiracy and terror required a two-pronged strategy of pacification, which would reduce incentives for aspirant Irish dema-gogues to organise for sedition while removing the material causes that made it attractive to the broader population. According to the Scottish peer and diplomat Gilbert Elliot, Lord Minto, the Irish parliament was an incubator for an assertive form of provincial patriotism that had threatened imperial stability since the 1770s. Under the existing struc-ture of multiple monarchy, a dynamic of conflict was inevitable, since Britain and Ireland were 'two distinct and unequal countries' where 'the superior must be predominant and the inferior subordinate in their com-mon concerns, and in the administration of the common parts of their Government.'[34] Demagogues in the smaller country were rewarded with honours and popularity for converting patriotism into 'jealousy' against the more powerful nation.

This is what had ultimately given rise to the United Irishmen. The inchoate and spasmodic discontent of the Irish countryside was given form by the movement's elite political leadership. 'With each succession of patriots,' warned Minto, 'seeking to enhance on the exploits of their predecessors, the improvement of independency is pushed forward until the true goal for that course comes in view— I mean separation.'[35] The United Irishmen were only the latest and most extreme manifestation of a tendency towards 'separation' that was implicit in the Anglo-Irish elite's insistence on an autonomous legislature.

Tempting Ireland's 'Patriots' away from the popular politics of insurrection and demagoguery required a subtle grasp of the dynamics of aristocratic faction. Here, British politicians were able to draw on their experience of managing the crisis in the American colonies. Dundas' speech in favour of the Union built on Adam Smith's analysis of the origins of the American Revolutionary War. Smith had argued that during the political crises produced by the Stamp Act and the Townshend Duties, American colonial leaders had been undermined by a centre bent on fiscal integration. The constitution of any 'free government', he had suggested, depended on the successful management of the pride and self-interest of 'the natural aristocracy of every country' for its stability. 'In the attacks which those leading men are continually making upon the importance of one another,' Smith asserted, 'and in the defence of their own, consists the whole play of domestick [*sic*] faction and ambition'.[36] They had embraced violent resistance to sovereign authority rather than allowing this sense of self-importance to be undermined. For Smith, one of the attractions of a prospective transatlantic Union was that it offered 'a new method of acquiring importance, a new and more dazzling object of ambition would be presented to the leading men of each colony.' By combining metropolitan and colonial parliaments, Union could draw off and neutralise the factional political energy of Britain's subject territories.[37]

Dundas recognised that Smith's model of factional competition could readily be applied to Irish politics. He dangled Smith's prospect of advancement in the imperial metropole before Irish MPs in his speech promoting the Union, urging Irish parliamentarians to remember 'that if their genius be ever so acute, their talents ever so transcendent, their eloquence ever so splendid, all these wonderful powers are confined to one little island'. The Westminster parliament, by contrast, would be 'worthy of true ambition … a more respectable body than what had been described by a gentleman who, in talking of the limitations of the Parliament of Ireland, compared it to a Grand Vestry or Parish Meeting'.[38] A Smithian approach to the management of sentiment and faction, combined with a call to uphold European civilisation against Napoleonic encroachment, was employed to tempt Irish MPs away from their allegiance to Dublin.[39]

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Concern for the regulation of disruptive political sentiments was not confined to discussions of the institutional relationship between the Irish and British parliaments. Proponents of Union also believed that the root

of the Irish tendency to agrarian violence lay in sectarian divisions among the population. These were aggravated by the political constitution of the Irish Kingdom and in turn exploited by an unscrupulous colonial aristocracy. According to this distinct strain of unionist analysis, shared by British ministers and a range of Irish advocates of all denominations, political centralisation would reduce the temperature of sectarian conflict within the Irish polity by separating the social from the political functions of (predominantly Protestant) Irish landholders.

Here, again, Smith and Hume provided the crucial insights that drove unionist analysis. Smith had believed that there were circumstances in which political centralisation was likely to be beneficial to the provinces of an extensive state. In England and, subsequently, Scotland, the modern liberty of security and economic activity had been secured by the decline of the petty regional sovereignties of feudal barons into the centralised territorial authority of the Crown.[40] In the absence of the 'coercive power of the mother-country' the multiple small colonies of the American continent were likely to descend into the factional conflict that was 'inseparable from small democracies'.[41] Smith had a secure basis for this judgement in the science of human passions that he had pursued in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), itself a response to Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* (1738). Here, Hume had painstakingly examined how perceptions of distance in space and time influenced both the understanding and the passions, arguing that 'every thing contiguous to us, either in space or time, should be conceived with a peculiar force and vivacity'.[42]

In a discussion of the nature of conscience, designed in part as a correction to Hume's passion-driven science of morals, Smith examined the difficulties involved in forging sympathetic connections with others at great distances.[43] Unlike Hume, Smith emphasised the counteraction of this tendency towards moral disinterest through the capacity for conscience and the 'honourable virtue' of self-command. The two men were in agreement, however, on the urgent need to promote the influence of the 'calmer passions' in the political conduct of an extensive, commercial state. In a reference to his own provincial location in Fife, and his claims to philosophical detachment, Smith observed at the end of the *Wealth of Nations* that the 'spirit of party' was invariably weaker in the distant provinces of a 'great' and 'uniform' state:

The distance of those provinces from the capital, from the principal seat of the great scramble of faction and ambition, makes them enter less into the views of any of the contending parties, and renders them more indifferent and impartial spectators of the conduct of all. The spirit of party prevails less in Scotland than in England. In the case of a union it would probably prevail less in Ireland than in Scotland.[44]

Like Hume, Smith's analysis of political competition drew no fundamental distinction between the religious and political underpinnings of 'factions of principle', and located all forms of party attachment on a spectrum stretching from rhetorical to physical conflict.[45] Religious and political motivations, words and deeds, could not be meaningfully separated: passionate attachment and status-seeking governed all forms of group behaviour.

Smith's rare, and isolated, pronouncements on Irish affairs combined this Humean analysis of the passionate underpinnings of political faction with the typology of the 'natural and respectable distinctions of birth and fortune' he had constructed in the course of his discussions of the origin and nature of jurisprudence. Here, he had described the stabilising (if potentially corrupting) disposition to admire the rich and powerful that was generated in commercial societies by the human capacity for sympathy.[46] Smith asserted that the major pathology of Irish society was not the mere fact of sectarian division, but the perversion of social hierarchy that it enabled. The foundation of Ireland's Protestant aristocracy lay in the 'most odious of all distinctions, those of religious and political prejudices'.[47] The bane of Irish society—the source, according to Smith, of not only its instability but also its poverty—was the persistence of an aristocracy based on religious faction, rather than the esteem naturally accruing to social status and material wealth.

This argument was very close to the thinking of Edmund Burke, who had criticised the political exclusion of Catholics on the basis of a Protestant 'spirit of conquest' derived from the seventeenth-century wars.[48] Burke, however, had been ambivalent about union as a solution to this problem. A key refrain of his later political analysis was that the complexity of Irish society required a distinct form of government.[49] The development of Catholic equality within the Irish Kingdom would enable the Protestant Ascendancy to be gradually converted into an aristocracy in sympathy with the people, producing a gradual accession of Catholic property and representation. Writing in 1795 to his disciple

William Smith, an Anglo-Irish MP, Burke had stressed the need for the British government to speedily grant further political concessions to the Catholic majority that went beyond the concession of the franchise in 1793. 'Emancipation', the granting to Catholic subjects of the right to not only elect but also to hold office in parliament and municipal corporations, was essential to prevent Catholics turning their allegiances towards the Presbyterians and Jacobins who constituted the United Irishmen.[50]

William Smith alluded to Burke's commitment to Emancipation as the guarantor of security against revolution in his speech proposing Union to the Irish parliament in 1799.[51] Due to the violence of the 1798 Rebellion, Union was now a sad necessity. Since Burke's death in 1797, Smith claimed, 'opposite parties had … vied with each other in civil rage, and supplied, by their distractions, so many arguments for Union'. Events, Smith argued, had brutally vindicated Adam Smith's judgement that 'without a Union with Great Britain, the inhabitants of Ireland are not likely for many ages to consider themselves as one people.'[52] William Smith interpreted the Scotsman's comment in line with the earlier discussion of transatlantic Union in the *Wealth of Nations*:

> He recommends the measure, as calculated to deliver the [the colonies] from *rancorous and virulent factions*, and to promote American *tranquillity and happiness* … I think that Ireland, as well as America, has *its* rancorous factions to remove; and tranquillity and happiness, yet to attain![53]

William Smith claimed that only the removal of political competition to Westminster, rather than the admission of Catholics to a purely Irish political nation, would affect the dissolution of the divisive Protestant Ascendancy condemned by Adam Smith and Burke. He noted with approval that Union would 'exclude many Protestants from that political importance, which the present state of things permits them to enjoy'. With a much smaller caste of absentee politicians left to agitate over the country's future in Westminster, the remainder would abandon their prized 'political distinctions' and dedicate themselves to the peaceable lives of gentry improvers. Echoing Adam Smith once again, he projected that 'after Union, our *resident* aristocracy would be founded on those distinctions of birth and fortune, which are as attainable by those of one religion, as of the other'.[54]

Crucially, this understanding of the sentimental dynamics underpinning religious faction was able to cross sectarian lines. The Catholic lawyer and erstwhile parliamentary reformer Theobald McKenna made a case for Union that hitched a careful analysis of the sectarian perversion of Irish social hierarchies to a skilful play on the anxieties of Catholics following the 1798 Rebellion and the rise to prominence of the Orange Order.[55] Like Burke, William Smith and Adam Smith, McKenna drew a clear distinction between a natural social hierarchy formed by economic inequality, and its distortion by the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy created by the eighteenth-century Penal Code. The danger, in the absence of a Union, was of a Protestant response to the Rebellion that reversed the progress made under the British-sponsored reforms of 1778 and 1793, which had abolished restrictions on Catholic access to property and the franchise.[56] Dedicated to the reintroduction of the Penal Laws out of a 'spirit of revenge' animated by a misreading of the 1798 Rebellion, the new Orange Order ignored the economic reality that Catholics 'supply almost entirely the labouring and industrious classes of the community'.[57] By setting up its members as a 'superior order in the state, with a superior title to every kind of consideration and privilege', they threatened the social fabric at every level.[58]

Following Adam Smith—who he described as 'an excellent judge of the springs by which men are moved'—McKenna asserted that the advantage of Union lay in its modification of the relationship between centre, periphery and faction.[59] It was urgently necessary, he explained, to contain sectarian conflict within the institutional setting of the Westminster parliament:

> Open governments, those I mean in which political affairs are discussed without reserve, are of themselves prone to faction—where there is a difference of religion, it tends in proportion, as the parties are nearly balanced, to increase this propensity. That is a very urgent reason to render Ireland as little as possible the scene of political activity.[60]

McKenna adhered to a definition of the 'liberties of the people' that emphasised the modern civil liberty of security and happiness, described by prominent contemporary legal authorities including Montesquieu, Burlamaqui, Blackstone, and Delolme. Trial by jury and the protection of property rights, McKenna argued, were 'the first object of civil society. This is the end; Peers and Representatives are but the means'.[61]

He cited with approval John Millar's claim that the 'the British government is the only one in the annals of mankind that has aimed at the diffusion of liberty through a multitude of people, spread over a wide extent of territory'.[62] The small republics of Italy and Switzerland, Millar observed, bestowed 'very unequal privileges upon different individuals', and the liberties of the former United Provinces had been upheld by their confederal political order, which ensured that 'every particular province' constituted 'an independent political system'.[63]

McKenna was scornful of the notion that Ireland could operate as such a distinct political system within the British Empire: 'The definition of our political establishment is, a qualified sovereignty, vested in an assembly, which may be a wise and virtuous senate, but cannot pretend to be a popular delegation.'[64] The claims of Anglo-Irish patriots to an autonomous Irish Kingdom amounted to nothing more than 'an unprofitable and delusive imitation of British forms,' attempted in the absence of Britain's natural and representative system of social distinctions.[65] Wales and Scotland, like Ireland, lacked these 'proper materials for a mixed monarchy, but both nations enjoy that advantage, *engrafted* on the capability of England. Ireland stands, at least as much as the latter, in need of this assistance.'[66]

Projects of reform that simply sought to recreate the conditions for English liberty, including McKenna's previous demand for Catholic Emancipation within the Irish Kingdom alone, were consequently doomed to failure. 'You do not act in the spirit of enlightened attachment,' he observed,

> but in a ridiculous and pedantic bigotry, when you chain yourself down to the forms of British liberty. You ought to propose for your object the social happiness, that these forms confer; and you should pursue it by whatever means it is most easily attainable.[67]

McKenna's analysis carried a sharp warning for erstwhile radical colleagues who had embraced the risks of revolution and invasion rather than contemplate the possibilities for reform on an imperial level. Reform within Ireland risked the dissolution of political society itself—a hazard that would not be presented by Union.[68]

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The 'social happiness' described by McKenna also had an important economic component. British politicians were clear that, alongside

a flawed constitutional structure and sectarian violence, poverty had increased the attraction of 'Jacobin' ideas to supporters of Defenderism and the United Irishmen.[69] Earlier English and Scottish interest in Union, which had existed from the middle of the eighteenth century, had been driven by concern for a more rational system of free trade and equal taxation between Britain and Ireland.[70] This argument was, however, of dubious assistance in the debate of 1799–1800, since it opened the pro-Union case to arguments that all the benefit would be on the British side. The speaker of the Dublin parliament, John Foster, and dozens of pamphlets and newspaper articles produced by opponents of Union, had styled the measure as the continuation, rather than the rejection, of a pattern of British economic exploitation dating back to the era of the Williamite conquest.[71]

Thomas Brooke Clarke, a Church of Ireland clergyman and Trinity College alumnus working for the Prince of Wales at the time of the Union debate, strikingly inverted this argument, spelling out the benefits to Ireland of fitting in with a new imperial division of labour. Here, again, the hand of Dundas and the Scottish connection was clearly visible. Surviving correspondence between the two men shows that at least one of Brooke Clarke's productions—a refutation of Foster—was produced in consultation with the Scottish Secretary of War.[72] Brooke Clarke's vision of Irish development within the Union portrayed it as a corrective to both British and Irish preoccupations with luxury and long-distance trade. Foreign markets would not

> be so necessary for Commerce, when there is through home Industry and home Trade and good price for the Commodities … Perhaps a better criterion of the happy effects of industry can not be had than the home consumption of Britain compared with its trade all over the Globe.[73]

Just as McKenna had argued that civil liberty could only be secured in Ireland if it were 'engrafted' onto Britain's constitutional monarchy, so Brooke Clarke saw the Irish Kingdom taking its place at the bottom of an extended division of labour linking the core and peripheries of the British state. Working through another patron, the Earl of Shelburne, Brooke Clarke secured the publication of a vital letter by David Hume setting out his understanding of how, in the territories of a commercial

empire, occupations at differing levels of skill and value naturally arranged themselves at varying distances from a wealthy capital.[74] Brooke Clarke accordingly argued that, following Union, British investment in agriculture and lower-level manufacturing, designed to take advantage of Ireland's lower wage costs, would provide employment and raise living standards for the Irish peasantry. This would render them less susceptible to revolutionary or sectarian incitement.

Brooke Clarke's glowing prognostications of social progress under the union was described in terms derived from Smith's general history of European commerce, outlined in the third book of his *Wealth of Nations*. Smith had argued that the vanity of feudal barons had led them to disband their retinues and spend surplus income on foreign luxuries. This in turn freed their tenants from labour services and political violence, while empowering monarchs and the rising urban bourgeoisie. Brooke Clarke summarised the moral crisply: 'Commerce brings in riches; riches produce luxury; luxury puts down the high and exalts the low.'[75] In his refutation of Foster, he attempted a straightforward application of Adam Smith's history of commerce to Ireland's distinctive circumstances. Union, and its attendant commercial growth, would play a vital role in moderating inequality and religious bigotry, just as it had done in Scotland. Provocatively, Brooke Clarke substituted the Anglo-Irish aristocracy for the violent and unruly Scottish barons who figured heavily in Enlightened histories of the Scottish Middle Ages. He made the point clear in a particularly sharp attack on John Foster, closing by declaring:

> Let us be assured that if Union be lost, the commerce of Ireland is lost: that if Union be established, the commerce of Ireland is established; and upon a firm basis for incalculable improvement … it is through *commerce*, and *only* through commerce, the *barbarous spirit* of feudal power will *finally depart* from Ireland. *Thus* will the old and *corrupt body* of *civil* defects find a SEPULCHRE in the UNION.[76]

Brooke Clarke thereby signalled his ambition that Union with Britain would resolve the peculiarities of Irish history into the forward march of European civilisation. Unlike the subsequent generation of Victorian commentators, he did not associate Irish poverty with the laziness and

irrationality of an overpopulated Catholic countryside.[77] Instead, and in common with Dundas, Minto, Smith and McKenna, he laid the blame squarely at the door of its vain and refractory Protestant aristocracy.

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This survey of the Union pamphlets suggests that, in many important instances, eighteenth-century Scottish thinkers supplied the intellectual frameworks that made Union seem like a credible response to the violence of 1798. This was not the Enlightenment of high idealism, but that of political economy: an intellectual project that combined a sincere regard for the 'improvement of mankind' with a hard-headed assessment of the necessary foundations of imperial rule.[78] The abolition of the Dublin parliament occurred at a distinct moment in the history of British political thought, when certain aspects of the moral, historical and economic enquiries of the Scottish Enlightenment were developed, adapted and combined with other influences into something approaching a governing ideology. As such, Union can be seen as a political project that sought to apply the insights of Scottish philosophy to the fraught conditions of Irish society in the aftermath of the 1798 Rebellion.

The French revolutionary context ensured that the Union between Ireland and Britain could not, however, be construed purely as the integration of an aberrant Ireland into a stable Britain. Instead, it was understood as part of a prolonged struggle between rival British and French empires, animated by radically differing political ideologies.[79] Here, too, a framework of analysis derived from the Scottish Enlightenment could be used to construct narratives concerning the broader significance of the Union. While the majority of commentators who engaged with the writings of Smith and Hume used them to make the case for Union, the Ulster Presbyterian radical William Drennan offered a more pessimistic reading, informed by Millar, of the decline in political liberty brought about by the consolidation of the British state. Drennan, an erstwhile member of the United Irishmen, followed many of his 'Ulster Scot' contemporaries to Glasgow University during Millar's tenure as Regius Professor in Civil Law during the 1770s.[80] In his critical examination of the Union, published in the form of a *Letter to William Pitt* (1799), he took as his starting point Millar's ambiguous assessment of the relationship between commerce and modern liberty in his *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771).

'So widely different are the effects of opulence and refinement,' Millar had written,

which, at the same time that they furnish the king with a standing army, the great engine of tyranny and oppression, have also a tendency to inspire the people with notions of liberty and independence. It may thence be expected that a conflict will arise between these two opposite parties, in which a variety of accidents may contribute to cast the balance upon either side.[81]

Millar's analysis had initially been geared toward the explanation of the English Civil War and the rise of Bourbon absolutism in the seventeenth century; in his later writings, he warned against the recrudescence of the conflictual dynamic of unruly democracy and military tyranny within contemporary British politics.[82] For Drennan, union was a further instance of the British state's reduction of its complex, mixed constitution of liberty into a 'military machine' that 'compresses all parts to the centre'.[83] The territorial integrity and unity of France, he wryly observed, was a constant theme of revolutionary rhetoric from Sieyès to Napoleon via Robespierre: 'In the uniform habit of cursing and mimicking the French Revolution your inverted order ends where *it* began, by decreeing the unity and indivisibility of the empire'.[84] Drennan believed that, in emulating French efforts towards the centralisation and militarisation of an advanced commercial society, Pitt risked destroying the political liberty enabled by a more complex distribution of political authority. After the Union, the stage would be set for a direct confrontation between Irish 'democracy' and the British Crown, in the absence of the 'feudal compost' of the Ascendancy parliament.[85]

Drennan's analysis of the Union thereby updated eighteenth-century Scottish philosophical history to reflect the aggressive state-building activities of Europe's leading military powers in the decade since the French Revolution. The Union with Ireland was portrayed as the British analogue to the French revolutionaries' proclamation of a unitary republic. The diplomat and publicist Friedrich Gentz, a keen Prussian reader of Adam Smith and a close observer of the Union, drew a similar conclusion, but praised Britain's capacity to regenerate its constitution under revolutionary pressure. Gentz reported the debate over the Union as offering a choice between the 'ancient' political liberty of democratic city-states or feudal barons, and the ordered, 'modern' civil liberty afforded by a stable and centralised commercial monarchy.

'The Union', he declared, 'must in a moment, where everything in the political world points to division and dissolution, be the most effective and decisive of all measures salutary to the public that the British government could conceive of'.[86] Britain's union with Ireland pointed the way to the rationalisation of the entire European states-system, which needed to be purged of small, pluralist and composite polities if it was to endure in the face of resurgent French power.[87]

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Taking Drennan and Gentz's writing on the Union together with the other texts discussed, it is possible to draw some conclusions regarding both its underlying ideological character and its broader contemporary significance. It represented the triumph of a hierarchical, counter-revolutionary iteration of Enlightenment: the translation of the sceptical 'science of man' developed by the Scottish philosophers into an imperial 'art of government', in the hands of politicians and polemicists who were trying to reform the British state to ensure its endurance in the face of revolutionary pressure. One component of this art of government was an attitude to economic life that entailed both market freedoms and a particular form of commercial civility. The other was a commitment to strong and centralised forms of state sovereignty. This meant extirpating the ancient parliamentary institutions that had underpinned the 'composite monarchies' of early modern Europe.[88] Union was based on a coherent and developed account of contemporary political and economic life, framed in the distinctive institutional and intellectual context of the Scottish Enlightenment.

This reform agenda for Irish government was constructed and implemented in political and ideological contexts that transcended the history of the British Isles. For contemporaries, this was clearly a relevant framework, but it was not the only one. Economic improvement, commercial sociability, religious diversity and social inequality were recognised as problems of relevance to every European society, as central to debates over the French Revolution as they were to the Irish union. The measure was intended not only to pacify Ireland, but also to vindicate Britain's constitutional and commercial order against the ideological challenge of revolutionary France.

This, in turn, should prompt further reflection on the nature of four nations history, and especially in the modern era. The eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries are distinguished, in part, from their predecessors by the increased mobility of people, goods and ideas enabled

by both industrial revolution and print capitalism.[89] Forms of transnational political allegiance and identification—previously the preserve of the churches—became more common in the secular realm, as ideologies of Enlightenment, empire, revolution and even nationalism itself assumed a pan-European, even a global, dimension.[90]

The Enlightened case for British-Irish Union provides an early, but significant, example of this underlying shift. The key participants in the debate were driven to remake the British polity for reasons that encompassed, but transcended, an immediate British context. Scottish philosophers formulated general principles of political economy and moral psychology derived from reflection on common human characteristics and informed by a continental tradition of 'natural law'.[91] The United Irish revolutionaries identified as Irish patriots, but also wished to join their French counterparts in purging the European states-system of war and commercial jealousy. British opponents of revolution, in turn, deployed Scottish social theory in the service of an Irish policy that explicitly aimed to vindicate a form of commercial civilisation at once 'British' and universal. The task for a four nations history defined along the lines suggested by Pocock and Kearney would be to examine the Union of 1801 from the multiple perspectives presented by the nations of the British Isles. Yet there were ways in which its makers had already transcended these: they were forced by the circumstances of their time to locate themselves in the larger context of European war and revolution.

It would be mistaken, however, to use the case of the Union to postulate yet more false choices between the insular, imperial and European orbits of British and Irish history. These are not required. Greater attention to European and global contexts—ideological or otherwise—takes us yet further away from the Anglocentric conception of 'British' history Kearney and Pocock sought to dethrone. The complex interplay of institutions, ideas, identities and territories that constitute four nations history can only be fully appreciated if they are seen in the broader context of the continents and oceans surrounding the British Isles.

NOTES

1. J.G.A. Pocock (2000) 'The Union in British History', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 10, 181–96.
2. A. Jackson (2014) 'Ireland's Long Nineteenth Century of Union', *Journal of Modern History*, 86, 124–41.

3. J. Robertson (ed.) (1995) *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707* (Cambridge); C. Kidd (2008) *Union and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland 1500–2000* (Oxford).

4. For an exception to this rule, see M. Brown (2003) 'The Injured Lady and her British Problem' in M. Brown, P.M. Geoghegan and J. Kelly (eds.) *The Irish Act of Union, 1800: Bicentennial Essays* (Newbridge), pp. 37–49.

5. A. Murdoch (2005) 'Henry Dundas, Scotland and the Union with Ireland, 1792–1801' in B. Harris (ed.) *Scotland in the Age of the French Revolution* (Edinburgh), pp. 125–39.

6. A. Jackson (2011) *The Two Unions: Ireland, Scotland and the Survival of the United Kingdom, 1707–2007* (Oxford).

7. J.G.A. Pocock (1996) 'The Atlantic Archipelago and the War of the Three Kingdoms' in B. Bradshaw and J. Morill (eds.) *The British Problem, c. 1534–1707: State-Building in the Atlantic Archipelago* (Basingstoke and New York, NY), pp.172–91; cf. a more 'cultural' approach, with a greater emphasis on Wales, discussed in H. Kearney (2006) *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, (Cambridge, 2nd edn), pp. 4–5.

8. D. Hume (1983) *The History of England*, Vol. 3 (Indianapolis, IN), p. 206; p. 220.

9. J.G.A. Pocock (1975) 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *Journal of Modern History*, 48, 601–24; Kearney, *British Isles*, pp. 2–4.

10. The terms are employed in M. Hechter (1976) *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (London); for his account of all three British unions within this framework, see pp. 69–73.

11. S. Pincus (1995) 'The English Debate Over Universal Monarchy' in J. Robertson (ed.) *Union for Empire*; Jackson *Two Unions*, pp. 53–87; Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, pp. 69–73.

12. For useful European comparative treatments of the Union, see W. Doyle (2000) 'The Union in a European Context', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 10, 167–81; J. Livesey (2000) 'Acts of Union and Disunion: The Act of Union in Atlantic and European Context' in D. Keogh and K. Whelan (eds.) *Acts of Union: The Causes, Contexts and Consequences of the Act of Union* (Dublin), pp. 95–105.

13. For a comprehensive catalogue, see W.J. McCormack (1996) *The Pamphlet Debate on the Union Between Great Britain and Ireland, 1797–1800* (Blackrock). Two definitive high-political accounts of the Union's passage exist: G.C. Bolton (1966) *The Passage of the Irish Act of Union: A Study in Parliamentary Politics* (Oxford); P.M. Geoghegan (1999) *The Irish Act of Union: A Study in High Politics* (Dublin).

14. Bolton, *Act of Union*, pp. 120–4.

15. J. Smyth (2000) 'The Act of Union and "public opinion"' in J. Smyth (ed.) *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Union: Ireland in the 1790s* (Cambridge), pp. 145–60.

16. J. Kelly (2000) 'Popular Politics in Ireland and the Act of Union', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 10, 259–87.

17. J. Robertson (2005) *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680–1760* (Cambridge), p. 25

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Celticism and the Four Nations in the Long Nineteenth Century

Ian B. Stewart

On 10 January 1828, the *Caledonian Mercury* published a scathing letter to the editor titled 'Celtic Blarney'. The author was incensed that the paper had printed a report of the Anniversary Dinner of the Highland Club of Scotland, and denigrated the account as 'doleful trash ... the most admirable and unique compound of nonsense, blarney, and humbug that I ever remember to have read ... flummery which would sconner a Hottentot'. The correspondent also impugned the editor using two of the most classic foils in British history, the Celts and the French—'though by birth a Lowlander, you are almost as thoroughly inoculated with the *rabies Celtica* as the veritable sansculloterie of the Mountains'—before signing off as 'A GENUINE UNADULTERATED GOTH'.[1] Reflecting on the turbulence of the European revolutions twenty years

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later, *The Economist* used a similar trick, exclaiming 'Thank God! We are Saxons! ... Flanked by the savage Celt on one side, and the flighty Gaul on the other... The Frenchman is a civilised Celt. The Irishman a Barbaric Gaul'.[2]

These are familiar themes: English exceptionalism, Celtic marginalisation, and the spectre of the French. In historiography, Anglo-French connections and relations are perpetually re-assessed, while English constitutional history was purged of whiggishness long ago, but the Celt-versus-Saxon dichotomy remains alive and well.[3] Although racial essentialism is no longer a factor in history writing, the Celts are still employed as a simplistic 'other'.[4] This is in part because terminological confusion has always existed in relation to the word 'Celt' and its derivatives, which are as variable and vague as they are ubiquitous. 'Celtic' can be used variably to refer to a branch of the Indo-European language family, to describe a 'race' of people, or as shorthand for nations meaning 'not England'. In this chapter I follow Joep Leerssen's definition of 'Celticism' as the study, not of the Celtic peoples themselves, but of the 'reputation and ... meanings and connotations ascribed to the word "Celtic"' in different historical periods.[5] However, while there has always been a certain plasticity to the 'Celts', there are clearly discernible meanings employed and understood in different historical eras. Therefore, whatever convenience is derived from the tendency towards blanket use of the word 'Celtic' to refer to the non-English nations of the Isles is more than negated by its distortion of the past. For example, Michael Hechter's use of 'Celtic fringe' to describe the territory subjected to creeping English hegemony from the sixteenth century has been influential, but the phrase 'Celtic fringe' itself is dateable to the 1890s.[6] Here linguistic convenience, reflecting a model that is too simplistic, glosses over the vastly different histories of each of the nations vis-à-vis not only England, but also each other. As this chapter will show, there was no real sense of Celtic kinship among any of the different nations of the Isles until the middle of the nineteenth century; on the contrary, throughout the eighteenth century they were more likely to compete with one another for the claim to be the purest descendants of the ancient Celts, rather than unite based on familial sentiment.

'Four nations' history, which has sought to redress the balance of emphasis among England and the other nations of the Isles,[7] has done little to question the received narratives based around ideas of the Celt. This is unsurprising given the initial emphasis of the 'New British

History' on explaining the formation of the British state from the 'three kingdoms', unavoidably tending towards an Anglocentric teleology already prevalent in British historiography.[8] As David Cannadine has pointed out, even though the nineteenth century saw the most complete integration of the British state, nation and empire, English whig history predominated until the Second World War:[9] British successes were English triumphs.[10] After the war, non-English historiographies increasingly reconsidered their own national past, vastly understudied in comparison to that of the English. Irish, Scottish and Welsh historiographies have all been concerned to a considerable extent with their own 'national question', and each now possesses its own extensive historical literature relating to issues of national identity and nation building. An unintended consequence has been a 'silo effect', wherein these historiographies exist largely independent of one another. While seminal works on Britain and Britishness certainly exist,[11] they do not add up to an integrated British History. Four nations history, overlapping with the emergent transnational approaches in the last several decades, now seeks to link up the separate lines of national histories and identify hitherto overlooked angles in the modern period. But the nations have been and are joined by far more than just the political arrangements of the state superstructure, and shared ideas and culture have been fruitful areas of investigation.[12] It is therefore the aim of this chapter to examine and reassess Celtic ideas and their cultural outlets, revealing the ways in which they underpinned integrative concepts and processes in the four nations of the British Isles during the 'long nineteenth century'.

Two major trends have emerged in treating Celticism in the Isles. The first has been employed in the social sciences, where a 'core-periphery' model is used to explain the creation of the Celts by a metropolitan centre.[13] This approach tends to treat all non-English nations as 'Celtic', thereby ignoring intra-national cleavages and the variety of ideas around the Celts. The second tendency, seen more in historical and literary studies, is to examine how Celticism has factored into 'Britishness', or rather how Celtic ideas have underpinned certain national—and almost always separatist—identities.[14] Though Celticism did come to buttress national ideas and identities to differing extents in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, not to mention Cornwall, the Isle of Man or Brittany, this did not occur in most cases until the mid-eighteenth century, and did not immediately imply separatist aims.[15] It was almost universally agreed that the ancient Celtae described by Caesar had at one time populated the Isles;[16]

the question was to what extent the later Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman invasions had supplanted them, if at all. The importance of the Celtic past waned in England as it waxed in the other nations, but even well into the nineteenth century Celtic ideas were not inherently separatist, though they did come to underpin movements for increased autonomy and, increasingly, versions of independence in their respective nations. Eventually many modern Celts of the various nations recognised their racial kinship, leading to the emergence of pan-Celticism at the end of the nineteenth century, institutionalised in the Celtic Association, which sought to connect the Celtic nations and form an extra-Anglo polity, thereby inverting the idea of Great Britain and seeking to make England peripheral to the Celtic nations.

Examining Celticism in the four nations holistically reveals over-looked trends that cut against the historiographical grain. For example, Celtic descent was drawn upon in different nations at different times, and Celticism was not simply reducible to non-Englishness. There were prominent English scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries claiming the Celtic mantle for the English. Undoubtedly, anti-Celtic racism existed in a variety of quarters; for example, in the eighteenth-century antiquarianism of John Pinkerton (1758–1826), the Victorian anthropology of Robert Knox (1793–1862) and his circle, or the con-stitutionalist history ring around E.A. Freeman (1823–1892), and fre-quently in the popular press.[17] But many, like J.S. Mill (1806–1873), played down the importance of race in the Celtic context or, like Matthew Arnold (1822–1888), flipped it on its head, arguing that racial science suggested the British were actually a mixed-blood Anglo-Celtic hybrid. This chapter therefore hopes to offer some suggestive examples of a topic that demands extended and detailed study.

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Celticism was a point of contention among the four nations in the early modern period. The Isles were far from integrated culturally, let alone politically or socially, during the early modern period, as open con-flict reinforced long-running prejudices among the three kingdoms (and four nations). Ethnicity was based on national descent, which was cru-cial because the past functioned as authority: an esteemed ancestral line-age meant more prestige in the present. Though competing versions of constitutionalism accorded differing degrees of importance to ethnicity,

with Anglo-Saxonism gradually ascendant, by and large the Celts were not depicted negatively.[18] On the contrary, Celtic ideas could be seen as unifying rather than divisive, and one strand of Gothicism held the Celts to be part of the same northern European people as the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Teutons, thus preserving the same ancient freedoms as the Anglo-Saxons.[19] This Celto-Gothic interpretation peaked in the middle of the eighteenth century,[20] but collapsed shortly thereafter, albeit surviving on the continent into the nineteenth century. Yet nineteenth-century Celtic ideas relied on the eighteenth-century ideas and myths of Celtic national descent explored in this chapter; recognition of the latter is imperative to a correct understanding of the former.

The history of the British Isles was firmly structured within a European framework, to which the Celts were central. The third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published in 1797, lists the 'CELTÆ, or CELTES' as 'an ancient nation, by which most of the countries of Europe are thought to have been peopled'.[21] The only written records of the ancient Celts were descriptions by classical writers, which left early modern scholars unsure whether there had been a contiguous Celtic polity or society. However, it was generally agreed there had been a single Celtic language. While Christian theology viewed Hebrew as the original language of humanity, some scholars began to challenge this idea during the seventeenth century, either equating Hebrew with Celtic or substituting Celtic in its place.[22] Because the language used by the ancient Celts was unknown and unwritten,[23] any nation could claim to have best preserved it, and German, French, Swedish, Dutch, Welsh, Scottish, Irish and English scholars all squabbled over the Celtic mantle, until the Indo-European language paradigm pioneered by William Jones (1746–1794) at the end of the eighteenth century eventually offered solution to the question of the 'Original language'.[24]

Britain was very much a part of this European intellectual power struggle. The Isles were thought to have been populated by the Celts, a common thread in the humanism of figures like Jean Bodin (1530–1596), Philippus Cluverius (1580–1622), George Buchanan (1506–1582) and William Camden (1551–1623), though Ireland's provenance was contentious. Cluverius stated the peopling of Ireland was uncertain, 'but that they were Celte, as the other Britaines, [*sic*] is probable', an interpretation that strengthened over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[25] However, Cluverius argued that the German language was closest to that of the ancient Celts. Terminological confusion

reigned, and because the Celts were thought to have occupied most of Europe, they could be claimed as ancestors by any of these nations. Far from the modern idea of a 'Celtic fringe' on the Atlantic coast of Europe, the entire continent could be referred to as the relic of an ancient *Europa Celtica*, and it was not until the turn of the eighteenth century that the geographical specificity of the Celts, with their dialects and cultural vestiges, began to be confined to the British Isles and Brittany.[26]

Several scholars, aware of each other's work and corresponding intermittently, shifted the debate. The Breton Abbé Paul-Yves Pezron (1639–1706) claimed that the Celts were the descendants of Noah's grandson Gomer, whose language was preserved most completely in Breton and Welsh: 'The people who are in Brittany … and also those who live over the sea, I mean Wales … these are those who have the honour of having preserved the language of the descendants of Gomer…'.[27] Translated into English in 1706, the work proved enormously influential and was re-issued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1707 Edward Lhwyd (1660–1709), the Welsh keeper of the Ashmolean Museum and an admirer of Pezron, published the first volume of his *Archaeologia Britannica*, a rigorous work on the 'Ancientest Languages of Britain and Ireland' that painstakingly detailed the affinity among the Welsh, Cornish, Breton, Irish and Scots Gaelic languages. The work is now seen as the first major development in Celtic linguistics, but Lhwyd's aim was primarily to draw 'a Clear Notion of the First Planters of the Three Kingdoms'.[28] Lhwyd's emphasis here points to the importance attached to the question of which nation had the strongest claim to be the original inhabitants of the islands. It was an academic truism that the different nations were descended from the Celts; what really mattered was being the purest descendants of the first Britons, a claim to which the Welsh fiercely clung, arguing that the modern British constitution was inherited from their original Briton ancestors rather than the Saxons.[29] Although a Welsh patriot, Lhwyd declared Irish to be elder than Welsh and Breton, a hypothesis supported by the enormously influential German polymath G.W. Leibniz (1646–1716), who cited Lhwyd and refuted Pezron explicitly in his posthumously published *Collectanea Etymologica* (1717). Finally, the Irish deist John Toland (1670–1722), who claimed to have given Lhwyd the idea to examine the languages comparatively,[30] outlined in 1718–1719 three letters to the Irish peer Robert Molesworth (1656–1725) 'A Specimen of the Critical History of

the Celtic Religion and Learning'. Toland also declared Irish to be more ancient than Welsh, crucially connecting the language to the Druids and disentangling it from Gothic: 'the Celtic and the Gothic [languages], which have been often taken for each other, are as different as Latin and Arabic'.[31] These various works further rooted the Celts to the Isles; however, scholars disagreed—largely but not solely due to patriotism—over the antiquity of the different Celtic 'dialects' and traditions, arguing over which nation had the most authentic claim to be the closest descendants of the original Celtic inhabitants.

Eighteenth-century antiquarianism thus had several related Celtic strands to draw upon, which were mixed according to the convictions and biases of the author. Henry Rowlands (1655–1723), an Anglesey vicar and friend of Lhwyd, combined his ideas with those of Pezron— 'that great light of our British antiquities'—to argue that Anglesey (Mona) was the home of the Druids and that the language called 'Celtic or British … was undoubtedly one of the primary vocal modes and expressions of mankind after the dispersion at Babel'. He provided language tables comparing Welsh and Hebrew to prove the assertion.[32] The English antiquary Francis Wise (1695–1767) drew on Pezron, Lhwyd and Toland, directly suggesting Celtic—preserved most purely in Irish— could be called 'the Universal language of the post-diluvian world' and was safely protected from the Gothic in the 'corners, and hiding places' of Western Europe.[33] Wise's friend, the English archaeological pioneer William Stukeley (1687–1765), took a similar line, drawing heavily on Toland and the antiquary John Aubrey (1626–1697) in arguing that monuments like Stonehenge and Avebury were built by Celtic Druids. But Stukeley, an Anglican clergyman, fashioned his own ideas of the Druidical philosophy into a defence of Trinitarianism—the idea that God exists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit—rejecting the freethinking deism of figures like Toland.[34] Celtic ideas and origins could thus be the vehicle in which other, more immediate, arguments were advanced. No single interpretation was cogent enough to hold the field, but the broad lines of argument were re-hashed over the following century, and were an important part of antiquarian and historical studies of the Isles.

The centrality of Celtic ideas to the history of the British Isles in the eighteenth century is a stark contrast to the denigration of the Celts in favour of the Saxons by some authors during the nineteenth century. Stukeley privileged the Celts, arguing that 'Britannia' was a Celtic word from the ancient Britons, who by the 'Ungratful [*sic*] Saxons' were

forced through 'barbarous violence and savage masacr [*sic*] … to retire into the baron and mountainous parts of Cumberland, Cornwal [*sic*] and Wales'.[35] David Hume (1711–1776), an unapologetic Lowland Saxonist, nevertheless acknowledged the Celtae as the first Britons and asserted that Celtic 'governments, though monarchical, were free, as well as those of all the Celtic nations'.[36] The etymologist John Cleland (1709–1789), author of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, or 'Fanny Hill', maintained English to be closest to the ancient Celtic language.[37] James MacPherson (1736–1796)—briefly the doyen of British antiquarians on the back of Ossian's popularity—contended not only that the Celtae were the original inhabitants of Europe, but also that their name derived from the appellation 'Gaël', synonymous with Scottish Highlanders, who first peopled the Isles, rather than the Britons (Welsh).[38] Ethnicity clearly had some import, but by and large the fact that power in the Isles was increasingly consolidated by a nation purporting itself as Anglo-Saxon did not preclude Celtic dignity or a share of historical significance. The shrill tone and exclusionism of high racialism were a long way away.

MacPherson embodied the zenith of enthusiasm for the Celtic past—retrospectively labelled 'Celtomania' in the nineteenth century—and both Ossian and his *An Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland* (1771) were increasingly challenged in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, creating space for the acceleration and ascendance of the Anglo-Saxon paradigm. The first and most devastating assault on Celtic ideas came from the English Anglican Bishop Thomas Percy (1729–1811), who divided Europe between the Celts—Gauls, Britons and Irish—and the Goths or Teutons—Germans, Belgians, Saxons and Scandinavians.[39] Language tables and comparisons between Druidism and the Gothic religion of Odin demonstrated that the 'Teutonic and Celtic Nations were *Ab origine* two distinct people'.[40] Percy consulted a Welshman named Evan Evans (1731–1789) who, irked by MacPherson and his Scottish chauvinism, guided Percy through some of the relevant literature, declaring that 'no nation in Europe possess greater remains of ancient and genuine pieces [of poetry] … than the Welsh'.[41] Percy—finding it 'pleasant to have MacPherson attacked by a "North Briton"'[42]—proved an inspiration and cautious mentor to the vehemently anti-Celtic lowlander John Pinkerton, who sneered that the eighteenth century could be 'called the Celtic Century, for all Europe has been inundated with nonsense about the Celts'.[43] Pinkerton's *Dissertation on the Scythes* painted the Scythes as progenitors of most European nations—and

direct ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons—who had conquered the Celts and pushed them to the fringes of Western Europe. Writing around the same time as Pinkerton, Sharon Turner (1768–1847)—also influenced by Percy—produced the first modern Saxon history of England, declaring 'Our language, our government, and our laws, display our Gothic ancestors in every part'.[44] The Celts, already pushed to the geo-political margins of the Isles, were now being pushed to the intellectual and ideological margins as well.

Celtic importance in English antiquarian thought plummeted as the eighteenth century ended, though it remained stable in the other nations of the Isles. However, in the context of the eighteenth-century rise of particular national ideas, the 'Celtic nations' did not accord much importance to their kinship—as evidenced by writers like MacPherson and Evans. The competition among antiquarians from each of the four nations reveals that Celticism was a source of conflict among Welsh, Scottish and Irish scholars in the eighteenth century, where Ossian proved the flashpoint; there was no sense of a shared identity of marginalisation or oppression.[45] It can be argued that Saxonist scholars, even by denigrating the Celts, actually helped to connect ideas of the different Celtic nations by treating them monolithically. Nevertheless, as English power and Saxon prejudice increased into the nineteenth century, the other three nations eventually had recourse to ideas that linked them, ultimately setting the stage for the emergence of pan-Celticism.

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Ideas of a Celtic 'race' became popular at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as developments in the 'racial sciences' of anthropology, ethnology and philology catalysed racial thinking and the classification of peoples.[46] Nations and races were compared throughout the early modern period but these categories had more to do with ideas of genealogy and descent, and, as Colin Kidd has argued, the biblical framework in which scholarship operated stressed humanity's descent from one common source (monogenesis) and precluded separating mankind into distinct categories of origin (polygenesis).[47] Racial typologies and rankings emerged with the 'secularisation of knowledge'—the decoupling of scholarship from theology—that occurred with Enlightenment. However, at the same time, the Indo-European linguistic paradigm suggested the common root of most European languages, including those

in the Celtic branch, pointing to familial links among all Indo-European peoples. Ironically, while philology pointed to common kinship of Celts and Saxons, a few outspoken ethnologists and much of the popular press kept them divided. Against the background of increasing national consciousness, the ethnic makeup of nations mattered less in proving a particular descent than it did for more immediate hard and fast national differences in the present—a frequent recourse of both British politicians and the press in assessing the situation in Ireland in particular.

The political landscape of the United Kingdom, particularly the situation in Ireland and unsteady Union of 1801, furnished the important backdrop for Celtic ideas in the nineteenth century. For the British ruling class, the 'otherness' of the Celtic race provided a ready-made excuse for Irish differences and the inability of the British to adequately govern the island, as outlined by the pioneering works of L.P. Curtis Jr.[48] However, Curtis' approach to the English–Irish relationship as a dichotomy of Saxon vs. Celt has resulted in an equation of the two, tangling the wispier threads of the relations between Celts and Saxons in Britain, as opposed to the United Kingdom. These require gentle untying rather than forceful separation. Undoubtedly anti-Celtic prejudice existed in a variety of guises during the nineteenth century and the repugnance of Victorian racialism and 'Teutomania' linger heavily in historical memory, but this treatment has been too monolithic. The paradigms of understanding shifted, but Anglo-Celtic overlaps existed in the nineteenth century, just as they had in the eighteenth.

Ethnology was the key field for the developing racial ideas of Celt and Saxon. However, the dominant figure in British ethnology—James Cowles Prichard (1786–1848), a Bristol physician of Welsh parentage—protected the Celts in this scientific realm. Remembered most for his *Researches into the Physical History of Man* (1813), Prichard proved through philological comparison that the Celtic languages belonged to the Indo-European family in *The Eastern Origins of the Celtic Nations* (1831). But Prichard's primary motivation was religious rather than patriotic; raised a Quaker, his scholarship revitalised a Christian science of man that defended monogenesis from the onslaughts of polygenesis, which was advocated by Pinkerton but also occupied a strong foothold in France, where racial categories hardened under positivist influence.[49] It was in Paris that the foremost British polygenist, Robert Knox, studied comparative anatomy before he became professor of Anatomy in Edinburgh.[50] A racial determinist, Knox's theories

resembled those of Joseph de Gobineau (1816–1882) in contending that race-mixing caused the decay of civilisations and he attacked Prichard, whom he placed among the 'well meaning, timid persons' who 'dreaded the question of race'.[51] According to Knox, the biological inferiority of other races justified Britain's right to empire around the globe and more locally in Ireland. He also argued for the Saxon commonality of England and the Lowlands, which the Celts had never occupied: 'the Caledonian Celt of Scotland appears a race as distinct from the Lowland Saxon of the same country as any two races can possibly be'.[52] The Celts were inferior in battle, as proved by Celtic defeats at Culloden, the Boyne and Waterloo.[53]

No doubt because of the fervour of his unsavoury ideas, Knox stands out as a Victorian racist par excellence. Although he had followers, particularly those who formed the Anthropological Society of London in 1863, Knox was a provocateur and his extreme views are not representative. Treatment of race was normally more nuanced, even in scientific works.[54] The English barrister and amateur ethnologist Luke Owen Pike (1835–1915) took issue with Knox and those who divided Britain between two races, arguing that the Celtic race still made up the majority of the English (and British) nation, despite repeated invasions.[55] Pike pointed out the problems of identifying races of people through philology, arguing that 'the partly Anglo-Saxon origin of the English language does not necessarily imply the Anglo-Saxon origin of the English people'.[56] Other scholars—Thomas Price (1787–1848), Richard Garnett (1789–1850), Robert Latham (1812–1888) and Isaac Taylor (1787–1865)—challenged the racial supremacy of the Saxons on anthropological and linguistic bases. In 1885, John Beddoe (1826–1911) published his landmark study *The Races of Britain*, containing his famous 'index of negrescence', a scale measuring eye, hair and skin colour and reducible to the equation: '$D + 2N - R - F = Index$'.[57] Britons became darker the further west one travelled, and Beddoe equated the Celts to the 'Negroid' type found in Africa. Beddoe felt Saxonism to be in full decline: 'It is not very long since educated opinion considered the English and Lowland Scots an almost purely Teutonic people. Now the current runs so much the other way that I have had to take up the attitude of an apologist of the "Saxon" view'.[58] But Beddoe is not reducible to a Saxon chauvinist, the book having developed from a prize-winning essay submitted to the 1868 National Eisteddfod, which helped to fund its publication.[59] Differences in race were seen to be matters of fact,

and those who deemed themselves Celts were as interested in their distinctiveness as Anglo-Saxonists were, a consideration overlooked in the Anglo-Celtic dichotomy.

Racialism was not the exclusive preserve of science, and was more strident in popular discourse. For instance, the character Sidonia in Benjamin Disraeli's (1804–1881) novel *Tancred* (1847) reflected a prominent sentiment of the age when, musing on the success of English civilisation, he declared 'it is an affair of race. A Saxon race, protected by an insular position, has stamped its diligent and methodic character on the century … All is race, there is no other truth'.[60] While Knox's broadsides against the Celts following the 1848 upheavals—the 'Celtic race could never comprehend the meaning of the word liberty'[61]—were echoed in circulations such as *The Economist* (see p. 1), many denounced the notion that the Celtic race was inherently rotten. J.S. Mill defended the Irish, arguing that imputing difference to race was the most vulgar of 'modes of escaping from the consideration of the effect of social and moral influences on the human mind'.[62] The historian Henry Buckle (1821–1862) picked up this thread in the 1850s: 'the simple fact being, that the Irish are unwilling to work, not because they are Celts, but because their work is badly paid'.[63]

In many ways, the Irish are a special case in the history of Britain, and anti-Irish prejudice existed for more than half a millennium before the Irish were deemed to be Celtic. For Hume the Irish were an exception in the entirety of Europe; whereas Viking invasions by 'northern tribes … had spread barbarism in other parts of Europe', they had 'tended rather to improve the Irish'.[64] Jacobitism was a concurrent danger, but though Celtic Highlanders were briefly deemed a threat and their customs proscribed after the 'Forty-five', they were quickly reconciled to the Union—largely through service to the Empire—and were not held in the same negative esteem as the Irish, as indeed none of the other Celts were.[65] Charles Trevelyan (1807–1886), chief conductor of British governmental policy during the famine of 1846–1851, provides a revealing example. Of Cornish extraction, Trevelyan declared himself a 'reformed Celt', boasting that he 'always regarded with peculiar interest the Celtic branch of our national family. However superior the German race may be in some points, I would not have Ireland Anglo-Saxon if I could'.[66] For Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859), the historical problem of the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Ireland had been masked by problems of religion that surfaced after the Reformation, for which he was criticised

by Knox.[67] In 1866 the *North Wales Chronicle* posed the question, 'Is "Fenianism" essentially Celtic?' The answer was a resounding 'no': 'The Irishman, we repeat, is not a rebel because he is a Celt, but solely because he is a Papist',[68] a sentiment highlighting the religious cleavages that could still cut through any emphasis placed on ethnicity. But for the Catholic Lord Acton (1834–1902), race was the problem in the Irish situation as 'Celts are not among the progressive, initiative races'.[69] T.H. Huxley (1825–1895) perceptively diagnosed the real essence of the Celtic problem:

> A leading article on the affairs of Ireland in any popular English paper is pretty certain to contain some allusions to the Celt and his assumed peculiarities. If the writer means to be civil, the Celt is taken to be a charming person, full of wit and vivacity and kindliness … or if the instructor of the public is angry he talks of the Celt as if he were a kind of savage.[70]

Irishness tainted the Celt, not vice versa. Irish commentators, like the Young Irelander Thomas D'Arcy McGee (1825–1868), placed varying emphasis on Celtic ideas. In response to an 1851 article in the London press, McGee drew on the historical importance of the Celts as 'the original inhabitants of Europe': figures like 'Cicero, Montesquieu, Cervantes, Ariosto, Raphael and Michael Angelo' were all Celts but 'with the *O* at the wrong end of their name'.[71] He vacillated between racial essentialism—arguing that all Irish were Celts and all Celts Catholic—and a more muted cultural approach wherein the Celtic element had been diluted through intermarriage with other races.[72]

The mixture of races was a prominent theme for Matthew Arnold, titan of Victorian cultural criticism, who staged a famous defence of the Celt in the context of his crusade against Saxon philistinism, with his lectures on 'Celtic literature' given at Oxford in 1865–1866. The eldest son of 'that Teuton of Teutons, the Celt-hating Dr. Arnold',[73] Matthew Arnold reacted strongly against his father's views and wrote to his sister, Jane Martha Arnold-Forster (1821–1899), of his pride in their 'semi-celtic origin', which he thought gave them the ability 'of comprehending the nature of both races'.[74] Written against the background of the simmering Fenian conflict in Ireland, Arnold—who drew heavily on Ernest Renan's (1823–1892) essay on Celtic poetry and literature[75]—urged his 'brother Saxons' to take a more sympathetic view of the Celtic Irish and the situation in Ireland, and called for 'a new Englishman', who

mixed the stolidity of the Saxon with the spirit of the Celt.[76] As soon as the lectures began to be printed in *The Cornhill Magazine*, *The Times* declared them to be 'arrant nonsense'.[77] Others were more tolerant. The Scot Robert Giffen (1837–1910), in *The Fortnightly Review*, found the 'positive value … very great', particularly Arnold's popularisation of the science behind origins, though the 'Celtic fibre' in English literature was doubted.[78] *The Spectator* praised *Celtic Literature*, proclaiming it Arnold's most successful attack yet on Anglo-Saxon philistinism, as it provided a solution and was not simply destructive.[79] By lending the weight and credibility of his name, Arnold forced positive Celtic ideas into mainstream debate, subverting the moralising language normally employed against the Celts by arguing that the Celtic element in the British population could do much to 'improve' the Saxon. Arnold's intervention further underscores the different ways the discursive struggle over the Celts could function as a proxy for debates about British culture.

Racial ideas developed considerably over the course of the nineteenth century; but, much like the ambiguity of the Celtic past allowed the Celt's malleability in the eighteenth century, the constantly evolving racial sciences and differences of opinion among intellectuals as to what exactly race was, meant that Celtic plasticity was preserved in the nineteenth century. Though the idea of a distinctive Celtic race was prominent, the boundaries of understanding were much more fluid than historiography has presented them to be.

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Pan-Celticism is one of the most overlooked aspects of the bundle of Celtic ideas.[80] Based on the premise that modern Celts share a common descent and should recognise their kinship and organise on that basis, Pan-Celticism seeks explicitly to connect the different nations of the Isles, with the exception of England, the Anglo-Saxon pariah.[81] Pan-Celticism also serves as an example of how racial thinking re-invigorated ideas of the Celts in the nineteenth century: the Celtic nations were no longer just groups of people sharing a common descent, they were united by the deeper biological layer of race. Racial thinking could therefore be beneficial to modern Celts, and was not simply a scientifically justified 'othering' mechanism of English hegemony.[82] Informal pan-Celtic exchanges occurred throughout the second half of the nineteenth century before the birth of the Dublin-based Celtic Association in 1900, the

first institutionalisation of the Pan-Celtic principle. In the logic of nineteenth-century racially-centred nationalisms, Pan-Celticism seemed to offer the possibility for the smaller nations to unite and oppose European global empires while ostensibly preserving national sovereignty—though in practice it was little more than a language-focused cultural revivalist movement.

Vague notions of Celtic kinship existed from the early modern period but, as we have seen, Celtic descent was squabbled over more than it was celebrated as a pan-national unifier. Pan-Celticism surfaced in the nineteenth century with the rise of nationalisms across Europe. It first manifested as informal exchanges of delegates to national festivals, beginning with the Abergavenny Eisteddfod of 1838, which hosted Breton scholars and revivalists.[83] Literary studies also began to take on a pan-Celtic, comparative aspect. Ernest Renan's 'La Poésie des Races celtiques' was one of the first major analyses of Celtic literature as a whole, connecting the native poetry of Brittany, Ireland, Wales and the Highlands, and treating their inhabitants as part of the same feminine Celtic race.[84] Matthew Arnold built on this sentiment with *On the Study of Celtic Literature* in 1867, which appeared in print the same year as the first *Congrès Celtique International* was held in St Brieuc.[85] Organised by Charles de Gaulle (1837–1880), the uncle of the famous statesman, who in 1864 published a pan-Celtic appeal to 'The Celts of the Nineteenth Century', the congress aimed 'to reconnect the members of the Celtic family', and brought together a handful of Welsh and Bretons.[86]

Occurring alongside some of the initial Celtic cultural forays, land agitation stimulated early pan-Celticism. The 'Land War' in Ireland, along with unrest in the Highlands and discontent with landlords in Wales, served as the backdrop for organisation.[87] The militant Highland cultural nationalist John Murdoch (1818–1903) wrote in 1875 that the purpose of his newspaper *The Highlander* was to sink 'the differences between the different members of the Celtic family'.[88] His ideas were cited at the Highland Land Conference of 1886 at Bonar Bridge, where John Stuart-Glennie (1841–1910) floated the prospect of a 'Celtic League', received with acclaim by the Irish and Welsh delegates. Stuart-Glennie's main point followed a Celtic historicist line—that Celtic rights to the land had been violated in the Celtic nations by oppressive Anglo-Saxon conceptions of right and wrong. Although framing the problem as Celt against Sasannach, Stuart-Glennie urged cooperation with oppressed English

peasants, taking issue with Anglo-Saxon, rather than English, institutions. Michael Davitt (1846–1906), radical leader of the Irish Land League, took a harder line, describing the land problem as 'seven generations' of oppression by 'Anglo-Saxons'.[89] He toured Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the 1880s, urging solidarity, but though some prominent Liberals like T.E. Ellis (1859–1899) in Wales supported the idea of co-operation, it would be another fourteen years before pan-Celticism was institutionalised. However, in the individual nations themselves, cultural nationalist movements arising out of the land agitation were successful in securing legislation on a Celtic historicist basis. William Gladstone (1809–1898) recorded reading W.F. Skene's (1809–1892) *Celtic Scotland* (1876–1880)—a work that stressed the Celtic elements of medieval Scotland—and justified his various land acts on a historicist reading of the situation, writing to William Vernon Harcourt (1827–1904) that Highland crofters deserved legislation to restore historical rights of which they had been deprived.[90]

The last several decades of the nineteenth century also saw an increasing pan-Celtic element in the various national cultural festivals. Of all the gatherings, the Welsh Eisteddfod, a bardic festival and musical competition, had the longest genealogy, supposedly dating back to 540 before being re-invented in the later Middle Ages and then again in 1789.[91] Eisteddfodau were (and still are) convened by the Gorsedd, a neo-druidic body of bards invented by the stonemason Iolo Morganwg (1747–1826). The Gorsedd occasionally conferred honorary membership upon other leading Celts, and the Eisteddfod became the template for Celtic gatherings in all the Celtic nations, including the Breton *Congrès Celtique* in 1867, the Scottish *Mòd* in 1893, and the Irish *Oireachtas* and *Feis Ceoil* in 1897. Perhaps because they could point to longer lines of national tradition—though with much invention to be sure—the Welsh were more insular than the other Celtic nations, leaving the Irish to take up the pan-Celtic banner. At the 1898 national *Feis Ceoil* in Belfast the delegates from the largest Celtic nations decided to form a pan-Celtic committee, with the aim of hosting a Pan-Celtic Congress in 1900.[92]

The committee renamed itself the Celtic Association in 1900, and was driven largely by the Honorary Secretary, E.E. Fournier d'Albe (1868–1933), an English-born physicist. Fournier edited the monthly journal *Celtia* and organised the triennial Pan-Celtic Congresses in Dublin (1901), Carnarvon (1904) and Edinburgh (1907). Fournier aimed for the 'regeneration of the Celtic race' through language revivals

in each of the Celtic nations, which would lead to an awakening of the collective Celtic soul, and ultimately spiritual and political independence. In slightly more direct terms, Fournier characterised the approach as 'militant Celticism, directed mainly against the deadening and demoralising influences of modern Anglo-Saxondom, and working to raise the self-respect and strengthen the cohesion of the Celtic race'.[93] Fournier proposed a radical political option, wherein the 'Celtic federation' would be joined by other oppressed countries in a 'Hansa of small nations' that could oppose imperial powers, above all England. But tensions between the Celtic nations still existed and, frustrated by lack of Pan-Celtic progress generally and particularly in the Highlands, Fournier at one point declared the 'sole remedy' was for Ireland to annex the Highlands: 'Scotia Minor must again become part of Scotia Major'.[94] A 'Gaelic Empire', shorn of Wales 'who feebly struggles in the dark', would be composed of Ireland, the Highlands and the Isle of Man, as 'The Gael is the strong man of these Islands … When he comes into his full strength, he will put a thing or two in order'.[95] The idea was subsequently abandoned following criticism from Scottish nationalists, but nevertheless illustrates the fact that tensions relating to Celticism in the various nations still existed even in the Pan-Celtic era. Anglo-Irish figures like W.B. Yeats (1865–1939) joined the Association, along with more politically oriented veterans such as Michael Davitt. Patrick Pearse (1879–1916) and Douglas Hyde (1860–1949) briefly joined before a row with the Gaelic movement meant they were forced to abandon it; the episode points to the essential fact that, despite the existence of Pan-Celticism, nationalism trumped cosmopolitanism. The Association lost significant momentum when Fournier retired in 1909, though the Celtic Congresses were rekindled in 1917 and the Celtic League still hosts them to this day—but the Association is now defined primarily by language and culture, rather than race.

While the Celtic Association occasionally took a hard line against the Saxons, for the most part Pan-Celticism existed happily alongside other national identities, further revealing the malleability of Celticism and the overemphasised Celt-Saxon dichotomy. Cornwall, which successfully petitioned for inclusion in the Pan-Celtic Congress of 1904, provides an obvious example—the leaders of its Celtic revival remained loyal to England despite harbouring Jacobite Legitimist beliefs. But Celtic ideas could also be used to underpin ideas of Britishness in the four nations. During the land agitation in the Highlands, commentators posited

an 'Anglo-Celtic' identity, arguing for a racial mixture in which Scots and English were equal partners in the Empire.[96] John Stuart-Glennie adopted this line of argument, attributing Shakespeare's linguistic proclivity to bardic, Cymric blood. Unionism and loyalty to the monarchy also survived in this context—the Queen was routinely toasted in Gaelic at Highland gatherings, so Highlanders could symbolically assert their distinctiveness while swearing loyalty to the monarchy.

Irish Pan-Celticists were likewise sympathetic to the Anglo-Celtic interpretation. The poet T.W. Rolleston (1857–1920) referenced the idea to dampen calls for Home Rule. The president of the Celtic Association, Lord Castletown (1848–1937), was an open Unionist and a soldier in the British Army during the Boer War; he saw no problem in reconciling what he saw as the sacred traditions of the Celtic race with involvement in the British Empire, referring proudly to the 'two Celts who ruled the world' in 1921, Lloyd George and 'Briand of Brittany'.[97] Celtic festivals could also have a British flavour. The Scottish Mòd was quickly retitled the Royal National Mòd, as was the Royal National Eisteddfod, with King Edward VII (1841–1910) and Queen Alexandra (1844–1925) honoured as members of the Gorsedd,[98] and Eisteddfodau were occasionally held in England. Edward VII presented his son George as the Prince of Wales in 1901, before this ceremony was institutionalised as the Investiture in 1911, designed to reconcile Wales and England, Celt and Saxon.[99]

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Celtic ideas have existed in a number guises and have been employed for varying purposes in the four nations. The plurality of ideas around the Celt in the long nineteenth century is a testament to their importance, despite the fact that the Celts often served as a blank canvas on which commentators could paint their own ideas about race, nation and politics in the Isles. Investigating Celticism both holistically and in each of the four nations reveals the complex, tangled history of a set of ideas to do with ethnic descent, and its links to national ideas, character, race and 'identity'. It guards against teleology of the type that assumes Celticism has always had a pan-Celtic element. Despite a vague recognition of kinship in the eighteenth century, nations sharing a Celtic descent competed more amongst each other for the Celtic mantle than they did in the nineteenth century, and even with pan-Celtic recognition and an

official movement, national loyalties still took precedence over the cosmopolitan Celtic Association.

Examination of Celtic ideas in the four nations also leads to a reassessment of the importance accorded to race and ethnicity as major components of identity in recent British history writing. Given that Celticism is the major ethnic connector among the three non-English nations, its erratic variability and lack of cohesive power undermines the importance of ethnicity in the four nations more generally. Any sense of a shared Celtic identity based on race did not come about until the latter half of the nineteenth century and, even then, only in conjunction with the rise of national movements.

Celtic ideas varied depending on the nation, era and intellectual backdrop, and are not simply reducible to a monolithic 'other'. Under scrutiny, modern ideas of the Celt, and especially anti-Celtic prejudice, turn out to be less about separateness or similarity and more the sliding scale of a barometer measuring contemporary intellectual or political pressures. Recent studies of the Celts fit this model more than ever—from the national myth-busting of Hugh Trevor-Roper, the deconstruction of Simon James and Malcolm Chapman, or the 'identity'-oriented study of Murray Pittock. Undoubtedly the Celts were frequently 'othered' and some individuals held an irrational, disproportionate animosity toward them—Pinkerton or Knox, for example—but often anti-Celtic prejudice reveals more about prevailing intellectual trends or the political situation in the Isles at the time than it does anything concrete about Celtic ideas or, indeed, those considered 'Celts' themselves.

NOTES

1. *Caledonian Mercury*, 10 January 1828, p. 2.
2. 'The Saxon, The Celt, and The Gaul', *The Economist*, 29 April 1848, pp. 477–8.
3. For the Anglo-French relationship, see, for example, R. Gibson (2004) *Best of Enemies: Anglo-French Relations Since the Norman Conquest* (Exeter); R. and I. Tombs (2006) *That Sweet Enemy: The French and the British from the Sun King to the Present* (London); C. Charle, J. Vincent and J. Winter (eds.) (2007) *Anglo-French Attitudes: Comparisons and Transfers between English and French Intellectuals since the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester). For the assault on whiggism see H. Butterfield (1931) *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London); L. Namier (1929)

The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III (London). For studies that assess Celticism, see, for example, M.G.H. Pittock (1999) *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester); N. Davies (1999) *The Isles: A History* (London); B. Nelson (2012) *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race* (Princeton, NJ) relies on the Celt-Saxon framework of the once seminal work of L.P. Curtis Jr (1968) *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anglo-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* (Bridgeport, CT); L.P. Curtis Jr (1971) *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington, D.C.).

4. C. Kidd (2008) *Union and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500–2000* (Cambridge), pp. 170–2, identifies Gordon Donaldson (1913–93) as the last of the Scottish Teutonist tradition.

5. J. Leerssen (1996) 'Celticism' in T. Brown (ed.) *Celticism* (Amsterdam), p. 3.

6. M. Hechter (1975) *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (London); 'Celtic fringe' in *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2016, accessed 2 August 2016.

7. This aim is different from J.G.A. Pocock's original intention of spawning a 'New British History' that turned away from Europe and towards the Commonwealth, see J.G.A. Pocock (1975) 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', *Journal of Modern History*, 74, 601–24. For a recent assessment, see R. Bourke (2010) 'Pocock and the Presuppositions of the New British History', *The Historical Journal* (*HJ*), 52, 747–70.

8. See, for example, A. Grant and K.J. Stringer (eds.) (1995) *Uniting the Kingdoms? The Making of British History* (London); R.G. Asch (ed.) (1993) *Three Nations—A Common History? England, Scotland, Ireland and British History, c. 1600–1920* (Bochum); G. Burgess (ed.) (1999) *The New British History: Founding a Modern State, 1603–1715* (London); B. Bradshaw and P. Roberts (eds.) (1998) *British Consciousness and Identity. The Making of Britain, 1533–1707* (Cambridge); B. Bradshaw and J. Morrill (eds.) (1996) *The British Problem, c. 1534–1707: State Formation in the Atlantic Archipelago* (Basingstoke); B. Crick (ed.) (1991) *National Identities: The Constitution of the United Kingdom* (Oxford).

9. D. Cannadine (1995) 'British History as a "New Subject": Politics, Perspectives and Prospects', in Grant and Stringer, *Uniting the Kingdoms?*, pp. 12–28.

10. See, for example, R. Colls (1998) 'The Constitution of the English', *History Workshop Journal*, 48, 97–127.

11. L. Colley (1992) *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT); K. Robbins (1988) *Nineteenth-Century Britain: Integration and Diversity* (Oxford); P. Ward (2004) *Britishness Since 1870* (London).

12. For an especially novel take see C. Harvie (2008) *A Floating Commonwealth: Politics, Culture and Technology on Britain's Atlantic Coast, 1860—1930* (Oxford).

13. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*; M. Chapman (1993) *The Celts: The Construction of a Myth* (Basingstoke).

14. See, for example, Pittock, *Celtic Identity*; Davies, *The Isles*.

15. I do not use 'identity' here to imply that all those in the so-called 'Celtic nations' recognised themselves to be Celtic, but that a variety of national images arose during this century—from within and without the nations themselves—which relied on the idea of Celtic descent.

16. No classical writer explicitly described the aboriginal Britons as 'Celtae', though by the early modern period it was surmised they were the same. See, for example, D. Hume (1754–61: 1767) *The History of England: From the Invasion of Julius Caesar to The Revolution in 1688*, (London, 2nd edn, 8 vols), I, p. 2.

17. P. O'Flaherty (2015) *Scotland's Pariah: The Life and Work of John Pinkerton, 1758—1826* (Toronto, ON); G.W. Stocking Jr (1987) *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, NY), pp. 64–5; C.J.W. Parker (1981) 'The Failure of Liberal Racialism: The Racial Ideas of E.A. Freeman', *HJ*, 24, 825–46.

18. See C. Kidd (1999) *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600—1800* (Cambridge), esp. Chapter 4.

19. R.J. Smith (1987) *The Gothic Bequest: Medieval Institutions in British Thought, 1688—1863* (Cambridge), pp. 61–2, p. 112; Kidd, *British Identities*.

20. S. Kliger (1952) *The Goths in England: A Study in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Thought* (Cambridge, MA), pp. 84–5.

21. 'Celtae' (1797) in *Encyclopaedia Britannica; or, a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature*, (Edinburgh, 3rd edn, 18 vols), IV, p. 283.

22. T. Van Hal (2014) 'One Continent, One Language? *Europa Celtica* and its Language in Philippus Cluverius' *Germania Antiqua* (1616) and Beyond', *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 21, 889–907.

23. Aside from Ogam inscriptions, though these date from the fifth and sixth centuries AD and were not first researched until 1785, at which time Celtic prestige was in full decline [K. Forsyth (2006) 'ogam inscriptions and primitive Irish' in J.T. Koch, *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopaedia* (5 vols, Santa Barbara, CA.), IV, pp. 1390–3].

24. See J. Turner (2014) *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities* (Princeton, NJ), pp. 98–9.

25. P. Cluverius (1657) *An Introduction into Geography, both Ancient and Moderne, comprised in six books* (Oxford), p. 109.

26. Van Hal, 'One Continent, One Language?'.

27. P. Pezron (1703) *Antiquité de la Nation & de la Langue des Celtes, autrement appellez Gaulois* (Paris), 'Preface', n.p. '… les Peuples qui sont dans la *Petite Bretagne* … & ceux encore qui habitant au-delà de la mer, j'entens au païs de *Galles* … Ce sont eux qui ont l'honneur d'avoir conservé la Langue des descendans de Gomer…' (translation my own).

28. E. Lhwyd (1707) *Archaeologia Britannica, Giving some account Additional to what has been hitherto Publish'd, of the Languages, Histoires and Customs Of the Original Inhabitants of Great Britain: From Collections and Observations in Travels through Wales, Cornwal, Bas-Bretagne, Ireland and Scotland* (Oxford), I, *Glossography*, 'The Preface', n.p.

29. P. Morgan (1981) *The Eighteenth Century Renaissance* (Llandybïe).

30. J. Leerssen (1986) *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael. Studies in the Idea of Irish Nationality, Its Development and Literary Expression Prior to the Nineteenth Century* (Amsterdam), pp. 288–9.

31. J. Toland (1726) 'A Specimen of the Critical History of the Celtic Religion and Learning' in *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland*, (2 vols, London), I, p. 7.

32. H. Rowlands (1723) *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* (Dublin), p. 33, p. 295.

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77. The letter was printed in the introduction of *Celtic Literature*, where Arnold refuted it at length, *Celtic Literature*, ix–xii.

78. R. Giffen (1867) 'On the Study of Celtic Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, II, 125–6.

79. 'Mr. Arnold on the Celtic Genius', *The Spectator* (22 June 1867), pp. 696–8.

80. I follow Philip O'Leary in designating the institutionalised variety 'Upper Case P' Pan-Celticism, and the informal corollary, 'lower case p' pan-Celticism [See P. O'Leary (1994) *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival, 1881–1921* (University Park, PA), pp. 375–94].

81. Though Cornwall is included.

82. Cf. Chapman, *The Celts*.

83. S.S. de Beaurepas (1903) *Rénovation Celtique* (2 vols, Paris), I, p. 5.

84. Thomas Price submitted essays to the Abergavenny Eisteddfodau on these topics, but they received nowhere near the amount of attention as Renan's essay.

85. *Congrès celtique international, tenu à Saint-Brieuc (Côtes-du-Nord), Bretagne, en octobre 1867* (Saint-Brieuc, 1868).

86. *Congrès celtique*, vi.

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93. *Celtia*, I (1901), 15.

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96. See *Celtic Magazine*, V (1880), 406–10.

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The Beefeaters at the Tower of London, 1826–1914: Icons of Englishness or Britishness?

Paul Ward

In the nineteenth century, a new icon was added to the British national gallery, alongside established symbols such as Britannia and John Bull.[1] The distinctive costume of the Yeomen Warders and their highly visible role at the Tower of London made them colourful symbols of the nation. By 1858, the Beefeaters at the Tower were established enough as national symbols to cause controversy across Britain when the Office of Works, who employed them, suggested that as well as their ceremonial red and gold uniforms, they should have a work-a-day (and less expensive) blue uniform for all but state duties. Within a few years, this new uniform had also been accepted as symbolic of the nation. This chapter examines the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries as an epoch of crisis to which the monarchy and its agents responded by creating a narrative of historical continuity based on national loyalty to the Crown and constitution. The Beefeaters at the Tower played

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an important part in this response. But which nation did they represent? Whose history and tradition did they symbolise? Since they were located in the Tower of London, their symbolism could be associated with the United Kingdom, England or just the capital city. Many Britons associated the Beefeaters and the Tower unequivocally with England. Hence in 1901, Lord Ronald Gower began his history of the Tower as follows:

> To the English race the Tower of London will always be the most interesting of its Monuments … that, for eight centuries has been the very heart of the English capital, and, since the victor of Hastings raised the great Keep—or White Tower—through all the succeeding centuries, the Tower has been closely connected with the history of England.[2]

This chapter, therefore, explores the development of the Beefeater as a national symbol as well as the web of affiliations that complicated their national meaning in the context of a 'four nations' approach to British history. Four nations historians have sought to think about the ways in which the constituent nations of the UK were active in forging a shared British culture and consider the national plurality of the British past.[3] This chapter uses the Beefeaters, and their representation in the press and in advertising, to delineate the fluidities of national cultural boundaries in the British Isles in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Beefeaters' long history of service at the Tower was very much a part of English history but the Beefeaters themselves were recruited from veterans of the British Army who came from all parts of the United Kingdom and had served across the British Empire.[4] However, this acts as a reminder that the complex interactions within the British Isles, examined by Hugh Kearney in his classic *The British Isles: A History of Four Nations*, were often associated with the building of the British state. Murray Pittock has warned, in turn, that four nations historians have too often concentrated on what made Britain congeal as a state, resulting in a 'camouflaged Anglo-centrism' that emphasises 'homogeneity and commonality, thereby downplaying or ignoring expressions of tension, oppression and difference.'[5] The history of the Beefeaters allows for an exploration of issues of unity and diversity, being a case study located at the heart of the British nation, which suggests that the Beefeaters, through their association with the monarchy and the army and their histories, could claim to be British rather than just English. Being symbols

linked to the person of the monarch and the personnel of the Army, the Beefeaters are ciphers for the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century, even though most of their history is necessarily English.

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Given the roots of their uniform in the Tudor period and the origins of the warders in the White Tower built in the eleventh century, it is ironic that the Beefeaters' national symbolism dates only to about 1826, when the Duke of Wellington became Constable of the Tower of London and set about reforming the conduct of the Yeoman Warders. Before then the Beefeaters' reputation was so tarnished by their behaviour that they were unavailable to serve as a positive symbol of nation. The development of the Beefeater as national icon in the nineteenth century can usefully be understood within the 'invented tradition' paradigm, in which a version of national identity was deliberately constructed to overcome the Beefeaters' poor reputation.[6] In Britain, much of this construction was around the monarchy. As the cultural historian Alan Confino has remarked, 'the past is constructed not as fact but as myth to serve the interest of a particular community'.[7] The Beefeaters at the Tower of London provided both a symbol of permanence against turbulent changes and a way of incorporating urbanisation and democracy within monarchical constraints. The Beefeaters themselves were drawn from working-class ex-servicemen; their class and national origins served the monarchy well in providing a prop to the royal state while other working-class people were challenging the state through varieties of radicalism including Luddism, the Reform Bill riots of 1831–1832 and Chartism. Their solid masculinity, embodied in their uniforms, stood as a bulwark to the forces of change active across the century.[8]

Some of the components of the construction of such a conservative national identity dated back nearly a thousand years. As part of the Norman Conquest, the White Tower was built on the banks of the Thames in 1078 to subdue Anglo-Saxon London. From this date, there were warders at the Tower, though as a body they were formed officially only in the late fifteenth century as a detachment of the Yeoman of the Guard, the bodyguards of the royal household. Both bodies—bodyguards and warders—later came to be referred to as Beefeaters, and the only visual difference in their uniforms is the cross-sash worn by the Yeomen of the Guard but not by the Yeoman Warders. The Yeomen of the Guard had (and have) a ceremonial role in accompanying the monarch at annual rituals such as the state opening of parliament whereas

the Yeomen Warders' role was to protect the Tower of London, defend the royal family when they were in residence, and serve as warders to prisoners of the Crown held at the fortress. Warders therefore acted as witnesses to Anglo-British history, from Henry III's surrender of the Tower to Simon de Montfort in 1263, the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury during the Peasants' Revolt, the presumed murder of the Princes in the Tower, the beheadings of Queen Anne Boleyn and Lady Jane Grey, the torture of Guy Fawkes, an attempt to steal the Crown Jewels in 1671 and the last hangings that took place on Tower Hill in 1780.[9]

All these events became ingredients for the historical commentary that the Beefeaters recited to visitors when, from 1671, 'the public' were allowed entry to the Tower. Official visitors were also attracted to the Tower by the display of impressive and propagandist artefacts embodying English power. The Line of Kings, the Spanish Armoury (from the Armada), the Small Armoury and the Artillery Room were all in place by the 1690s. As Peter Hammond argues, 'The 18th-century Tower was the setting for the celebration of British monarchy and the Protestant patriotism which supported it.'[10] Many of these events preceded the establishment of the United Kingdom, from constitutional settlements and acts of union with Wales in 1536 and 1542, Scotland in 1603 and 1707, and Ireland in 1801. The Tower and the Beefeaters can be associated with an English history that underpins a later Britishness. Hence Rebecca Langlands has argued that 'English ethnicity embodied in a number of customs, traditions, codes and styles has existed at least since the early modern period, and this provided the basis for the state-aided development of the British "nation" during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.'[11] The 'history of England' was narrated as pertaining to the rest of the British Isles. The Beefeaters contributed to this narrative. With an eye on the unity of Britain in the nineteenth century, English and British histories were elided. English history came to be portrayed as underpinning the unified British state. Locating the origins of the Tower and Beefeaters in the eleventh century imposed an English historical narrative on the rest of the United Kingdom. Historical divergence in the past was hidden by the state's desire for unity in the present, despite many in Scotland, Wales and particularly Ireland sharing little sense of this English past. As Raphael Samuel has explained in his account of four nations history, '1066, "the one universally known date

in English history", has no resonance at all in Ireland.'[12] The association of the British monarchy with state construction motivated significant opposition in nationalist Ireland. Royal visits, accompanied by Beefeaters, were often warmly welcomed due to 'royal charisma and effectively executed ceremony',[13] but they could equally lead to the revitalisation of Irish nationalism.[14]

The construction of the Beefeaters as symbols of the British nation was no easy matter. The departure of the royal family from the Tower of London in the sixteenth century meant that the Tower's main function was as a prison. The warders also acted as tour guides and, by the eighteenth century, had acquired a very poor reputation for swindling tourists. The warders were certainly picturesque; a mid-eighteenth-century visitor described them:

> Upon their Heads they wear round flat-crowned Caps, tied round with Bands of party-coloured Ribbands: Their coats are of a peculiar make, but very becoming with large Sleeves, and flowing Skirts, and are of fine Scarlet Cloth, laced around the Edges and Seams with several Rowes [*sic*] of Gold Lace; and girt around their Waists with a broad laced girdle. Upon their Breasts and Backs they wear the King's Silver Badge, representing the Thistle and Rose, on which are the Letters G.R. in Capitals.[15]

Yet their abuses provided them with a lucrative occupation, signified by the ability to sell a wardership for £350 in the eighteenth century.[16] Colonel Sir Reginald Hennell explained, in his 1904 history of the Yeomen of the Guard, that, 'though retired officers of the Army still continued, most of the vacancies were filled up by civilians, largely recruited from those who by the length of their purse were able to purchase their appointments.'[17] The purchase of the office meant that it was imperative to recoup the outlay by charging visitors. In 1821, the Chief Clerk in the Record Office at the Tower, John Bayley, considered that the warders were damaging the national reputation. 'Their exactions', he wrote in his two-part history of the Tower, 'have become a tax not only burthensome upon the people, but disgraceful to the nation'.[18]

The warders, therefore, were visually appealing but financially manipulative and less than helpful in enhancing the visitor experience. Such abuses left them unavailable as icons of national identity in a period in which Britishness was being reformulated.[19] The Yeoman Warders

were considered an obstacle to the appreciation of the national history embodied within the Tower. In 1798, an attempt was made to encourage the warders to consider their reputation. Their orders and regulation directed the Yeoman Porter

> to be particularly attentive that warders are Regular and Vigilant in the Performance of every Part of their Duty; they are to be constantly sober, and clean in Appearance; respectful to their Superiors, and civil to all.[20]

But the Beefeaters were firmly seen as part of 'Old Corruption', a system of enriching Britain's elites through nepotism and sinecure that came under increasing criticism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[21] As late as 1837, the radical MP Joseph Hume was associating the Beefeaters with the lavish lifestyle of the old aristocracy:

> Ministers were acting a very unfortunate part in beginning a new reign with extravagance, instead of advising the Queen to carry on the Government with economy, so that she might obtain the love and affection of her subjects … And why was there to be such an enormous expense incurred, merely for the purpose of keeping up an additional number of Lords and Ladies of the Bedchamber, beef-eaters, and yeomen of the guard, with cocked hats and fine gold liveries? [Laughter.][22]

Such criticisms stoked the long period of discontent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Radicals, Luddites, Reformers, anti-Poor Law campaigners and Chartists unsettled the nation, its history and institutions as they campaigned against the entrenched abuses of the government, the aristocracy and the established order.[23] Facing a potential crisis of legitimacy, the British state sought to transform its institutions and national culture.

In 1826 the composition of the Yeomen of the Tower was transformed by the Duke of Wellington, ironically seen as one of the chief beneficiaries of Old Corruption. As W.D. Rubinstein has remarked, 'the end of Old Corruption is surely among the few examples in history of an elite reforming itself in some quite basic respects, which cost it considerable amounts of money.'[24] In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the British aristocracy sought to 'nationalise' itself, moving away from fashionable cosmopolitanism towards displays of patriotism, duty and association with national history.[25] Appointed as Constable of

the Tower, Wellington aimed to professionalise the Yeomen Warders and to establish them as a respected body operating within a clear code of conduct. He ensured that only soldiers with long service and good conduct could take up the post, and reduced their number from around a hundred to thirty-three. He tackled individual warders when they acted dishonourably and imposed guidelines that clarified Beefeaters' duties.[26] Crucially, though, Wellington insisted that henceforth Beefeaters be appointed only from non-commissioned officers in the British Army, who had showed their respectability and patriotism. As Martin has argued, 'It was this transparency of appointment that allowed the warder to become a popular symbol transcending class and region.'[27]

Simultaneously, a popular demand for access to the Tower had arisen. Rehabilitating the Beefeaters was connected to the growth of tourist interest in the Tower of London in the early nineteenth century.[28] Visits to sites of British history were considered to be potentially improving for the masses;[29] it was not only a question of top-down manipulation but also an interaction between popular interest in the Tower and the desire of those like Wellington and the political establishment to seek to guide such demand into healthy channels. As Billie Melman has argued, 'Central government, together with corporate bodies and interests and local metropolitan interests, were active agents in restricting consumption of history.'[30] Previously, as Samuel explained, the Tower 'though admitting the public to see its curiosities, fell into decay as a metropolitan presence'.[31] In 1821 and 1825, John Bayley published the two-volume *History and Antiquities of the Tower of London*, which was abridged to encourage sales in 1830.[32] Other popular histories followed in its wake and in 1840 a novel called *The Tower of London* by William Harrison Ainsworth was published. Lavishly illustrated by George Cruikshank, the book made the Tower and its inhabitants recognisable and attractive to the general public (Fig. 7.1). Visiting the Tower became fashionable. While some of the visitors were foreign tourists, they were vastly outnumbered by British visitors. John Baxendale has argued that domestic visitors believed that British history belonged to them.[33] Peter Mandler considers that the backdrop to the historical imagination of the Victorian tourist was 'the rise of the modern city, with especially after 1840, a large and growing commercial class of clerks and small tradesmen who had discretionary income and leisure opportunities that made tourism possible'.[34]

WARDERS' HALL.

Fig. 7.1 William Harrison Ainsworth's novel *The Tower of London* (1840) was illustrated by George Cruikshank and played a major role in popularising the history of the Tower of London and the Beefeaters within. *Source* Private collection

Such people found the Tower fascinating. Melman has shown that Ainsworth and Cruikshank deliberately intended to introduce the parts of the Tower closed to the public, which they considered 'the property of the nation, and should be open to national inspection'.[35] At the same time, thanks to the Wellington reforms, the Beefeaters themselves were seen as an essential part of visits to the Tower to be sought out, rather than swindlers to be avoided. They came to be seen as storytellers of the nations' history, much of it sensational, macabre and unsettling, but certainly entertaining.[36]

The combination of political and social unrest and a desire for a democratised sense of national history created a challenge for the British

monarchy. The Beefeaters provided one part of a potential solution. The reputation of soldiers was not high in nineteenth-century Britain, with Wellington himself reputedly describing them as 'the scum of the earth',[37] but the Beefeaters after the Wellington reforms were the cream of the crop, and were part of Wellington's wider strategy to rehabilitate the image of the professional soldier. They came to serve a purpose in 'peopling' the Tower, appointed from among non-commissioned servicemen, whose social origins were from the aspirational labouring classes. By being of 'good conduct', they had displayed their patriotism and respectability and hence the reputation of the Beefeaters was substantially higher than other soldiers.[38] The reform of the Beefeaters allowed the 'lower' social orders access to national history without disrupting the national hierarchy. As David Cannadine has argued,

> Britons generally conceived of themselves as belonging to an unequal society characterized by a seamless web of layered gradations, which were hallowed by time and precedent, which were sanctioned by tradition and religion, and which extended in a great chain of being from the monarch at the top to the humblest subject at the bottom.[39]

The novelty of Wellington's reforms had to be underplayed, since the creation of a new body would suggest a breach with the past and across the nineteenth century the trend among nation-builders was to assert the essential continuity of English (and British) history. In order to uphold the honour of the warders it became necessary to further emphasise their medieval origins and, given their rather mundane role in the Tower's security, to stress how their origins dated back to the Normans and the White Tower. Tower historians recognised the formation of the royal bodyguard as the warders' 'official' foundation date. Thus, Thomas Preston, writing a history of the Yeomen of the Guard for their 400th anniversary in 1885, began by asserting that,

> There are very few institutions in this country which can boast of a history of four centuries … Since that remote time there has been no royal pageant or ceremonial in which the Yeomen of the Guard have not taken a more or less conspicuous part. Their portly appearance, picturesque costume and ancient weapons, have made them famous.[40]

Some Yeoman Warders argued that their origins were older still, with John Fraser, born in the Scottish Borders, claiming ancestry not just from the White Tower but from William the Conqueror. He argued that

> when the first coronation of a king of all England took place—that of Duke William of Normandy, crowned William I of England, in 1066, the post of honour of guarding the entrance to the Abbey Church of St. Peter (now Westminster Abbey) was given to William's personal bodyguard. I shared in the same duty at the Coronation of King George V.[41]

Reaching back into the past, to a time before the United Kingdom was formed, provided a justification for the present. The Beefeaters were constructed as a medieval and early modern symbol of identity to provide a sense of stability in the rapidly changing nineteenth century.

* * * * *

The press played a major role in the popularisation of the Beefeaters as old in origin, steeped in tradition and representative of the constitution. This was developed alongside the creation of a public image of the monarchy as connected to national history and constitutionalism salient to an age of reform. John Plunkett has argued that the press were at the centre of the construction of a public monarchy: 'The engagements carried out by Victoria and Albert only had such an impact because they were keyed into the simultaneous development of popular weekly newspapers like the *News of the World*, *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, the *Weekly Times* and *Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper*.'[42] Newspapers diffused the iconic nature of the Beefeater beyond the confines of the Tower itself, making visual imagery the paramount feature in their status as national symbol. They contributed to the development of a British national identity, even though the press was still dominated by provincial titles.[43] Leading articles were often supplied from London and dealt with national affairs; editors used centrally processed news, and syndication of stories enabled provincial papers to fill their columns.[44] There were very few straightforwardly fact-based news reports of the Beefeaters at the Tower of London and much coverage was accompanied by editorial comment and pictorial representation. The Beefeaters were reported for the contribution they made to the construction of a sense of national identity associated with the longevity of Anglo-British history.

The most frequently represented scene was the Ceremony of the Keys, played out nightly at the Tower of London, in which the fortress was secured for the night. This ceremony was depicted over and over again

in very similar terms; the *Daily News* in 1852 and *Young England* in 1881 both described it as 'an ancient, curious and stately ceremony.'[45] Prior to technologies that allowed the printing of illustrations and photographs in large numbers, journalists painted pictures with words, explaining how readers might imagine the Beefeaters' distinctive costume. Beefeaters came to be reported as part of the *mise en scène* of royal and other events. Hence the *Bradford Observer* reported of the state opening of parliament that, 'Shortly a procession entered at the door to the right of the throne—red Beefeaters and golden maces; and then the sword of state, borne by the Duke of Wellington, the crown of England, and other emblems'.[46] The *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* explained of another royal occasion that 'The line was kept by well-drilled "Beefeaters" in their quaint costume of scarlet and gold'.[47] The nationalisation of culture described by Jose Harris also involved the nationalisation of history as tourism focused on London and transport that enabled national travel.[48] Newspapers across the four nations reported stories of the Beefeaters, encouraging tourists to visit London. For example, the *Glasgow Daily Herald* carried full coverage of the change in uniform of the yeomen in 1858.[49] Similarly, the *Western Mail* reported of a historical pageant in Cardiff: 'In the corridor of the hall [visitors] will be met by a gigantic beefeater in tightly-fitting crimson uniform, his head covered with the hat of the period of Henry VIII'.[50] The availability of stories about the Beefeaters across the four nations reinforced their importance in national history.

By the end of the nineteenth century, one in five of the population of England and Wales lived in Greater London, suggesting its increasing dominance in the British nation.[51] The monarchy and the royal family were associated with London while remaining representative of the United Kingdom as a whole. Both Mandler and Melman have stressed the modern and urban nature of British society in the nineteenth century, highlighting the role of new social groups in creating an audience for the press *and* visitors to national historical monuments. As tourism developed, London became a popular destination for imperial and foreign visitors alike, prepared through guidebooks for their travels.[52] As well as the physical sites of London, some of the capital's inhabitants were seen as tourist attractions in their own right, including military figures such as the guardsman in his red tunic and busby and the Chelsea Pensioner, as well as the London bobby.[53] There were nineteenth-century inventions such as the blue-coated telegram

messengers,[54] pearly kings and queens, and, of course, the Beefeaters.[55] In 1851, for example, the *Glasgow Herald* reported the Beefeaters as part of 'The Sights of London'.[56] Whereas some of these figures were associated solely with London, the Beefeaters, like the monarchy, were depicted in the press, across the United Kingdom, as belonging to the nation as a whole.

The provincial press emphasised the parallels between national, regional and local developments, and the ways in which national developments were increasingly shared by all parts of the United Kingdom, despite tensions and differences. This new mass audience for the press expected to receive its news and entertainment in a variety of media that reflected the diversity of leisure experiences in which they could participate. Mandler explains how the audiences 'considered the stories, pictures and dramatizations as preparation for the encounter with the historic building' and Melman argues that 'Reading about the Tudors preceded and preconditioned sightseeing of their traces, even among urban marginal groups such as the urban poor'.[57] The producers of newspaper and periodical journalism largely favoured moderate reform against a backdrop of a constitutional conservatism that enhanced the role of Beefeaters as purveyors of a democratised history. Martin Conboy has suggested that the press developed 'This narrative of nation [which] assisted social stability at home and pride in the achievements of the imperial effort abroad, which could also have a calming and integrative effect on the population.'[58]

Readers did not have to visit London to be introduced to the Beefeaters. The provincial press figuratively transported them outside London to be witnessed vicariously in British cities, towns and villages. Beefeaters were associated with celebratory dinners and banquets, especially those involving joints of beef.[59] The *North Wales Chronicle* reported in 1840 that at the Mayor's Grand Eisteddfod entertainment, 'there was introduced, with a flourish from the trumpet by men in the olden beefeaters' dress, a baron of beef, according to the old baronial custom.'[60] The *Glasgow Herald* carried eight pages of coverage of the opening of the Albert Hall by Queen Victoria in 1871, with men 'in all kinds of uniforms, among whom were conspicuous the "beefeaters" in their quaintly cut coats and low crowned hats.'[61] Regional newspapers reported on 'the ancient ceremony of the searching of the vaults beneath the Houses of Parliament'.[62] The *Belfast News-Letter* described

the opening of the new law courts by the Queen, who was preceded by 'a detachment of the Yeomen of the Guard, more commonly known as Beefeaters … Carrying halberds and dressed in their antique garb, these venerable Yeomen added one more feature of interest to the already animated and brilliant scene.'[63] These accounts readily elided the Yeoman Warders with the Yeomen of the Guard as Beefeaters but created an image of red and gold and historical identity reported in all four nations. Across the UK, reporting and reception was uneven. While the *Belfast News-Letter* had frequent reports, it represented Unionist Ulster. The nationalist *Freeman's Journal* reported on royal events and accompanying Beefeaters less frequently, and occasionally on Unionist events, such as a fancy dress ball at the viceregal lodge at which 'little master Blagrove' dressed as a Beefeater.[64] Its longest report on matters associated with the Beefeaters was in January 1885 when it covered the spate of bombs set off on 'Dynamite Saturday'.[65] These Fenian attacks focused on sites of symbolic importance in London, including the Tower of London, Westminster Hall and the House of Commons.[66] The hostility of radical nationalists and republicans in Ireland shows the diverse responses to symbols of British power in different parts of the kingdom.

Visual representations of the Beefeaters were nevertheless similar and iterative and became more common as mechanisation democratised the production of images.[67] The transition from woodcuts and wooden engravings to steel engravings and the reproduction of photographs brought the Beefeater into the visual imagination of the Victorian public. This representation of the baubles of the monarchy was parallel, as Janice Carlisle has explored, with representations of British parliamentary government, emphasising 'the central role in Victorian culture of visual experience.'[68] Familiarisation with the Beefeaters' uniform through illustrations meant that it could become a sensitive political and cultural issue. With small government and low state expenditure the spirit of the day, the Office of Works decided, in the 1850s, that the red and gold costume of the Yeomen Warders was extravagant and excessive. They decided to redesign the uniform, with Queen Victoria being consulted and playing a role in the final design. The intention was to maintain the shape and distinctiveness of the uniform, continuing its recognisably Tudor origin while reducing costs by using cheaper materials for day-to-day wear, and retaining the full red and gold only for royal and state occasions. The press, which had done so much to popularise

visual awareness of the Beefeaters, carried extended discussion of the change. With lingering hostility to 'Old Corruption', some newspapers mocked the reform; the *Morning Chronicle* teased that 'The honourable corps of "Beefeaters" would resent as an insult any attempt to strip them of their ugly ruffs and boiled lobster liveries.'[69] But the consensus was the great shame that economy, however welcome, was being put ahead of history:

> That respectable portion of the British public which holds our ancient institutions in veneration will learn with serious concern that it is intended to deprive the Tower of the rich holiday costume in which they have rejoiced since the days of Henry VIII … In point of economy this change is commendable … In other respects the change will suggest melancholy reflections on the innovating spirit of the age.[70]

Retrenchment and reform were in conflict with history. The press had done much to popularise the distinctiveness of the Beefeaters' appearance. It was, though, difficult to reconcile this with the desire for economy, as *Punch* noted:

> Lament, ye good old Tories,
>
> Old England's setting sun:
>
> Alas her ancient glories
>
> Are going one by one.
>
> The last drop of the barrel
>
> We very soon shall see;
>
> The Beefeaters' apparel
>
> Discarded is to be.[71]

The replacement uniform was to be a blue tunic with scarlet facings and blue trousers with a red stripe. The *Illustrated London News* came to the rescue of the reform. As well as describing the uniform in positive terms, it published a colour picture to illustrate the acceptability of the change, which it claimed the majority of the Beefeaters welcomed (Fig. 7.2):

Fig. 7.2 The new uniform, *Illustrated London News*, 27 November 1858. *Source* Heritage Quay

The new dress which Messrs. Batt and Son have designed is very useful and becoming. The old cut is retained, the alternations being in the colour of the cloth and the trimmings … The tunic or frock is of dark cloth, with a crown in red cloth on the breast, and the letters V.R. underneath …[72]

Within a few years, the undress uniform was equally accepted as part of the historical tradition of the Tower and its Beefeaters but subsequent changes to the design of the uniform always prompted press dissatisfaction. In 1885, when the design of the hat was changed, the London *Daily Telegraph* condemned 'the unsparing hand of a pretended reform [that] has seized upon the Beefeater's hat, narrowed it brim and raised its crown, torn away its coloured ribbons, and substituted a plain band surmounted by a rosette in front, more or less like a groom's cockade.'[73]

There was, as is inevitable in the desire to illustrate essential historical continuity, a remarkable similarity in the series of images shown in such newspapers and periodicals as *The Graphic*, the *Illustrated Police News*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *The Strand*. In 1871, *The Graphic* commissioned 'The Beefeater and Drummer Boy at [Field Marshal] Sir John Burgoyne's Grave'. Burgoyne had served under Wellington in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and in the Crimea. He died in 1871, in a period when military heroism was becoming increasingly important in the construction of British national identity.[74] *The Graphic*'s illustration depicted a stout Beefeater comforting a fresh-faced drummer boy as they stood looking at Burgoyne's grave (Fig. 7.3). It signified the approval of history on the military endeavours of Britain in the nineteenth century while also validating the future military service symbolised in the depiction of the boy soldier.[75] Events at the Tower themselves became newsworthy; in 1872 *The Graphic* reported the installation of Sir William Gomm, another veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, as Constable of the Tower, describing 'the Beefeaters, in full Tudor costume, starched ruffs, red stockings, rosettes, and black velvet hats encircl[ing] the spot assigned to the ceremony of the installation'.[76] It related how, as they inspected the Beefeaters, 'Sir William and Lady Gomm recognised the faces of many old veterans, pleasant greetings were exchanged, and recollections of Indian campaigns were revived.'[77] The story was accompanied by an illustration of the encounter, with a line of Yeomen standing at attention as the Field Marshal walked along the line (Fig. 7.4).

Fig. 7.3 The Beefeater and the Drummer Boy, *The Graphic*, 18 November 1871. *Source* ©The British Library Board

Fig. 7.4 Installation of Sir W.M. Gomm GCB, GCSI as Constable of the Tower—inspecting the Beefeaters, *The Graphic*, 30 November 1872. *Source Illustrated London News* Ltd/Mary Evans

<p style="text-align:center">* * * * *</p>

The increasing public familiarity with the image of the Beefeater made it attractive to the developing world of commercial advertising. As Anne McClintock has explained, international commercial competition 'created the need for a more aggressive promotion of British products and led to the first real innovations in advertising.'[78] The Beefeater, representing tradition, quality, character and nation, was a popular choice in marketing. By the late nineteenth century, their image was used to advertise soap, tobacco, herbal drinks and beef extract. In the 1880s, the Dickson Beef Tea Company marketed their beverage with a song sheet of 'The Beefeaters' Chorus; or, The Drinking Song of the Yeomen of the Guard'. Its cover included a well-fed Beefeater standing under a portcullis, with the word 'Sustaining' running around its arch.[79] Dickson's accompanied their advertising campaign with the production of a 48-page history of the Beefeaters written by William H. Stacpoole, science fiction writer and historian of *Victorian England* (1880), free on request to consumers of their beef tea.[80] It is noteworthy that W.S. Gilbert had been inspired to write the operetta 'The Yeomen of the Guard', which opened in 1888 at the Savoy Theatre, London, when he saw an advert at Uxbridge station for the Tower Furnishing Company, which featured a Beefeater. The appearance of the Yeoman Warder on bottles of James Burrough's gin had to wait until 1908 but can be considered the real coming of age of the Beefeater as national and commercial symbol.[81] Such advertisements used the Beefeater as a symbol of both Englishness and Britishness. They did not seek to limit sales to England but rather aimed to draw upon the distinctiveness of the Beefeater in the context of British consumer capitalism, similar to the use of Scottish symbols advertising Scotch whisky.[82]

The Beefeaters were portrayed as representative of the British Army, which was truly British in that it recruited from all the four nations, and indeed disproportionately from Scotland and Ireland. As Stephen Schwamenfeld has argued about the early nineteenth century:

> Theoretically each regiment possessed a recruiting district of its own where its depot was located … In practice recruiting parties roamed wide afield, the ideal goal of individually assigned recruiting districts not being allowed to preclude Corps in general from sending recruiting parties to the great manufacturing towns in England and Wales; as also to Scotland and Ireland.[83]

On leaving the Army, veteran soldiers with long service looked for secure employment. For the lucky few who wanted to continue in uniform in a less regimented form of military service, becoming a Yeoman Warder provided an attractive option. It allowed the continued display of their patriotism (and a secure income). For example, Dubliner Edward Costello of the 95th Rifles fought in the Peninsular War, became an officer in the British Volunteer Legion in the Carlist Wars in Spain in the 1830s, and ended his life as a Yeoman Warder at the Tower of London.[84] John Fraser, author of *Sixty Years in Uniform* (1939), was born in Berwickshire in Scotland and decided to try to become a Beefeater in 1896, 'for', he explained, 'inclusion in the ranks of the Yeomen Warders of the Tower of London is a mecca of all old soldiers who do not crave to return to civil life.'[85] Soldiers' loyalties were often mainly to each other and to their regiment. Some men looked for the emotional comfort of a new home and the Body of the Yeomen Warders at the Tower of London could provide that—a new identity in uniform as a soldier of the Queen.

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By the end of the nineteenth century, the Beefeater was well established as an icon of national identity in the United Kingdom. Beefeaters had been available as a distinct visual symbol since the sixteenth century. Their origins were associated with English history: in the Norman Conquest of England, the Wars of the Roses, and in the decisions made by Henry VIII about the royal residence and bodyguard. But the Beefeaters were not exclusively English, either as a national symbol or in their membership. Their symbolic power was derived from their association with the monarchy and the army, both institutions that could make substantial claims to be British rather than English. There are, therefore, several ways of considering the national nature of the Beefeaters at the Tower of London in the nineteenth century.

Considering their context in relation to the four nations draws out the complex nature of their national symbolism. It is not sufficient to consider that they were simply icons of Englishness. Located in London, they were part of the tableau of history and national identity that tourists from across the British Isles (and the world) visited. In the nineteenth century, there was a series of radical campaigns to gain access to historical sites that were considered to belong to the British people and the Tower of London was seen as a key battle site in this desire to 'own' the national history. Certainly, much of this history was embedded

in the period before the emergence of the United Kingdom—and was related to English history—but there was a sense that this was a shared history, contributing to the development of varieties of Britishness in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The division between London and the rest of Britain was becoming well established in the nineteenth century. This division was well represented in the Victorian press, with newspapers outside London reporting on the capital's difference and its attractions. McClintock has pointed out that since the late nineteenth century the singular power of nationalism has been its capacity to organise a sense of popular, collective unity through the management of a mass national commodity spectacle.[86] London looked different from each of the four nations but it was still central to the nation.

Finally, the Beefeaters themselves were from all parts of the British Isles. Often, they had been away from their country of origin for extended periods, with long service in barracks across the United Kingdom and the Empire. They adopted a variety of identities. Scottish regiments, for example, maintained a greater sense of distinctiveness than others, but they too populated the Yeomen Warders. Those who served in the army often saw themselves as 'Soldiers of the Queen', a useful cypher for nation that occluded the confusions over Englishness and Britishness.[87] The Beefeaters wore a single uniform, identified as royal by its crest on the front, which included the English rose, Scottish thistle and Irish shamrock. Englishness was the predominant identity. As Keith Robbins argues, 'The preponderance of England within Britain was evident. It set the tone.'[88] But Englishness was not all-encompassing. The Beefeaters might best be described as Anglo-British, based in London, in the Tower of London, but enabling membership to all who had served in the British Army and symbolic of a monarchy that was mainly but not exclusively associated with England. This was not a swift or easy development. As Raphael Samuel has argued, 'The rehistoricization of the Tower, and its transformation from a military arsenal and *omnium gatherum* of curiosities into a national shrine, was the work of many different hands, and took some eight or nine decades to accomplish.'[89] Popularised through a link to the urban and the modern, the Beefeaters were a conscious reminder of tradition and continuity, and of the link between English and British history in an age of rapid change. In a compound state, made up of at least four nations, the Beefeaters at the Tower of London proved themselves to be successful national symbols, but they still had to cope with the complexities of being British.

Notes

1. See R. Samuel (ed.) (1999) *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity: Volume 3, National Fictions* (London) and M. Taylor (1992) 'John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in England *c.* 1712–1929', *Past & Present* (*P&P*), 134, 93–128.
2. R.S. Gower (2001) *The Tower of London*, (2 vols, London), I, p.1.
3. See P. O'Leary (2004) 'Historians and the "New British History"' in P. Lambert and P. Schofield (eds.) *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline* (London).
4. Paul Readman (2005) considers the Anglocentric nature of heritage consciousness in late Victorian and Edwardian England, 'The Place of the Past in English Culture *c.* 1890–1914', *P&P*, 181, 147–99.
5. M.G.H. Pittock (1999) *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester), pp. 98–100.
6. See E.J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.) (2012) *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge, rev. edn) and J. Martin (2013) 'Reinventing the Tower Beefeater in the Nineteenth Century', *History*, 98, 730–49.
7. A. Confino (1997) 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *American Historical Review*, 102, 5, 1387.
8. For military masculinity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see, for example, M. McCormack (2015) *Embodying the Militia in Georgian England* (Oxford) and A. Miller, 'Clothes Make the Man: Naval Uniform and Masculinity in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Journal for Maritime Research*, 17, 147–54.
9. Histories of the Tower of London written since the eighteenth century include: D. Henry (1755) *An Historical Description of the Tower of London, and its Numerous Curiositie*s (London); J. Bayley (1820, 1825) *The History and Antiquities of the Tower of London*, (2 vols, London); R.S. Gower (1901, 1903) *The Tower of London*, (2 vols, London). For an overview of the construction of the Tower as national symbol see R. Samuel (1998) 'The Tower of London' in *Theatres of Memory: Volume 2 Island Stories: Unravelling Britain* (London) pp. 101–24, and P. Hammond (1999) '"Epitome of England's History": The Transformation of the Tower of London as a Visitor Attraction in the 19th Century', *Royal Armouries Yearbook*, 144–74.
10. Hammond, 'Epitome of England's History', 144.
11. R. Langlands (1999) 'Britishness or Englishness? The Historical Problem of National Identity in Britain', *Nations and Nationalism* 5, 1, 53–69, 59.
12. Samuel, *Island Stories*, p. 29.
13. J. Loughlin (2002) 'Allegiance and Illusion: Queen Victoria's Irish Visit of 1849', *History*, 87, 513.

14. S. Pašeta (1999) 'Nationalist Responses to Two Royal Visits to Ireland, 1900 and 1903', *Irish Historical Studies*, 31, 124, 488–504.
15. Henry, *An Historical Description of the Tower*, pp. 3–4.
16. Hammond, 'Epitome of England's History', 197.
17. R. Hennell (1904) *The History of the King's Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard: The Oldest Permanent Body Guard of the Sovereigns of England, 1485 to 1904* (London), p. 197. If the warder sold his post himself he could keep the money but if he died in post the income was granted to the Constable of the Tower, hence the toast by Beefeaters, 'May you never die a Yeoman Warder!'.
18. Bayley, *The History and Antiquities of the Tower of London*, pp. 668–9.
19. The classic account of Britishness in this period is Linda Colley (2009) *Britons: Forging the Nation*, (New Haven, CT, rev. 3rd edn).
20. British Library, HS.74/1239/45, Orders and Regulations for the Yeoman Warders of the Tower of London, 1798.
21. See P. Seaward (2010) 'Sleaze, Old Corruption and Parliamentary Reform: An Historical Perspective on the Current Crisis', *Political Quarterly*, 81, 1, 39–48.
22. House of Commons Debates, 19 December 1837, series 3, Vol. 39, column 1330, Civil List Bill.
23. The literature on this period is enormous, but E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* remains the classic account. See also E. Royle (2000) *Revolutionary Britannia? Reflections on the Threat of Revolution, 1789–1848* (Manchester).
24. W.D. Rubinstein (1983) 'The end of "Old Corruption" in Britain 1780–1860', *Past & Present*, 101, 78.
25. See G. Newman (1993) *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740–1830*, (Basingstoke, rev. edn) and P. Mandler (1993) *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven, CT).
26. See Martin, 'Reinventing the Tower Beefeater', 736–7.
27. Martin, 'Reinventing the Tower Beefeater', 737.
28. For which, see B. Melman (2006) *The Culture of History: English Uses of the Past, 1800–1953* (Oxford), Chapter 4.
29. J. Baxendale (2007) 'Royalty, Romance and Recreation: The Construction of the Past and the Origins of Royal Tourism in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Cultural and Social History* 4, 3, 317–39.
30. Melman, *The Culture of History*, p. 139.
31. Samuel, 'The Tower of London', p. 107.
32. The book is available on-line at https://archive.org/details/towerlondon00ainsgoog.
33. Baxendale, 'Royalty, Romance and Recreation'.

34. P. Mandler (1999) '"The Wand of Fancy": The Historical Imagination of the Victorian Tourist' in M. Kwint, J. Aynsley and C. Brewer (eds.) *Material Memories* (Oxford), p. 127.

35. B. Melman (2011) 'The Pleasures of Tudor Horror: Popular Histories, Modernity and Sensationalism in the Long Nineteenth Century', in T.C. String and M. Bull (eds.) *Tudorism: Historical Imagination and the Appropriation of the Sixteenth Century*, Proceedings of the British Academy, 170 (Oxford), 37–57.

36. Melman, *The Culture of History*, Chapter 5. See also R. Crone (2012) *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century London* (Manchester).

37. R. Holmes (2002) *Redcoat: The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket* (London), pp. 148–9.

38. For a recent discussion see the introduction to L. MacKay (2013) *Respectability and the London Poor, 1780–1870: The Value of Virtue* (London). Former non-commissioned officers were also important in the administration of the New Poor Law after 1834, see P. Harling (1992) 'The Power of Persuasion: Central Authority, Local Bureaucracy and the New Poor Law', *English Historical Review*, 107, 422, 30–53.

39. D. Cannadine (2001) *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London), p. 4.

40. T. Preston (1885) *The Yeomen of the Guard, Their History from 1485 to 1885: And a Concise Account of the Tower Warders* (London), p. 13.

41. J. Fraser (1939) *Sixty Years in Uniform* (London), p. 198.

42. J. Plunkett (2005) 'Civic Publicness: The Creation of Queen Victoria's Royal Role, 1837–61', 11–28 in L. Brake and J.F. Codell (eds.) *Encounters in the Victorian Press: Editors, Authors, Readers*, (New York, NY), p. 12. See also D. Cannadine (2012) 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", *c.* 1820–1977' in Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds.) *The Invention of Tradition*, and A. Tyrrell and Y. Ward (2000) '"God Bless Her Little Majesty." The Popularising of Monarchy in the 1840s', *National Identities*, 2, 2, 109–25.

43. See A. Hobbs (2009) 'When the Provincial press was the national press (*c.* 1836–1900)', *International Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, 5, 1, 16–43.

44. See W. Marshall (2011) 'The Creation of Yorkshireness: Cultural Identities in Yorkshire *c.* 1850–1918' (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of Huddersfield), pp. 47–8.

45. *Daily News*, 18 March 1852; *Young England*, 28 May 1881.

46. *Bradford Observer*, 22 August 1850, p. 4.

47. *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 28 April 1882, p. 4.

48. J. Harris (1993) *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain, 1870–1914* (Oxford), pp. 19–23.
49. *Glasgow Herald*, 1 September 1858.
50. *Western Mail* (Cardiff, Wales), 23 June 1882.
51. See F. Sheppard (1985) 'London and the Nation in the Nineteenth Century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 35, pp. 55, 56–8 and J. Schneer (1999) *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, CT).
52. D. Gilbert (1999) '"London in all its Glory—or How to Enjoy London": Guidebook Representations of Imperial London', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25, 3, 279–97.
53. See http://www.victorianlondon.org/entertainment/sightseeing.htm and http://www.victorianlondon.org/publications4/peopled-02.htm.
54. https://postalheritage.wordpress.com/tag/messenger-boy/.
55. G. Stedman Jones (1989) 'The "Cockney" and the Nation' in D. Feldman and G. Stedman Jones (eds.) *Metropolis: Histories and Representations since 1800* (London), pp. 272–324.
56. *Glasgow Herald*, 25 August 1851.
57. Mandler, 'The Wand of Fancy', p. 139; Melman, 'The Pleasures of Tudor Horror', p. 52.
58. M. Conboy (1992) *The Press and Popular Culture* (London), pp. 112, 77. For the imperial transmission of images of Beefeaters, see P. Ward (2012) 'Beefeaters, British History and the Empire in Asia and Australasia since 1826', *Britain and the World*, 5, 2, 240–58.
59. For the cultural history of British beef more generally, see B. Rogers (2003) *Beef and Liberty* (London). Rogers points out that the thirty Beefeaters at St James' Palace in 1813 received a daily ration of 24lbs of beef, p. 17.
60. *North Wales Chronicle*, 30 June 1840.
61. *Glasgow Herald*, 30 March 1871.
62. *Blackburn Standard*, 14 February 1872.
63. *Belfast News-Letter*, 5 December 1882.
64. *Freeman's Journal*, 7 January 1891.
65. *Freeman's Journal*, 26 January 1885.
66. S. Kenna (2014) *War in the Shadows: The Irish-American Fenians who Bombed Victorian London* (Dublin).
67. See G. Began (2008) *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London* (Basingstoke).
68. J. Carlisle (2012) *Picturing Reform in Victorian Britain* (Cambridge), p. 1. See also P.W. Sinnema (1998) *Dynamics of the Pictured Page: Representing the Nation in the Illustrated London News* (Farnham).
69. *Morning Chronicle*, 8 February 1858.

70. *Essex Standard and General Advertiser*, 18 August 1858. See also *Glasgow Herald*, 1 September 1858.
71. *Punch*, 28 August 1858, p. 90.
72. *Illustrated London News*, 27 November 1858. There were similar outcries at later suggested changes in the uniform, see for example, *The Standard*, 15 August 1885, p. 5 and *Illustrated Police News*, 29 September 1900.
73. *London Daily Telegraph*, 13 August 1885.
74. For recent work on heroism in modern Britain, see M. Jones (2007) 'What Should Historians Do with Heroes? Reflections on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain', *History Compass*, 5, 2, 439–54.
75. *The Graphic*, 18 November 1871.
76. *The Graphic*, 30 November 1872.
77. *The Graphic*, 30 November 1872.
78. A. McClintock (1995) *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, NY), p. 210. See also T. Richards (1991) *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851–1914* (Stanford, CA).
79. The advertisement symbolised the visual confusion over the distinction between the Yeoman Warders at the Tower and the Yeoman of the Guard, since the image lacked the sash and was, therefore, for those 'in the know', clearly a Tower Beefeater.
80. Both the advertisement and pamphlet are available in the Bodleian Library, Oxford: The John Johnson collection: An Archive of Printed Ephemera, http://johnjohnson.chadwyck.co.uk.
81. For other advertising using Beefeaters see: the John Johnson Collection and *Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 10 July 1909, p. 32 for Beecham's Pills; C. Campbell, W. Nicholson and J. Pryde (1990) *The Beggarstaff Posters: The Work of James Pryde and William Nicholson* (London), for *Harper's* magazine.
82. For patriotic advertising generally see R. Opie (1985) *Rule Britannia: Trading in the British Image* (Oxford).
83. S. Schwarnenfeld (2007) '"The Foundation of British Strength": National Identity and the British Common Soldier' (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Florida State University), p.16, quoting Regulations and Instructions for Carrying Out Recruiting Service, 1810. See also D. Welch (2005) *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People c. 1870–2000* (Oxford), which argues that localised recruiting usually failed. There is an extensive literature on Scottish and Irish soldiers in the Empire, enabling a 'four nations' perspective. See T.M. Devine (2012) 'Soldiers of Empire, 1750–1914' in J.M. MacKenzie (ed.) *Scotland and the Empire* (Oxford) and A. Bubb (2012) 'The Life of the Irish Soldier in India: Representations and Self-Representations, 1857–1922', *Modern Asian Studies*, 46, 4, 769–813.

84. D. Bowen and J. Bowen (2005) *Heroic Option: The Irish in the British Army* (Barnsley), p. 74.
85. Fraser, *Sixty Years in Uniform*, p. 15.
86. McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 219.
87. The marching song 'Soldiers of the Queen' was written by Leslie Stewart in 1881 and became popular during the Second Boer War. See J. Richards (2001) *Imperialism and Music: Britain, 1876–1953* (Manchester), p. 335.
88. K. Robbins (2009) 'The 'British Space': World-Empire-Continent-Nation-Region-Locality: A Historiographical Problem', *History Compass*, 7, 1, 66–94, 72–3.
89. Samuel, 'The Tower of London', p. 108.

Regional Societies and the Migrant Edwardian Royal Dockyard Worker: Locality, Nation and Empire

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In 1913 the funeral of John Williams, Inspector of Painters at Portsmouth Royal Dockyard, was attended by various members of the Dockyard workforce alongside representatives of the North End Bowling Association and the Pembroke County Society. In addition, he received wreaths from the members of the Corporation Bowling Club, the Pembroke County Society, the Twyford Avenue Wesleyan Society Class and the teachers of St Agatha's School.[1] As the largest industrial group in the town, Royal Dockyard workers had dominated Portsmouth's associational landscape since the mid-Victorian period.[2] Williams' network highlights how notions of recreation traversed other subjectivities such

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as area of residence, regional ties, faith and concepts of public duty to create a complex profile of working-class male identity through an associational culture. It also demonstrates how other loyalties and affiliations played an important role in the creation and maintenance of social status and identities.

The formation of national and county societies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in many towns and cities was arguably symptomatic of the alienating effects of increasing industrialisation, economic migration and urbanisation. They underscored the necessity felt by members of the migratory workforce to forge a sense of identity and belonging as a substitute for familial support networks, and were a way to seek friendship, influence and prosperity in their host communities. As self-promotional associations, they can illuminate the ways in which the British public negotiated concepts of national identity through an analysis of their acceptance into civic culture, their ethoses and activities.

In the English naval town of Portsmouth, Hampshire, the rapid rise of national and county associations was catalysed largely by the expansion of operations in the Royal Dockyard under the Naval Defence Act, 1889. The Act brought an influx of migrant workers to the town from Scotland, Wales and Ireland, but also from within England. By 1901, 36% of Portsmouth's population had been born outside of Hampshire.[3] Significantly, Williams' membership to various clubs and societies ensured that he was invested in the community, rather than alienated from it. These associations made him at the same time, a skilled artisan, a sportsman, a Methodist and a Welshman living in a British community.

Such affiliations raise questions about the nature and character of loyalties within a framework of the British nation-state and challenge the idea of what it meant to be British in the early twentieth century. Hugh Kearney has argued that this period was characterised by increasing industrial migration and urbanisation in what he has termed the 'Britannic melting pot'.[4] Certainly, by the beginning of the twentieth century the four nations of the United Kingdom encountered each other in increasingly familiar ways. The major cities of the British Isles 'became multi-ethnic societies in which varied ethnic groupings competed for economic security, social status and political influence.'[5] However, I assert that Kearney's term can be misleading and that the metaphor of 'melting' can actually obfuscate a process of contention whereby unique and shared characteristics, such as nationhood, were fluidly prioritised and hybridised to suit a myriad of circumstances.

This chapter combines a four nations perspective with an understanding of social and workplace relations. It adds nuance to a monolithic interpretation of nationhood by exploring identity-making in situ through a case study of the Naval Dockyard town of Portsmouth, in the south of England, *c.* 1900–1914. It asserts that by investigating the national and regional societies formed in this period, alongside national and local expectations of the British 'imperial citizen', we can begin to explore the hybridity of British identity in a way that moves away from a 'top down', Anglocentric history of the United Kingdom. A four nations approach is a useful conceptual model with which to seek out British patriotism and imperial identity. However, this should not negate other considerations which enable a more holistic understanding of the state of 'Britishness'. By comparing local newspaper reports and the surviving archives of regional societies, and cross-referencing Royal Dockyard employment and Census records, we can build up a picture of activities and attitudes which highlights the intersection between national and local identities, personal and professional identities, and articulate the nuanced and complex subjectivities of working people.

Scottishness, Welshness and Irishness were identities often constructed in opposition to Englishness.[6] However, what will be evidenced is that this process was complicated by the sharing of a competitive localised culture. The particular character of the regional societies was determined by the socio-economic conditions of the city, and efforts to create a cohesive community culture were fostered by Portsmouth's civic elites. Indeed, the Irish, Scottish and Welsh migrants to the town formed hybridised versions of their national patriotism which coexisted with other types of local patriotism. Similarly, Englishness was articulated through regional exceptionalism, whereby societies made links to their unique contribution to the nation-state rather than adhering to a monolithic Anglocentric narrative. Importantly, these factors did not negate their inclusion into the fabric of the host community.

Ultimately, this chapter will demonstrate that nationalism and patriotism were simultaneously objective and subjective forms of identity; defined within the public sphere, but adopted, lived and felt in personal ways. What can be seen is that while the 'British' public were able to accentuate difference through national and regional tropes, in most cases, this difference did not threaten the cohesion of the United Kingdom. Rather than belligerent forms of nationalistic counter-culture, national and regional societies in Portsmouth were tools for sociability whereby

complex narratives of identity and selfhood were galvanised and hybrid-ised with wider narratives of local, national and imperial belonging.

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Following J.G.A. Pocock's call for a more integrated approach to the history of Britain, movements towards a 'new' British history have illu-minated alternative discourses for understanding what it meant to be 'British'.[7] However, although the British nation may have been 'forged' between 1707 and 1837, by the First World War, 'diversity was not elimi-nated'.[8] There are certainly limitations to a four nations approach when addressing this issue. Recent historiography has suggested the importance of localism in understanding early twentieth-century society through the 'appropriation of the national narrative through local cultural codes'.[9] Indeed, Paul Ward has convincingly argued that regionalism could con-stitute a wider British national identity.[10] His assertion has enabled his-torians to reconceptualise national identities as diffuse and varied, rather than static and monolithic. Thus, employing a nuanced interrogation of networks of subjectivities and cultural codes can strengthen our under-standing of the intersection between 'belonging' and 'otherness'.

Historians have moved away from defining 'belonging' solely through geographical boundaries, allowing national and local patriotism in the age of industrial migration to be perceived in terms of an 'imagined community'.[11] This has implications for identifying unity, but also for highlighting uniqueness. For example, Krishan Kumar has cited the British imperial mission as a cohesive element in forging an integrated English, Scottish and Welsh nationalism which 'directed … attention away from their own ethnic identities'.[12] However, recent movements in imperial history have sought to refract the lens of a monolithic British imperialism. Importantly, J.M. MacKenzie has argued that by employ-ing a four nations approach historians can identify each country's unique role within the British imperial mission rather than obliterating distinc-tions under the umbrella of the 'British Empire'.[13] This is a pertinent point, which further underscores the juncture and disjuncture within the contemporary construction, and historical understanding, of national identity.

Therefore, a new approach needs to be aware of the sometimes-contradictory nature of identity-making by taking into account the idea of multiple identities and subjectivities based on national and local

understandings. For example, Daniel Gorman's study of the development of imperial citizenship between 1895 and 1920 acknowledged the need to reframe the concept of identity and belonging within the context of shifting contemporary perceptions of 'Britishness' and the place and role of the Empire.[14] Progress has also been made in conceptualising what 'empire' meant in specific localised contexts.[15] The imperial message was not only multifaceted, but also co-opted and filtered at a local level to provide precise meaning, secure legitimisation and fulfil specific civic goals.[16] Thus, at points of celebration or crisis, rather than obscuring or obliterating loyalties, ideas of the British Empire, nationalism, ethnic distinction and local patriotism could be bolstered by expressions of difference or uniqueness.

Portsmouth's civic pride was shaped by the assertion of its devotion and service to empire both in the actions of the local government and in the sheets of the provincial press. The town's status as home of the Royal Navy meant that entertaining became something of a patriotic duty. By the late Victorian period it had become a site for potent and powerful displays of 'naval theatre' whereby ship launches and fleet reviews served as a conduit for 'the projection of local, regional, national and imperial loyalties' into which local residents could then place themselves.[17] The role of the town on occasions such as the coronation of King George V was a matter of such local pride that the *Portsmouth Times* asserted that 'As the premier naval port of the empire, it is only right and fitting that Portsmouth should loom largely in the forthcoming Coronation festivities.'[18]

As Britain's principal Royal Dockyard, many of Portsmouth's citizens built, maintained and staffed the Royal Navy's ships and helped to sustain the metropole's bonds with the sinews of its empire. A case study enables us to explore the nexus between a workforce composed of citizens hailing from all four nations and attempts to create cohesion through notions of place and empire. In Portsmouth, a concept of 'imperial citizenship' was fostered by local elites in an effort to shape the townspeople into representatives of the 'first Naval Port of the Empire'.[19] However, this was not simply a top-down enterprise. A criticism of the four nations approach has been that 'New British History' was never intended to incorporate social history.[20] Patrick Griffin argued that by focusing on state formation, the New British historians made it difficult to 'integrate the experiences of people that did not make up the "political nation".'[21] Indeed, Robert Colls noted that identities can

differ from place to place, be top-down and bottom-up and change over time, citing the changing behaviour of the new Scottish political class as they learned, post-1707, 'how to be Scottish in London, British in Edinburgh, and a sort of English gentleman everywhere else'. This, he suggested, was 'good training in imperial preference'.[22] However, I assert that, rather than being a condition of a middle-class mentality, this multiplicity was more likely a condition of living within a multi-ethnic community where regional, ethnic and national loyalties and subjectivities converged at all levels of society.

The ways in which Portsmouth's national and county societies operated can illuminate the values their members prioritised, and say much about the agency and creativity of workers within the associational structures of the period, and how they conformed (or not) to national and civic ideals.[23] My research maps the concepts of empire and imperial citizenship in the British public sphere and how they were practically applied and used to create meaning and identities.[24] Moreover, this work demonstrates the pragmatic ways in which migrant Royal Dockyard workers used tropes of regional, national and imperial identity in their recreational time in order to 'get on' and to strengthen and maintain connections in the industrial era. Indeed, the concept that identities were also created from the bottom-up enhances the call for a nuanced approach to analysing diversity alongside conformity within 'new' British history. The links between 'respectability' and collective security for migrant workers have, until recently, been underappreciated and studies such as Paul O'Leary's on Irish migrants in south Wales have usefully highlighted the role that ethnic identity has played in the formation of a 'distinctive leisure culture'.[25]

Moreover, this is complicated by the fact that pre-First World War working-class cultures have been noted for their stratification and modes of distinction.[26] It has also been asserted that these cultures helped to construct competitive and dynamic codes of conduct and social norms.[27] Certainly this is evidenced within the Royal Dockyard, where a powerful hierarchical system endowed skilled, 'Established' tradesmen more security and thus ostensibly a better platform to parade their cultural capital within the town and their neighbourhoods. They formed an elite group which prided itself on the basic tenets of working-class respectability, thrift, collective security and independence. In contrast, the hired semi-skilled and unskilled workers were subject to fluctuating fortunes based on their workmanship and personal relationships with members of the skilled, established workforce. For unskilled workers, their entrance into

the Dockyard, and subsequent advancement, depended on catching the attention of a superior. This was achieved more often than not through informal town institutions such as the church, local political involvement and leisure facilities. Workers, therefore, had many reasons for wanting to join a multitude of societies, and shared identities were sought out in a number of different ways. The regional and national societies which proliferated during the Edwardian era display one way in which British workers conceived of, and found, collective security and cultivated connections in new environments.

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A four nations perspective can help to examine the complexity of a multinational country and where ideas of cultural ethnicity (English-, Welsh-, Scottish- and Irish-ness) and constitutional patriotism (Britishness) diverged and interposed. The Edwardian period has been noted for conscious attempts to incorporate the Welsh and Irish through nationalistic royal ceremonies.[28] This amenability can also be seen to have filtered down. At a civic level, notions of belonging and citizenship were especially potent as urban elites began to adopt a Hegelian concept of 'social citizenship', which fostered a participatory expectation towards the citizenry and their social and civic duties.[29] This approach was used by the elites and the local press, who were eager to secure votes and readers, respectively.[30]

During this period, Portsmouth's civic elites sought to assimilate the lower classes into the town's ethos through elaborate imperialist civic celebrations and public policies. Many county and national associations were allowed to hold their annual dinners in the Town Hall, which strengthened links with their new locality and legitimised their presence as migrant communities within the fabric of their adopted society.[31] Similarly, the attendance of serving mayors at society events was significant. During proceedings, the attending civic dignitaries and 'the Corporation' were toasted and given a platform upon which to update concerned citizens about municipal initiatives such as health, road-building, sewers and the provision of schools and school meals.[32] Investigating the mechanisms by which migrants were thus included in the fabric of civic culture helps us to understand the conflation of nationalism and local pride alongside multiple expressions of British 'otherness'. For example, in an attempt to include the Irish community in 1900, the

locals were encouraged to wear green and the Mayor of Portsmouth commissioned a special Union Flag mounted on a green background to commemorate St Patrick's Day. It was declared that the flag would be flown from the flagstaff of the Town Hall, and in a similar fashion, a St George's Flag would be flown on England's national day.[33] Subsequently, this gesture was extended to the Scottish and Welsh communities.[34]

The local daily newspapers also mediated and shaped identities; their representation of migrant workers reveals a carefully crafted dialogue between the editors and their target readership of lower-middle and working-class citizens.[35] Middle-class journalists accentuated differences and 'otherness' but were quick to portray migrant associations as non-threatening. Reporting of the Cambrian Society evoked a whimsical Welsh stereotype and hinted at the economic rationale for migration: 'Portsmouth now possesses a thriving Cambrian Society in which are bonded together the national spirit those Welshmen and Welshwomen who have left their native hills to make their fortunes among the Saxon.'[36] Similarly, Scottish nationalism was represented as a benign, if somewhat fanatical, pastime: 'What a fine body of enthusiasts are the members of the Portsmouth and District Caledonian Society! Patriots every one, their love for the land of the heather shows itself in a deep interest in its numerous historical associations'.[37]

The integration of four nations nationalism into Portsmouth's civic institutions can demonstrate a desire for local cohesion in order to attain the town's wider goal of serving the British Empire. Table 8.1 details the societies operating in Portsmouth during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods and documents their growth and variety. The societies highlight how similarities, such as the country or region of one's birth, could be co-opted to establish bonds and seek commonalities in an era where multiple cultural and geo-spatial identities were being forged. It is interesting, then, that the national societies of Welsh and Scottish migrants named themselves the 'Cambrian' and the 'Caledonian' societies. The deployment of such intentionally archaic Latin terms was a way of harking back to a pristine Scottish and Welsh identity. This was distinct from representations of Irishness in the town, which were displayed via sectarian and cultural heritages and often affiliated with pan-national associations. Protestant identity was articulated in the branches of the Loyal Orange Lodge, whereas Portsmouth's Irish Catholics formed their own branch of the Irish National League of Great Britain.

Table 8.1   County and national associations in Portsmouth

Name of organisation	Date of establishment
Portsmouth District of the Loyal Orange Institution of England	1811
Portsmouth Branch of the Irish National League of Great Britain/ United Irish League of Great Britain	1886/1900
Portsmouth Killarney Society	Pre-1900
Portsmouth and District Caledonian Society	1898
Portsmouth and District Lancastrian Association	1899
Portsmouth Branch of the Gaelic League	1901
Portsmouth Cambrian Society	1904
Portsmouth Channel Islands Society	1905
Portsmouth Devonian Society	1906
Portsmouth Society of East Anglians	1906
Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen	1908
Portsmouth Society of Wiltshiremen	1908
Portsmouth Cornish Society	1908
Portsmouth Pembroke Association	*c.* 1909
Portsmouth and District Association of Isle of Wight Men	1911
Portsmouth Society of Kent and Kentishmen	1911

Sources *Portsmouth Evening News* 1890–1918; *Hampshire Telegraph* 1890–1918

While the presence of county and national societies was not uncommon in British towns, the particular mix was dictated by the economy of the town. New technologies in the Royal Dockyard attracted engineers and metal workers from the North of England and other towns with private shipbuilding yards, which may go some way to explain the 173% rise in migration from Yorkshire between 1901 and 1911.[38] In Portsmouth, societies were set up for several English counties and geographical regions, including the Portsmouth Devonian Society and the Portsmouth Society of Midlanders. There was also a strong enough presence to institute a Welsh county society, the Portsmouth Pembroke Association.

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In order to understand the particular mix of inter-ethnic societies we must explore the patterns of migration to the town during the period and address civic responses to the influx of 'outsiders'. Overall population growth during this time was marked, with 188,133 inhabitants recorded in 1901, an increase of just over 18% from the previous Census. By 1911 this figure had risen a further 22.8%, to 231,141.[39] The numbers

employed in the Royal Dockyard increased from 10,044 persons in 1901 to 13,505 in 1911, and by the outbreak of the First World War, this figure approached 14,000.[40]

Although not all members of county and national associations worked in the Dockyard, these societies represented the needs of migrants to preserve their regional identities and to bond with those with similar life experiences. However, for the Dockyard workers specifically they would have been attractive for a number of reasons. 'Established' men could be sent to work in any of the other Royal Dockyards in Britain and the Empire, whereas 'Hired' men, especially the skilled and semi-skilled workers of the shipbuilding industry, would have been compelled to move around the country to find work. It was therefore important for these men to find common ground, and to quickly make connections in a new town. Rather than being atomised individuals, the process of identity-making was constructed within established models—such as associations. The abundance of national and county associations demonstrates that it was through various clubs and societies, rather than through informal encounters, that migrants preferred to seek commonality. This banding together would have allowed a form of camaraderie which enabled the migrant workers to make their own community away from home. As will later be seen, it also legitimised their place in their host society.

However, seeking out these people has proved difficult; migrant workers can often be under-represented due to the methodological complications encountered in tracing them. Membership has been hard to determine as records for most of the societies no longer exist.[41] Some Dockyard workers were prominent members who featured regularly in the local newspaper such as Secretary of the Portsmouth and District Lancastrian Society, William Henry Lowther, who was on the employment books as a Coppersmith from 1896 until 1916.[42] Cross-referencing names that appeared in the local press with Portsmouth Dockyard Employment records and Census returns to corroborate their positive identification has provided some insight. For example, a report from a smoking concert held by the Lancastrian Society in 1899 listed the surnames of those who played a key role in the night's entertainment.[43] However, without further detail for those with more common surnames I was unable to make a positive identification.[44] A Mr Frankland, appeared in the *Committee Minutes of the Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen* in 1909.[45] Mr Frankland's brief contribution to the

social and civic life of Portsmouth would not have been ascertained by using the Censuses alone. A 'John Sowden Frankland' is listed on the *Portsmouth Dockyard Employment Database* working as a Fitter between 1907 and 1909. However, the 1901 Census recorded him in his home-town of Bramley, Yorkshire, but by 1911 he was living in York.[46] This would have been a similar story for the many migrant workers who set-tled for a few years depending on available work and then left.

Migration has been closely linked to work in the Royal Dockyard or the Armed Services.[47] By comparing Census data between 1901 and 1911 (Tables 8.2 and 8.3), we can quantify the extent of inter-migra-tion between the Dockyard and other state military establishments.[48] The growth in migration to Portsmouth from Wales, Scotland and Ireland was steady but not spectacular, and this fed into the character of the county and national associations in the town.[49] The number of Welsh-born citizens was just over 2,000 in 1901. There was a sizable Pembroke-born community, which amounted to 0.4% of the town's population and was mainly connected with the Dockyard.[50] This meant that Welsh identities could be expressed via a county link, while other Welsh migrants were able to join the larger body of the Cambrian Society. Conversely, although there was a significant number of Scottish migrants in the town, Scottishness was expressed using a singular iden-tity rather than being distinguished by nuances between Highland and Lowland cultures, or specific expressions of regional pride.

Irish-born residents in Portsmouth generally totalled around 2% of the population from 1890 to 1920. The majority originated from County Dublin and County Cork.[51] Particularly significant here are the relationships which highlight links between Haulbowline Naval Dockyard and the naval establishments of nearby Cork Harbour and Beerhaven. Portsmouth was not affected by large-scale Irish migration as most of the Irish populace was employed by the Dockyard or Armed Forces. This was partly due to the lack of heavy industry and to the town not having a direct passenger route from Ireland.[52] As a result, Portsmouth did not see an inter-ethnic clash to the same extent as the major industrial cities of Liverpool and Glasgow. Therefore, as Gerry Daly has noted, the Irish 'provided no easy scapegoat for the problems of urbanisation in Portsmouth.'[53] Moreover, although Portsmouth branches of the Loyal Orangemen and the Irish League were established, due to the small number of Ulster migrants, very little direct conflict occurred between the town's Catholic and Protestant Irish residents.[54]

Table 8.2 Number of non-English UK-born residents in Portsmouth

Country	1901	1911	Difference
Wales	2043	2544	+501
Scotland	2528	2927	+399
Ireland	3952	4135	+183

Sources HMSO (1902) *Census of England and Wales 1901: County of Hants (Southampton). Area Houses and Population*; HMSO (1912) *Census of England and Wales 1911: County of Hants (Southampton). Area Houses and Population*

Table 8.3 Largest groups of English non-Hampshire-born residents in Portsmouth

County	1901	1911	Difference
Cornwall	1621	1684	+ 63
Devon	4850	5572	+722
Kent	3842	5268	+ 1426
Lancashire	1718	2416	+ 698
Wiltshire	2028	2642	+ 614
Yorkshire	1563	4276	+ 2713

Sources HMSO (1902) *Census of England and Wales 1901: County of Hants (Southampton). Area Houses and Population*; HMSO (1912) *Census of England and Wales 1911: County of Hants (Southampton). Area Houses and Population*

As can be seen in Table 8.3, whereas inter-nation migration was steady, migration from within England continued to climb. A large proportion of migrants originated from the south-west of England; a third of these hailed from Devon, which was home to the naval dockyard and military garrison at Plymouth.[55] Similarly, 3,800 residents were born in either Sheerness or Woolwich, which hosted a number of naval and military establishments.[56] These figures have implications for how we assess Englishness, in addition to Welshness, Scottishness and Irishness, within England in the early twentieth century. Historically, there has been a problem in defining Englishness, often conflated with Britishness due to an assumption of England's cultural and institutional dominance. That there was no 'English' national society is perhaps unsurprising; however, what the presence of specific county or regional cultures indicates is that notions of 'Englishness' were fostered through expressions of regional difference.[57]

In the absence of an English national narrative, regionalism was an important way in which to articulate belonging which sat concurrently with ideas of nationalism, local pride and Britishness. Indeed, the structure of the county system was so enmeshed in the English consciousness that an ancient moniker such as 'Mercia', originally proposed for Portsmouth's Midlander Society, was rejected because many members did not know what the word meant.[58] For migrants from the Midlands, it seems that there were insufficient numbers by county to institute separate county associations. This was similar to the Channel Islanders' Society, which drew members from the various islands, rather than those from Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney being able to represent themselves individually.[59] Reports of similar societies in the wider UK and in the Empire, such as a London Hampshire Society and a 'Southern Counties' Society formed in South Africa, featured in the local paper, showing how migrants to other locations fared.[60] The burgeoning Southern Counties Society, which featured most counties between Berkshire and the Channel Islands (with the exception of Cornwall, whose migrants were sufficient in number to form a separate society), were reported to be 'one of the strongest patriotic societies in Johannesburg'.[61] However, their desire to form an association resulted in allegiances with similar counties in order to express their shared heritage. Thus, as in the cases of the Caledonian, Cambrian and Irish societies, overarching similarities were co-opted to secure membership and establish bonds. These points underscore the assertion that historians need to take into account the hybridity of the four nations experience and identify occurrences where different identities and cultural forms overlapped and informed conduct and everyday life. This would not be merely inter-ethnically, but would also be within the nationalities themselves in order to highlight the cross-pollination and dilution of customs and traditions.

In addition to the regional/national nexus of membership, it is important to understand the principles and influences of the members opting to join such societies. For the Royal Dockyard worker, whose culture was largely based on status-ridden artisanal principles, the era marked an amalgamation of traditional forms of collective security such as savings clubs and trades associations with newer, national and transnational forms in order to ensure resilience in the modern industrial era. The general purpose of national and county societies was to promote conviviality; their programmes of activities were punctuated with day trips, dances and lectures, which could be viewed as forms of 'rational

recreation', self-help and respectability. Societies' activities were publicised in the local press as civilised and harmonious events, with the names of those who took part published, adding local renown to those in the 'index of civility'.[62]

The discourse of becoming an 'urban citizen' produced a self-censoring, unifying experience which could at times transcend class distinctions.[63] Indeed, membership was not exclusively for the working class and joining was more about forging loyalties along geographical lines, articulating a kind of mirrored local patriotism by tying the region of their birth with their successful establishment in another area. For instance, the Yorkshiremen boasted Town Councillor Alfred Hemmingway as President from 1907 to 1909, and again from 1913 to 1920.[64] At a meeting to discuss the establishment of a society of Yorkshiremen, Hemmingway spoke of the pride of a county which had borne prominent men in arts, science, literature and trade, and reasoned that if other regions could have their own societies in Portsmouth then 'surely the Yorkshiremen of the town could also form an organisation for themselves.'[65] Alternately, the Channel Islanders (not being mainlanders), were keen to ensure that their society not only benefited them, but also 'the mother country'.[66] Thus, the establishment of a county society was a symbol of status for migrant settlers which showcased their vibrant, structured and useful addition to the civic life of their adopted home.

Indeed, operating 'in the ethnic sphere' facilitated the breaking down of class barriers; the lower classes could gain respectability through their activities within the societies themselves.[67] This process provided an alternative arena for sociability and influence which was rarely obtained through other means. Adherence to established norms and cultural codes, therefore, was as a precondition of membership. The rules set out by the Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, for example, expressed the 'respectable' values of the organisation and specified that those conducting themselves in a way which was incompatible or injurious to the society would be expelled.[68]

Conviviality through organised events, rather than informal gatherings in the local public house, was an important marker of respectability and legitimisation. The Yorkshiremen's minute books show that their socialising was based on a series of balls and 'At Homes' with whist tournaments in the winter and cricket matches and outings in the summer.[69] Whereas other bodies such as trade organisations and friendly societies tended to exclude women, county societies like the Yorkshiremen

promoted socialising with the opposite sex and particularly within spousal relationships. The Yorkshiremen allowed women to become 'associate members', qualified via their husband's membership, and there was a dedicated body of female members who were instrumental in organising dances and functions. Although there is not room to explore this in more detail here, it also underlines how crucial the role of women and family life could be to sociability within these contexts, and to highlights the fact that many of Portsmouth's migratory workers had families which accompanied them and likewise required a place in the fabric of the town.[70]

Reportage of their activities in the local press served as an outward projection of the participant group or individual's ability to take part in leisure reserved for those who could afford it. It was also a means of legitimising migrants' presence and prestige in the adopted local community in addition to strengthening their position as national and imperial citizens. For example, the inaugural meeting of the Association of Wiltshiremen was chaired for the evening by a Swindon Town Councillor (a chairman, also, of Swindon Football Club), who toasted the 'The Navy, the Army and the Auxiliary Forces' before glasses were later raised to 'Our Country'.[71] The Yorkshiremen, on the other hand, sought prestige and recognition by capitalising on their sporting prowess, entertaining the Yorkshire County Cricket team with a banquet and boat trip in August 1910. A signal of their dual regional loyalties can be found in the fact that they sent invitations to the Deputy Mayor of Portsmouth and the Secretary of the Hampshire County Cricket Team, as well as reporters from the *Sheffield Telegraph* and the *Yorkshire Evening Post*.[72] County societies were also reported as being central to the local newspaper's 'Boot Fund', which provided poor children with footwear, thus illustrating their wish to extend their philanthropy beyond the realms of their own interests and show an active engagement with their adopted community.[73]

When the Kent County Association was established, the chairman of the meeting stated that the object of the Association was to 'provide the means whereby the natives of Kent in the Portsmouth district might regularly meet in friendship, and in misfortune or distress might be assisted; also the furtherance of matters beneficial to the county.'[74] This was also true of the Yorkshiremen, who outlined their purpose as a group which promoted 'good feeling and friendly intercourse among Yorkshiremen by means of social gatherings, lectures concerts and outings.'

It was also declared that the society should be 'entirely un-sectarian and non-political', seemingly as opposed to other societies where political activism was encouraged.[75] This was markedly different from the prominent Irish institutions in the town such as the Orange Lodge and the Irish National League which served as a galvanising force for Irish nationalist, or Protestant and Unionist, causes. For Catholic Irish settlers, many of their clubs and associations were organised or supported by the Roman Catholic Church.[76] Although Orangeism had become popular in Portsmouth during the 1880s, inter-ethnic stress only became noticeable in periods where the Union was threatened or where there was a perceived rise in Catholicism in the town.[77] Similarly, membership to the Irish League was sporadic and buoyed during elections, thus showing how Irish nationalistic ire could be raised in times of crisis.[78]

Orange politics transcended local and regional boundaries and informed the social life of working-class Irish Protestants. The perspective in Portsmouth on matters of domestic politics, such as the question of Home Rule for Ireland, was tempered by its distinctive mix of Irish migrants due to the town's status as a naval and garrison town.[79] Unlike county and national societies, the Loyal Orange Lodge, of which there were ten branches in 1909, was a recognised friendly society, which provided mutual security for their members. However, not all members were Irish-born, and comprised second generation or Conservative sympathisers of the Orange cause also. The small numbers of Protestant migrants in the town forced local Orangemen to focus on the alleged coercion of Ulster, rather than mount direct opposition to Irish Catholicism in the town.[80] Conviviality was often mixed with politics at their meetings and, in 1913, the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne was celebrated with brethren from the neighbouring towns of Gosport and Southampton. It was pledged that the Portsmouth District would 'assist the Orangemen of Ireland in maintaining their Protestant Liberties, and the union of Ireland with Great Britain.'[81] Thus, while the county societies, the Caledonians and the Cambrians were sociable and a tool for generally 'getting along', part of the Irish prerequisite for collective security was characterised by a local non-conflictual sectarian activism rooted within wider political causes.

Conviviality was also important for the county societies and, when seeking collective security, feelings of familiarity and a shared sense of place were nurtured. For example, the dinners of the Portsmouth Devonian Society featured 'real' Devonshire clotted cream and

Devonshire dumplings. Similarly, the Yorkshiremen presented regional fare at their dinners such as Yorkshire pudding, spice cake and cheese, whereas the Lancastrian Society held annual 'Hotpot' suppers.[82] However, there was also a degree of social mixing between the societies. Representatives from other regional and national societies were often invited to gatherings and toasts were made to 'kindred societies'.[83] The notion of kindred societies became another important way to network. Indeed, at an 'Inter-county' meeting, which included the Cornish, Devonshire, East Anglian, Isle of Wight, Pembrokeshire and Wiltshire societies, a member from the Portsmouth Society of Cornishmen declared that he had made 'many friends in Portsmouth, and would carry away with him a spirit of friendship that would never fade.'[84] Thus, although cultural difference was accentuated, the similarities of the organisations, populated by like-minded people striving for the same collective security, brought them together in pluralised and hybridised formations of Britishness. For instance, a boat race was held between the Cornish, Devonian and Pembrokeshire societies, which showcased camaraderie and competition though the shared qualities of working-class masculinity and seafaring. When socialising after the race, the societies celebrated their differences by each singing patriotic national songs. However, later in the proceedings the President of the Cornish Society declared that 'In the history of the Kingdom, Wales and the men of the West Country had always been at the front when deeds of daring and endurance had to be done.'[85] Thus, their shared cultural traditions and new associational links brought new possibilities of symbiosis, sociability and security.

The committee minutes of the Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen show that they actively liaised with the East Anglian and Devonian associations on models for programming their sports seasons and outings, and they also coordinated with the Inter-Counties Association for the arrangement of competitions, eventually joining an Inter-County Cricket League.[86] The spirit of friendly adversarial relationships was maintained through these regional identities and also with other social and workplace groupings. County associations took part in sports competitions with workplaces such as 'Cornishmen versus Shipwrights', or the 'Yorkshiremen versus the Lunatic Asylum workers or Poor Law Officers' at cricket.[87] Looking at the fixtures for local cricket matches, the Loyal Orangemen played in the divisions of the Portsmouth League, which was populated by a mixture of Anglican, Wesleyan and Roman

Catholic Church teams, local area athletics clubs and workplace teams.[88] Thus, social mixing was not exclusive to the migrant associations and exhibited a fluid approach which reflected upon the different connections that a society could possibly make within the associational culture of the town.

The concept of citizenship tactility implied by the formation of these societies, and their conscious integration into the fabric of the civic community, in turn led to the consideration of the place of their birth as part of the wider issues of nation, state and empire. Newspaper reports on the activities of the county associations, however, did not necessarily negate their patriotism, or their local identity in terms of the host community. In Portsmouth, associations celebrated homeland heroes as sources of regional pride and innate self-worth, which were taken with them when they migrated. During the Boer War, the Lancastrian Society toasted the 'Loyal Soldiers and Sailors Fighting in South Africa', with special reference to the heroism of the Lancashire Regiment and, following King Edward VII's ascendance to the throne in 1901, they gave a loyal toast to 'the King and the rest of the Royal Family.'[89] Similarly, the Portsmouth East Anglian Association boasted their importance to the wider nation, with the county being the 'birthplace of the Anglo-Saxon language', the home of the University of Cambridge and the birthplace of Lord Kitchener, Admiral Sir A.K. Wilson, Admiral Lord Nelson and Lord Wellington.[90] In mentioning such icons they gave a toast to 'the Imperial Forces', to highlight their special links to the defence of the British Empire and the land of their birth.[91] Likewise, the Devonians were eager to induce Boer War hero General Buller, whom they dubbed 'Devon's greatest soldier', to attend one of their functions, thus underlining the Devonian contribution to the imperial cause.[92]

The Portsmouth Caledonian Society also displayed a striking awareness of patriotic and imperial issues.[93] Their programme of lectures dealt with sources of Scottish history and pride, such as 'Scotland after the Union', which resulted in an 'interesting and merry' discussion about who benefitted the most from the Union. Other lectures centred on prominent literary figures Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson.[94] There were more explicitly imperial lectures, including 'To, In and From South Africa' by the Chaplain to the Forces at Gosport.[95] During their outings a Scottish band always accompanied them and Highland Games were often played.[96] Importantly, their difference was

viewed within a context of a wider national and imperial citizenship. The Caledonian Society was particularly busy at the start of the First World War. In December 1914, they entertained troops with a programme of singing, pipes and drums, and sword dancing.[97] The piped band offered their service to the local volunteer corps to accompany their route marches through the town and countryside.[98] Their willingness to provide morale-boosting entertainments for the local troops demonstrated how the Caledonians were happy to assume their famed martial role within the framework of the British imperial project.[99]

This hybridity was not uncommon. To a congregation of Welsh Portsmuthains wearing leek emblems, the Reverend Maurice Jones characterised the Cambrians of Portsmouth and their loyalties on their national day, 'We are not here as Unionists and Liberals, as Churchmen and Free Churchmen, but as Welshmen pure and simple.'[100] Friction between Irish settlers in Portsmouth was diffused on St Patrick's Day from 1900 onwards by the adornment of a crown insignia alongside a shamrock.[101] This, Daly has argued, displayed a less radical form of nationalism which signified 'loyalty to the crown and enthusiasm for the British Empire in common with most of the population.'[102]

Indeed, while the Portsmouth Branch of the Irish National League remained committed to national autonomy, they were dismayed at what they perceived to be a slight levelled at Irish soldiers in a speech by the Prime Minister during the Boer War. They cited the fact that so many Irishmen were serving in the Empire, and vowed to rouse Irishmen 'to do everything in their power to displace Lord Salisbury and his government' from office.[103] Leading local Irishmen often became the 'acceptable face of Irishness' by showing their adherence to the civic ideal, displayed on convivial occasions like St Patrick's Day balls. Local civic dignitaries and other national and county society representatives such as the Caledonians and the Devonshires were invited, thus demonstrating a desire for the event to be seen as an inclusive, rather than alienating celebration of national and cultural difference.[104] Portsmouth's own brand of Irish nationalism was witnessed during the outbreak of the First World War when leading nationalists Bernard Murtough and Alderman Mulvany put on a united front at the Town Hall recruitment drive for Portsmouth's first battalion of Lord Kitchener's army, and sat next to bitter opponents of Home Rule.[105] Events such as these highlight how patriotic loyalties were, at times, subsumed in favour of larger state and imperial goals.

The First World War affected the membership of the county associations and most decided to suspend activities until the conflict ceased. The Yorkshiremen rather optimistically decided to suspend their winter programme until after Christmas 'out of sympathy for those at war.'[106] However, by the end of January 1915, although subscription fees and elections for committee officers were suspended, the association resumed their social activities, which they used to raise funds for the war.[107] As patriotic 'citizens of Empire', workers could thus utilise the discourse of empire and patriotism to legitimise their recreational activities.

* * * * *

The associational culture of Portsmouth during the Edwardian period displays how important membership to a range of clubs and societies was to migrant workers in creating and maintaining collective identities. The process of identity-making was constructed within models which upheld artisanal values of respectability and incorporated cross-class local and communal bonds. By choosing to socialise in groups that stressed their cultural identities—be it a diffused 'Englishness', wider forms of Scottish and Welsh nationalism or Irish sectarianism—they were actively creating narratives within which to define themselves.

By integrating considerations of social and workplace subjectivities into a four nations approach we can move away from a 'top-down' history towards an exploration of how national consciousness was mediated through the town's middle-class civic elites and local press, and negotiated from below. This chapter has stressed the importance of notions of local citizenship, ideas which fed into larger narratives of national and imperial duty. This consciousness was contradictory, contested and multifaceted. By examining the nexus between civic duty and the agency of migrant workers within the boundaries of their national and regional associations we can uncover the multilayered concepts of identity, which were accentuated by and transposed onto their new environment. Accepting the terms of citizenship, they fed into the rich and vibrant cultural network of connections and influences which existed during the period. These contemporary understandings display the hybridity of the British consciousness and may explain not only why a cohesive 'British' identity has been historically hard to articulate, but also how a local and imperial patriotism was able to thrive.

Notes

1. *Portsmouth Evening News* [hereafter *Evening News*], 12 May 1913, p. 3.
2. J. Field (1994) *Portsmouth Dockyard and its Workers, 1815–1875* (Portsmouth), p. 16.
3. See Table 8.3.
4. H. Kearney (2006) *The British Isles. A History of Four Nations.* 2nd edn, (Cambridge), p. 7. See also Chapter 9, pp. 219–250.
5. Kearney, *The British Isles*, p. 8.
6. K. Kumar (2006) 'English and British National Identity', *History Compass*, 4, 3, 429.
7. J.G.A. Pocock (2005) *The Discovery of Islands: Essays in British History* (Cambridge). See also D. Cannadine (2005) 'British History as a "New Subject": Politics, Perspectives and Prospects' in A. Grant and K. Stringer (eds.) *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London), p. 22.
8. L. Colley (2009) *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837*, (New Haven, CT, rev. edn). K. Robbins (1988) *Nineteenth Century Britain, England, Scotland and Wales: The Making of a Nation* (Oxford), p. 1.
9. P. Purseigle (2003) 'Beyond and Below the Nations: Towards a Comparative History of Local Communities at War' in J. MacLeod and P. Perseigle (eds.) *Uncovered Fields: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Leiden), pp. 95–124.
10. P. Ward (2004) *Britishness Since 1870* (London), p. 68.
11. See B. Anderson (2006) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London, rev. edn).
12. K. Kumar (2003) *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge), pp. 178–9.
13. J.M. MacKenzie (2008) 'Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English Worlds? A Four Nation Approach to the History of the British Empire', *History Compass*, 6, 5, 1244. For an example of Scottish imperialism, see J.M. MacKenzie and T.M. Devine (2011) 'Introduction' in J.M. MacKenzie and T.M. Devine (eds.) *Scotland and the British Empire* (Oxford), p. 11.
14. D. Gorman (2006) *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging*, (Manchester), p. 2.
15. Gorman concurred that the relationship between citizenship and defining the British national identity became exceedingly important in the late-Victorian and Edwardian eras due to 'both an increased sense of international military and economic competition and domestic pressures for greater social, economic and political equality.' Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*, p. 2. MacKenzie has argued that Glasgow's efforts to market itself as 'Second City of Empire' signalled the desire of the elite to

create 'a distinct municipal identity in relation to Scotland, England, the United Kingdom and the Empire'. J.M. MacKenzie (1999) 'The Second City of Empire': Glasgow—Imperial Municipality', in F. Driver and D. Gilbert (eds.) *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identities* (Manchester), pp. 215–37. B. Beaven's research into Leeds, Coventry and Portsmouth between 1870 and 1939 usefully highlighted that the imperial message was filtered through local elites and communities 'where it became altered and adapted to address local anxieties, enhance civic reputations and engage the local populace'. B. Beaven (2012) *Visions of Empire. Patriotism, Popular Culture and the City: 1870–1939* (Manchester), pp. 70–91; M. Bassett (2014) 'The Royal Dockyard Worker in Edwardian England: Culture, Leisure and Empire' (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of Portsmouth), p. 210.

16. A. Croll (2000) *Civilizing the Urban: Popular Culture and Public Space in Merthyr, c. 1880–1914* (Cardiff) pp. 104–36; S. Gunn (2007) *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the Industrial City 1840–1914* (Manchester), pp. 163–86.

17. Jan Rüger has argued that Spithead, off the coast of Portsmouth, was 'formalized as a ritual arena for the display of the monarch's 'ocean throne'.' J. Rüger (2007) *The Great Naval Game: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge), pp. 19, 35.

18. *Portsmouth Times*, 13 May 1911, p. 9.

19. Portsmouth History Centre collection, Portsmouth and Southsea Advertising Association (1903) *Official Guide for Southsea*, p. 9.

20. R. Bourke (2010) 'Pocock and the Presuppositions of the New British History', *The Historical Journal*, 53, 3, 748.

21. P. Griffin (2000) 'Defining the Limits of Britishness: The "New" British History and the Meaning of the Revolution Settlement in Ireland for Ulster's Presbyterians', *Journal of British Studies (JBS)*, 39, 3, 264.

22. R. Colls (2002) *Identity of England* (Oxford), pp. 7, 42.

23. For example, Andrew August has argued that simplistic notions of identity and social determination should be abandoned and emphasis shifted to understanding the context of language and narratives and how 'social actors' comprehended their lives through them. A. August (2007) *The British Working Class, 1832–1940* (Harlow), p. 4.

24. See, for example, Bassett, 'The Royal Dockyard Worker', pp. 26–65.

25. P. O'Leary (2005) 'Networking Respectability: Class, Gender and Ethnicity among the Irish in South Wales, 1845–1914', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 23, 2–3, 260.

26. M. Savage and A. Miles (1994) *The Remaking of the British Working Class, 1840-1940* (London), p. 37.

27. J. Bourke (1994) *Working-Class Cultures in Britain: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (London), p. 169.

28. J. Ellis (1998) 'Reconciling the Celt: British National Identity, Empire and the 1911 Investiture of the Prince of Wales', *JBS*, 37, 4, 392.

29. B. Beaven (2009) *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-class Men in Britain, 1850–1945* (Manchester), p. 8.

30. For civic elite, see R.H. Trainor (1993) *Black Country Elites: The Exercise of Authority in an Industrialised Area 1830–1900* (Oxford), p. 153 and Croll, *Civilizing the Urban*, p. 20. For press see M. Dawson (1998) 'Party Politics and the Provincial Press in Early Twentieth Century England: The Case of the South West', *Twentieth Century British History*, 9, 2, 218; M. Hampton (2004) *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850–1950* (Urbana, IL and Chicago, IL), p. 111 and Croll, *Civilizing the Urban*, p. 20.

31. Devonian Society's first annual dinner, *Evening News*, 4 April 1906, p. 3; Caledonian Society's 10th Annual Grand Scotch Concert, *Evening News*, 20 November 1907, p. 5; Yorkshiremen's Celebration at winning the Inter-counties Whist Trophy, *Evening News*, 10 May 1913, p. 3.

32. *Evening News*, 28 November 1913, p. 5.

33. *Evening News*, 17 March 1900, p. 3.

34. *Evening News*, 30 November 1905, p. 4; 25 February 1908, p. 4.

35. L. Brown (1985) *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford), p. 4; Beaven, *Visions of Empire*, p. 74.

36. *Evening News*, 4 May 1904, p. 3.

37. *Evening News*, 17 March 1899, p. 2.

38. See Table 8.3.

39. F.N.G. Thomas (1979) *Portsmouth and Gosport: A Study in the Historical Geography of a Naval Port* (Portsmouth: self-published thesis), p. 167.

40. P. Galliver (1986) *The Portsmouth Dockyard Workforce 1880–1914* (unpubl. M.Phil thesis, University of Southampton), pp. 237–8.

41. I have relied on the existing records of the Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen to provide insight into the formation of a county society. Indeed, they state in that they have consulted other existing societies in the town, and used them as models upon which to base theirs. Portsmouth History Centre, unaccessioned item, Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen archives, unknown newspaper cutting *c.* 1907.

42. *Evening News*, 11 February 1899, p. 2; Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust (PRDHT), *Portsmouth Dockyard Employment Database*; Public Record Office (PRO), (1911) 'William Henry Lowther', *1911 England Census Return*, PRO RG14/5482; Schedule Number: 102. Ancestry.com. *1911 England Census*, http://www.ancestry.co.uk [Accessed 1 May 2016].

43. *Evening News*, 15 May 1899, p. 2.

44. See Bassett, 'The Royal Dockyard Worker', p. 222.

45. PRDHT, *Portsmouth Dockyard Employment Database*; Portsmouth History Centre, unaccessioned item, Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *Committee Meetings*, 7 April 1909.

46. PRO (1901) 'John Frankland' *Census Return,* PRO RG13/4206, f. 127, p. 17. Ancestry.com. *1901 England Census*, http://www.ancestry.co.uk [Accessed 1 May 2016]; 'John Sowden Frankland' (1911) *Census Return*, PRO RG14, piece 28442. Ancestry.com. *1911 England Census*, http://www.ancestry.co.uk [Accessed 1 May 2016].

47. G. Daly (2006) 'Crown, Empire and Home Rule: The Irish in Portsmouth 1880–1923', (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of Portsmouth), pp. 44–6.

48. Royal Dockyard establishments were based at Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham, Pembroke and Haulbowline.

49. Some caution must be taken over these figures as they cannot account for second generation, or those who otherwise felt themselves 'ethnically' Irish, Scottish or Welsh. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 40.

50. HMSO *Census of England and Wales 1901*, p. 109; A. Day cited in P. MacDougall (2007) *Settlers, Visitors and Asylum Seekers: Diversity in Portsmouth since the Late 18th Century* (Portsmouth), p. 13.

51. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 34.

52. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 60. D.M. MacRaild made similar findings in his studies of Victorian Cumbria. MacRaild (1998) *Culture, Conflict and Migration: The Irish in Victorian Cumbria* (Liverpool), pp. 142–3.

53. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 24.

54. This was also due to the relatively small number of Ulster Protestant migrants to the town. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 187.

55. HMSO (1902) *Census of England and Wales 1901: County of Hants (Southampton). Area Houses and Population;* HMSO (1912) *Census of England and Wales 1911: County of Hants (Southampton). Area Houses and Population.*

56. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 40.

57. Kumar, 'English and British', pp. 433–4.

58. *Evening News*, 26 January 1912, p. 4.

59. *Evening News*, 8 March 1905, p. 4.

60. *Evening News*, 14 October 1914, p. 4; *Evening News*, 22 June 1914, p. 4.

61. *Evening News*, 22 June 1914, p. 4.

62. Gunn, *The Public Culture*, p. 175.

63. Croll, *Civilizing the Urban*, pp. 217–18.

64. Portsmouth History Centre, unaccessioned item, Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *List of Presidents*.

65. Portsmouth History Centre, unaccessioned item, Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, unknown newspaper cutting, *c*. 1907.

66. *Evening News*, 1 February 1905, p. 4.
67. The idea of the 'ethnic sphere' where status and recognition could be achieved in a parallel to public sphere life has been posited by Louise Miskell. L. Miskell (2005) '"Operating in the Ethnic Sphere". Irish Migrant Networks and the Question of Respectability in Nineteenth Century South Wales', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 23, 2–3, 233–53.
68. This included the promotion of personal business interests, or being elected under false pretences. Portsmouth History Centre, unaccessioned item, Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *Annual Meetings*, 13 March 1907. As Peter Bailey noted, rather than a 'cultural absolute', respectability was a more pluralistic cluster of roles to be assumed depending on what was judged by the enactor as appropriate behaviour for the occasion. P. Bailey (1979) '"Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?" Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability', *Journal of Social History*, 12, 336–53.
69. Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *Annual Meetings*, 13 March 1907. Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *Committee Meetings*, 14 September 1911.
70. For more on the role of women see O'Leary, 'Networking Respectability', p. 262.
71. *Evening News*, 2 March 1908, p. 5.
72. Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *Committee Meetings*, 16 August 1910.
73. *Evening News*, 17 December 1913, p. 5.
74. *Evening News*, 20 April 1911, p. 5.
75. Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *Annual Meetings*, 13 March 1907.
76. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 103
77. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 73.
78. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 166. However, we should also acknowledge that there may have been Irish migrants who were not consistently active in national politics.
79. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', pp. 23–4.
80. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 187.
81. *Evening News*, 14 July 1913, p. 5.
82. Indeed, as Colls has observed, the act of 'keeping it up' meant keeping it yours. Colls, *Identity of England*, p. 28. *Evening News*, 4 April 1906, p. 3; *Evening News*, 10 May 1913, p. 3; *Evening News*, 9 March 1900, p. 2.
83. For example, the Pembrokeshire Society toasted to 'Kindred societies' at their smoking concert and praised the 'good work of the Inter-counties competitions in promoting the good fellowship that makes life worth living.' *Evening News*, 22 September 1913, p. 8.
84. *Evening News*, 2 October 1912, p. 5.

85. *Evening News*, 26 September 1910, p. 5.
86. Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *Committee Meetings*, 6 November 1912.
87. Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *Committee Meetings*, 7 April 1909.
88. *Evening News*, 26 June 1914, p. 3.
89. *Evening News*, 9 March 1900, p. 2; *Evening News*, 16 February 1901, p. 3.
90. *Evening News*, 23 April 1906, p. 3; *Evening News*, 20 October 1910, p. 3.
91. *Evening News*, 20 October 1910, p. 3.
92. *Evening News*, 9 February 1906, p. 5.
93. The records dating from the establishment of the Portsmouth and District Caledonian Society until 1933–34 were destroyed during the Second World War. The Society celebrated its centenary in 1998 at the Portsmouth Guildhall. Portsmouth History Centre, Acc. 1043A, Records of the Portsmouth and District Caledonian Society, Portsmouth Caledonian Society, *St Andrews Dinner 2001.*
94. *Evening News*, 24 February 1899, p. 2; Walter Scott lecture, *Evening News*, 20 April 1899, p. 3; R.L. Stevenson lecture, *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 March 1900, p. 4.
95. *Hampshire Telegraph*, 21 October 1899, p. 6.
96. *Evening News*, 13 July 1899, p. 3.
97. *Evening News*, 10 December 1914, p. 3.
98. *Evening News*, 18 December 1914, p. 4.
99. J.M. MacKenzie and T.M. Devine (2011) 'National Identity, Union, and Empire, *c.* 1850–c. 1970' in MacKenzie and Devine (eds.) *Scotland and the British Empire,* p. 13.
100. *Evening News*, 2 March 1911, p. 3.
101. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 226.
102. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 227.
103. *Evening News*, 16 May 1900, p. 3.
104. For example, March 1910 as cited in Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 112.
105. Daly, 'Crown, Empire', p. 206–7.
106. Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *Committee Meetings*, 22 September 1914.
107. Portsmouth Society of Yorkshiremen, *Committee Meetings*, 29 January 1915.

Four Nations Poverty, 1870–1914: The View from the Centre to the Margins

Oliver Betts

In a letter to the editor of *The Times* in October 1902 Helen Dendy Bosanquet expressed her profound dissatisfaction with the work of B. Seebohm Rowntree. Rowntree's text, published the previous year as *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, was a searing exploration of the near-inescapable economics of poverty in his home city of York. It was a study that laid deep roots for the burgeoning discipline of sociology and helped inform the coming Liberal reforms to welfare.[1] Bosanquet, though, was not convinced. A leading light of the Charity Organisation Society (COS), a group which had given itself over to the reform of philanthropy across the British Isles since 1869, Bosanquet simply could not see how Rowntree was able to claim that York was typical of industrial towns across the country. 'The Poor Law [in the city] is very badly administered,' she wrote, and 'its sanitary conditions are quite exceptionally bad', both factors, she believed, that significantly varied the experience of poverty in York. 'Mr. Rowntree appeals to the example of Mr Booth,' she concluded, referencing the earlier study of poverty

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undertaken by Charles Booth in London, 'well, there are those of us who think the great value of Mr. Booth's work lies rather in his detailed studies and descriptions than in his estimates and percentages'.[2]

In a microcosm, this represents the increasingly passionate tensions between broad-scale models of poverty, extrapolated from detailed research, as Rowntree's study embodied, and the inherent localism of the case-study work so prized by Bosanquet and the COS, that to some extent still shapes the history of poverty today. Investigations of the poor in British history, however they are defined, have tended towards either localised grass-roots case studies or comprehensive statistical assessments. Those texts that attempt a sweeping overview, be they thematic as in James Vernon's recent work on *Hunger*, or cultural as with Bronislaw Geremek's *Poverty: A History*, by their very necessity eschew the lived experiences of mass poverty for wider discussions of the cultural impact of hunger and need in modern society.[3] In contrast, Julie-Marie Strange's cultural focus on grieving and cultures of death, for instance, or the geographical approach that David W. Howell uses to mark out the boundaries of his study of the rural poor in Wales, exchange the broad-brush for the intricacy of detail.[4] Histories of poverty and the poor are caught between the intensely local 'bottom-up' approach and the 'top-down' national, thematic, or institutional approach. As Peter Jones and Steven King have recently pointed out, we are far from 'realizing a truly British "welfare history" for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'.[5]

It is a factor further complicated by the nature of the source material. Oral histories and critical re-readings of local and institutional records have supported innovative research in recent years. Much of the experience of poverty by those who lived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, remains lost to the historian.[6] There is a danger that the dominant voice of the outside expert in poverty—the Poor Law legislator, the philanthropist, the social reformer—can outweigh those of the poor themselves. The danger in marrying up the 'panoramic view' of an institution such as the Poor Law, which so affected the experience and the definition of poverty, is that, as Anthony Brundage has put it, 'it becomes necessary to employ words like "possibly", "probably", "surely", and "arguably"' when trying to assess the impact of the institutional approach to poverty on the individual experiencing it.[7] Analysis is made still more difficult by the different Poor Laws in operation across the British Isles. The English Poor Law, which also covered Wales, had

been in existence since the sixteenth century and even after its controversial restructuring with the passage of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 remained fundamentally a regional system where local levies were raised against rate payers to provide relief. Scotland's system, which had emerged from similar early modern roots and went through its own reformation in 1845, rested much more on the legal right to appeal by individual paupers than a sense of blanket parochial responsibility towards poor residents as in England. Finally, before the creation of the Irish Poor Law in 1838 the responsibility for tackling poverty rested in the hands of the Catholic Church and private alms. Harsher and more focused on institutions such as the workhouse, the Irish Poor Law, while inspired by the New Poor Law in England and Wales, represented yet another difference in how the poor and poverty were defined and treated across Victorian Britain.[8] Add to this the veritable array of late Victorian and Edwardian social reform groups, charities and overlapping government jurisdictions, and a thoroughly complex and multifaceted challenge emerges when writing a broad history of poverty and the poor. As Brundage observes, a book on poor relief throughout the British Isles would be almost impossibly vast in scope and scale.[9]

Yet, as this chapter will endeavour to show, there are potential insights to be gained from tackling this vast scale. As Bosanquet's critique of Rowntree demonstrates, by the beginning of the twentieth century an increasingly Anglocentric and urban notion of poverty had emerged at a national level. Despite the COS's deep involvement in poverty across the four nations, nowhere in her review does Bosanquet suggest that utilising a provincial English city like York might misrepresent poverty in, say, rural Wales. The roots of this increasingly English national conception of poverty are most effectively uncovered, this chapter argues, through the lens of a four nations study. Not only does this allow for a wider geographical comparison, but also for a critical re-examination of the wider social, cultural and political contexts in which the debates about poverty raged. The period between 1870, when exposés of poverty prompted many to look afresh at the problem, and the outbreak of the First World War, which cast ideas of state intervention and welfare in a new light, was also a time in which the very nature of what it was to be British or English was fundamentally in question. This chapter will show that notions of poverty on both a regional and a national level developed within the fervent context of these wider debates.

In attempting to marry together these disparate strands of research, this chapter moves from those who defined and studied poverty on an English national level, through the experience of poverty bound up in the particulars of an area's labour market and local Poor Law operation, to the poor themselves struggling with chronic want across the four nations. It takes its inspiration from J.G.A. Pocock's work, particularly Pocock's proposal that the writing of British history be seen as a 'journey of discovery' through a varied landscape.[10] It concentrates on the four constituent nations of the British Isles but also, as Pocock does, presses out towards the very fringes of those nations to provide further perspective, arguing for a comparative understanding of four nations history. An approach that balances between the micro and macro scale, the local and the institutional, and incorporates both the voices of established society and those of the poor, the comparisons uncovered in this chapter allow for an examination of both the defining of poverty and the experiences of the poor. Ultimately, it points to a growing divergence between the two, as poverty on a national level was imbued with a particularly English definition pertinent to the Edwardian sense of nation and identity.

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By 1911, when hundreds of delegates assembled for the National Conference on the Prevention of Destitution held at Caxton Hall in Westminster, poverty and its alleviation had assumed a prominent place in contemporary politics and society. The Conference came at a time when forty years of reforming zeal, philanthropic effort, and social upheaval had upturned late Victorian thinking about poverty.[11] Even the five years prior to the Conference had been tumultuous. The tariff reform campaign of Joseph Chamberlain had argued for a radical departure from the orthodoxy of free trade, in part under the banner of funding welfare and supporting the British worker on the edge of poverty, and although Chamberlain's ideas had not won out at the polls in 1906, the national debate had noticeably shifted for contemporaries.[12] Two-thirds of Liberal candidates in that election, though opposing Chamberlain and tariff reform, had made social reform pledges either in print or on the hustings.[13] The two elections of 1910, as the Liberal government struggled with the House of Lords over the People's Budget, had brought those promised reforms back to centre stage. David Lloyd George was not the only one in early twentieth-century Britain seeking to wage 'implacable warfare against poverty'.[14] The printed proceedings of the Conference

proudly proclaimed that 'the idea of such a National Conference was warmly received all over the Kingdom'.[15]

Yet for all its national rhetoric, the Conference itself was a remarkably English affair. The vast majority of the more than 1,000 delegates were from England. Twenty-three English county councils sent deputations (just under half), compared with only four Welsh (a third) and two Scottish councils (less than a tenth). Ireland was almost completely absent over the four days—if not for the Lord Mayors of Dublin and Belfast there would have been almost no one at Irish local government level participating in proceedings.[16] Some of this was due, no doubt, to the radical origins of the Conference. As a review in the COS's organ, *Charity Organisation Review*, pointed out, the close ties between the Conference and the radical and progressive National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution alarmed some. This group, emerging from the Poor Law Commission two years earlier, called for the root and branch abolition of the Poor Law and was led by Sidney and Beatrice Webb among others. While this certainly dissuaded some more conservative speakers, it would have had little effect on the proportions of non-English delegates.[17] More mundane elements, such as the short time between the announcement of the Conference and the event itself, the choice of London as host city, and the seeming unwillingness of the Local Government Board of Ireland to join its English and Scottish counterparts in financially supporting delegations, were perhaps more decisive in shifting the balance towards England. Despite a relatively even split between the governmental and voluntary sectors across the delegates, speakers and attendees from England vastly outnumbered their peers from the other parts of the British Isles.[18]

Not only were Scotland, Wales and Ireland underrepresented, but also, throughout the Conference, a distinctly Anglocentric conception of poverty and reform emerged. Delegates spoke in the language of a new British conception of destitution that was firmly rooted in an urban and English understanding of the nation. Patrick Joyce, one of the more recent historians to examine this critical period of British state-building, argues for the growth of a 'caste' of top-level state officials. A 'public school- and Oxbridge-educated high bureaucracy,' he claims, built a powerful, modern, and, crucially, technological state from the centre.[19] Although these delegates were, in many cases, several steps below Joyce's bureaucrats in both social and administrative standing, this centralising urge was nevertheless repeatedly represented in how they

spoke about their various regional jurisdictions. A medical expert from the Local Government Board of Scotland, giving a comparative paper on public nurseries in Europe as a means of helping poor women and children, presented his discussion in English terms. 'The whole question has been fully investigated from the English standpoint,' he observed, while lamenting, in passing, a lack of Scottish attention to the subject.[20] In a lengthy speech from the audience following a panel on unemployment, the Scottish Labour MP George Barnes argued that devolving the regulation of working hours and conditions to the different Home Rule parliaments—which he was certain were about to reshape government in the British Isles—would be a regressive step. When it came to tackling poverty, the administration of the law, he argued, needed to be operated from the centre.[21]

Both poverty and the poor themselves were to be marginalised in this new British configuration. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the discussion of Labour Colonies for the Unemployed. Colonel D.C. Lamb, of the Salvation Army, gave a paper on the Land and Industrial Colony established at Hadleigh in Essex. This 1891 complex, built on a 'strange prospect of a stretch of bare mud' across from Canvey Island, was the brainchild of the Army's founder, General William Booth.[22] Booth's ideology was a powerfully Anglocentric one that saw the broader four nations as merely peripheral spaces to a 'darkest England' that, as his book of the same name argued, was fundamentally an urban, and London-based, slum. Having co-founded the Salvation Army in Whitechapel in 1865 with his wife Catherine, an area that in 1911 still housed the organisation's headquarters, Booth was, like many delegates attending the Conference, extrapolating a vision of poverty outwards from London. Such schemes would, he claimed, make 'agricultural pioneers out of the scum of Cockneydom', housing them on waste ground such as 'the square miles of unused land which fringe the sides of our railroads' and making them work like the rugged colonial Britons of Canada and Australia.[23] In his paper at the Conference, Lamb was keen that such schemes should endeavour to 'give the colonist the feeling that he is not banished', but it is clear that, for the Salvation Army at least, the English pauper needed to be pushed to the fringes of society to be reformed.[24]

Like the imperial overtones Anna Davin draws out in her study of how reformers worked with poor mothers in the East End, these farm colonies were not simply an exercise in walling off the poor in a

Foucauldian sense of instilling discipline by separation. A four nations approach reveals that the very spaces considered were part of a contextual sense of the geography of British poverty.[25] The remote spaces of the four nations, like the imagined rugged landscapes of the colonies, were to be drawn upon to solve an essentially urban poverty.

* * * * *

Tracking the emergence of this increasingly narrow sense of what poverty was and where it was at its most virulent requires movement within this late Victorian and Edwardian context. If a four nations history should, as Pocock suggests, comprise a journey through time and space in the British Isles, then it is necessary to shift the focus from national to local level. Local studies have been the lifeblood of the history of poverty in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain, the means by which historians have often narrowed the scope of their investigations. Lorie Charlesworth, in her study of the legal elements of the Poor Law, for example, focuses on the north-west of England and argues that 'local and regional differences' can be explained through a history of the application of the laws regarding poverty.[26] In stepping down a level into this local context, this chapter will now show how the comparative element of four nations history can shed light on the overarching trend that led to the early twentieth-century conception of poverty on a national scale.

Poor Law conferences did not begin with the 1911 meeting at Caxton House. The shifting jurisdictions and challenges of the Poor Law meant that many local Unions established forums for discussing and debating the practice of relieving poverty. One such was the Annual Poor Law Conference for North Wales. First held in Rhyl in 1878, the development of this meeting of local government administrators and other associated notables of the district spanned most of the rural Poor Law Unions of North Wales.[27] Wales, unlike Scotland or Ireland as discussed later in this piece, operated under the same Poor Law as England, and the attendant conferences can be seen as part of that process of Administrative Anglicisation already well underway in urban Cardiff to the south.[28]

Following the newspaper coverage of the conferences between the 1870s and 1890s—when they were most active—provides a clear sense of a local meeting of minds that increasingly looked to the centre of the nation for its direction and example. From the very first meeting

the conference delegates expressed a tension between their function as local forum for exchanging information about and strategies for tackling poverty and their duty to the metropole. The chairman in 1878 expressed his hope that these meetings 'would help to prevent over centralisation' but in the same opening address stressed their utility as a conduit to the Local Government Board in London.[29] Steadily, as the conference became an established aspect of the relief of poverty in the region, London's significance to their work increased. By the third conference, in 1880, delegates felt ready to move a motion that the Local Government Board be asked for funds to prop up travel expenses for the conference.[30] At the sixth conference, the chairman opened debate by reflecting on the important work of the conference within the wider schema of the Poor Law. In doing so he observed that the idea of Poor Law conferences had emerged from England, and that the work of reliving the poor in north Wales had 'aided and extended' the wider reforms to the Poor Law that emanated from Westminster. Discussion of financial matters was driven by a national picture, and examples from English Unions were cited as crucial in providing a sense of how north Wales fitted into 'the country at large'. Significantly, by this point neither the delegates nor the coverage was restricted to north Wales as newspapers and officials from north-west England drew their Welsh colleagues into a wider network of Poor Law exchange and debate.[31]

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s conference delegates continued to relate their local experience of the Poor Law to the national perspective. Charlesworth has argued that historians often forget that the Poor Law contained a common core of 'legal foundations' that prevented it from being applied as mutable 'local custom'.[32] This is certainly true, but in the tension between codified and centralised legal foundations and local application, definitions of poverty in north Wales increasingly reflected a conception of a national whole. This was, by the 1890s, something that conference delegates very clearly responded to rather than shaped; an external model they came to accept as superseding their own experience of local poverty relief. By 1895 conference attendees in Llandudno debated dropping the regularity of conferences down to bi- or tri-annually following not only reconstitution of the central committee but also discussions higher up in London. Although the influence of the Local Government Board in London as a centre first of advice, and then of funding, and finally specific direction emerges from the proceedings, this alone does not fully explain the capital's influence over the debates

surrounding poverty in north Wales. More and more the discussion of poverty at the national level, in the press and in administrative reports and dictums, seems to have influenced these local administrators who came to see their actions as part of a wider whole.

Even the chairman's 1878 repudiation of increased state intervention in poverty, reflecting the conservatism of rural north Wales that David Howell sees as extending from the eighteenth century through to the First World War, was still very much reflective of national debates at the time about state pensions.[33] Despite the differences between rural north Wales and the uncovering of urban poverty that stimulated the pension debate in late Victorian society, the chairman did not decry the proposals as an urban imposition alien to their district. It was, simply, a rival view of 'what should be the nation's policy on these vital questions'.[34] The work of these Poor Law Unions had always been to implement national legislation on a local level but, as the nineteenth century wore on, delegates at the conferences looked more and more to London for direction in understanding poverty and its relief.

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Reaching the realities of poverty as experienced by the poor, as opposed to the views of investigators and reformers, is much more complex. Many historians driving the history of the working class have continued to follow the examples of E.P. Thompson, Elizabeth Roberts and Anna Davin in hunting out new sources and approaches, and the study of chronic want has often been only a part of their wider investigation into working-class society and culture at the time.[35] Recent significant works by Selina Todd and Alison Light have, for example, moved well beyond the experience of poverty to discuss the working class more generally.[36] Furthermore, as Julie-Marie Strange observes, both the terms working class and poor/poverty are 'concepts invested with individual and shifting meaning' and the poor and the working class are by no means synonymous.[37] As outlined earlier, the traditional response has been for historians of the poor to concentrate on a particular area and population in order to engage in the detailed primary source research needed to trace working-class voices. Michael Rose, framing the collection of essays he had brought together on the Poor Law and the city, states that they offer 'some signposts … and some openings' into the 'complex and massive historical problem of the treatment of urban

poverty'.[38] In arguing for a four nations approach to poverty, adopting a similar local strategy is key to ensuring that the voices of the poor themselves remain part of the wider narrative of a centralising and increasingly urban and English understanding of poverty.

Stepping down a level from the local administrators and reformers who attended the north Wales conferences with zealous purpose, a further part of the fringe of Pocock's Britain, the Shetland and Orkney Islands, should be brought into focus. Of course, the North Atlantic islands were not the farthest reaches of the British archipelago for either Pocock, writing from New Zealand, or for late Victorian contemporaries like William Booth, who was well aware of the potential of new colonial lands as spaces where the poor could be put to new, productive, lives. Imperial motifs helped inform discourses about poverty in the period.[39] In terms of studying the poor themselves in a four nations conception, the islands should perhaps be seen as being on the edges of such a study of poverty—living lives far from the urban model of poverty that was coming to dominate discussion but still within the direct administrative sphere of Poor Law, and thus of interest to those seeking to reform its provisions. In contrast, those paupers who actually emigrated voluntarily or through funded schemes left the umbrella of the Poor Law. They instead slotted into new economic, cultural and social circumstances that determined the experience of poverty in their new homes.

For contemporary investigators, sent there to study poverty, the distance to the islands was certainly considerable. When in 1881 the *Fishing Gazette* pitched the islands as an angling resort, it reckoned the trip by steam-packet from Leith was somewhere between thirty-two and thirty-six hours and required a 'good dose of castor-oil' for those unused to the choppy seas. The distance was, for the magazine's readers, framed in London-centric terms. Lerwick, the primary settlement, was recorded as 'some four hundred miles north of Edinburgh' and, when it was remembered that this was 'about the same distance from London, the distance to be overcome is considerable'.[40] The Shetland Islands, and the Orkney Islands that lay between them and the north of mainland Scotland, were characterised in nineteenth-century texts by a heavy emphasis on their remoteness.

Two investigative commissions provide insight into the lives of the poor themselves on the islands. In 1872, William Guthrie submitted the report of the Commissioners into the Truck System on the Shetland Islands to parliament and, in 1887, Chief Inspector of Factories

Alexander Redgrave followed up with a second report.[41] There are limitations to drawing upon sources passed through the prism of outside investigators; as Ian Gazeley and Andrew Newell have pointed out recently the statistical basis of some of these studies, as well as the mediated voices recorded in interviews, can be flawed.[42] Yet the context of these studies makes the answers given by poor residents significant. Both were conducted in periods of inclement weather. Redgrave, for instance, was hampered by the violent weather of the winter months which made travel impossible. Unable to visit many of the islands and render their own judgements, in both instances the investigators were forced instead to rely much more heavily on the testimony of residents.[43] The questions and answers of these interviews reveal both a poverty organic to the fringes of the four nations and also the growing distance between the lives of the poor and the visions of those studying their conditions.

The interviewees were drawn from those workers interviewed on the islands the investigators could visit, those who had left remoter islands for larger settlements like Lerwick, and from traders and employers who travelled in between. The perspective provided on poverty was as mixed as the interviewees themselves. In contrast, both interviewers were particularly interested in what was known as the Truck System. Regarded as an unwelcome relic of earlier, pre-modern forms of patronage, the Truck System—essentially the payment of employees in forms other than money—was seen as inherently abusive. Employers could withhold parts of payment for spurious reasons, supply low quality goods as payment, or come to some reciprocal agreement with shopkeepers to overcharge workers. Parliament had legislated against it as early as 1831, but to the annoyance of many reformers it seemed to stubbornly persist in some places. By the 1870s and 1880s the Truck System was suspected to have its deepest roots in Scotland. Thus, even before the interviews were conducted, there was a significant divergence between single-minded questioners and a varied array of answerers.

Entering into their interviews, the Inspectors were clearly riding a wave of suspicion that, on the edges of Scotland, near-feudal levels of oppression and exploitation were in existence. 'Talk about Shylock and his pound of flesh!' thundered the *Penny Illustrated Paper* in 1910. '[As] a class the hosiery merchants [the majority of buyers dealing with Shetland and Orkney working women] are very respectable men … [but] are not sufficiently anxious about the bodies of the women knitters as to be willing to pay them a living wage'.[44] The spectre of the sweating

system raised by the paper, so notably unveiled in London's East End workshops by well-publicised social reform campaigns, was similar to the invective that surrounded the Truck System. It had, in the 1850s, been observed among railway navvies working in remote cuttings and digging new lines following a parliamentary inquiry, and this increasingly linked it to the fringe spaces of society.[45] Both investigators were already convinced, before departing mainland Scotland, that they would uncover chronic misery caused by the Truck System. They carried their suspicions from the centre to the peripheries as they understood it.

The evidence of the women themselves was more problematic for the investigators. The Truck System was seen by outsiders as a vicious and exploitative practice, but what emerges from the accounts of the poor themselves is an image of a poverty organic to the islands in which the Truck System was just part of the wider problem of making a living. Mrs Elizabeth Moody, a knitter, frustrated interviewers when she admitted that she could have received cash for her work had she asked, 'but I did not ask for it'. The exchange, when quoted at length, illustrates how the testimony of the knitters confounded investigators convinced that they were trapped in the Truck System by unscrupulous and bullying male managers:

1872   Then, if you preferred it, why did you not ask for it?
          I told you I managed my affairs in such a way that I did not need it.
1873   But you said you would have preferred to have had half of it in money?
          Provided I could have got it, I should have liked it very well; but I did not ask that.
1874   Why did you not ask it? Do you think there would have been a difficulty in getting it?
          I don't know; I only know that I never asked for one-half of it in money.
1875   Why?
          Generally took a line for what remained to me upon a shawl. I might have got the money instead of a line, but I did not ask it.[46]

There was little sense, here, of Mrs Moody being thoroughly exploited. Her semi-cryptic 'provided I could have got it' comment about payment in cash potentially suggests that she might have struggled to obtain money directly from her employers, but generally her account places the Truck System firmly within the wider context of remote island life, a far cry from the critical emphasis the interviewers gave it.

There was no doubt though, in the women's minds, that they were living in poverty. It was just that this poverty, at least in their experience, was not a direct result of the Truck System. Catherine Borthwick could only get dried goods, such as tea, on credit from her employer, she told the investigators. She relied on her father's wages for her actual meals.[47] Margery Mason gave up knitting for another employer; 'I could not do with it, it did not keep me,' she told the Committee, for 'I did not have money to live on'. She had a sick husband to support, and many workers interviewed relayed similar accounts of discomfort and dissatisfaction.[48] The key problem, though, seemed to be the chronic low pay of the piecework the female knitters were engaged in. Whether paid in cash or in kind, the women were simply not earning enough.

In fact, in some cases the men and women interviewed expressed a more nuanced view of the Truck System. There was, as with any employer-employee relationship, the opportunity for abuse. Jemima Sandison told investigators that she never felt able to ask for money in hand from her employer as he effectively kept her in debt through a series of advances in credit. One fisherman, although admitting he did not like the system he was caught up in, nevertheless took a prosaic approach. 'We are quite satisfied with Mr Robertson,' he remarked when asked about the local employer who paid him and his fellows in kind, 'according to the custom of the country'.[49] Redgrave, perhaps reflecting on the inclement weather that trapped him in Kirkwall for part of his investigation, was forced to admit that the treacherous seas and remote islands meant that the Truck System was sometimes the only way of ensuring that food and supplies reached far-flung settlements.[50] The poor of the islands may not have liked the Truck System but they did not see it as the root cause of their poverty.

In their conclusions, though, both investigators chose to ignore this testimony and instead reiterate an understanding of the Shetland Islands and Orkney poor as trapped in a cruel system that ensured their poverty. The 226 inhabitants of Fair Island, Guthrie reported, were trapped within the Truck System to 'an excessive degree'.[51] Likewise, residents of Foula were simply described as 'trucked'.[52] Redgrave claimed that although it was 'doubtful' there was widespread evasion of the law on either Orkney or the Shetlands, 'the evil of the Truck system is rampant' nevertheless.[53] Those newspapers that reviewed their reports, across mainland Scotland, found their own beliefs about the

evils inherent in the fringes of the nation bolstered. 'The Shetland poor are very much at the mercy of their upper class', the *Dundee Courier and Argus* effectively summarised, 'taking what is given to them and being ignorant whether what they get is or is not a just reward for their industry'.[54]

It was the sense of distance from the centre, from the 'loci of government' as Pocock puts it, that saw these investigators set aside the opinions of the men and women they interviewed in favour of conclusions that confirmed their own preconceived notions of life on the island fringe of Scotland.[55] Their dismissal of the testimony of the female knitters embodies overtones of the low regard with which poor women's work was held throughout Britain at the time, seen as carrying the taint of poverty by many reformers who considered it a detriment to building a self-reliant working-class home resting on a well-paid and reformed paterfamilias.[56] But, seen through a four nations lens, their clear conviction about the nature of poverty in the area goes beyond a disregard for the opinions of the female workers they interviewed. It was impossible to separate the Truck System and the poverty it caused from the age-old nature of the island landscape Guthrie claimed. Indeed, quoting from a history of the ancient Shetlands, he argued that the relationships he had uncovered were a continuation of far older patterns of landlord and tenant subsistence.[57] The remoteness of the landscape, the terrible weather, and the dual forces of tradition and circumstance were responsible, in the minds of both men, for rooting the poverty of the Truck System so deep in the islands.[58]

'Reformers at the end of the [nineteenth] century,' Brundage contends, 'were prone to see poverty not as a single monolith, but as an array of particular problems' in context.[59] Exploring local conditions on the Shetland and Orkney Islands suggests his conclusions are, broadly, correct. The two investigations in the 1870s and 1880s concluded convincingly that local poverty was fed by a Truck System that had specifically developed from the remoteness of the region. This remoteness, though, cannot be separated from wider national debates about poverty. In tracing the origins of the Scottish welfare state of the twentieth century, Ian Levitt has pointed out the prominent influence local reformers could have in remote areas, singling out for example the efforts of Liberal MP John Sinclair. But, as Levitt observes, Sinclair was a product of a national reform agenda, having been at Toynbee Hall and heavily involved in the campaigns against sweated labour in the capital.[60] The

same is true of the investigators featured here. They were able to both acknowledge the existence of a localised form of poverty and, at the same time, remain unswayed in their belief that the Truck System they were so sure lay at the heart of the poverty they uncovered should be abolished. The voices of the female knitters actually working in the system were marginalised in favour of an almost pre-determined judgement.

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Ultimately, the potential strength of a four nations approach to the history of poverty lies in an adherence to Pocock's belief in the value of interwoven dialogues. He saw this on a grand scale, arguing for example for a 'reconstituted' Irish history that should 'move in and out of British history', but this does not preclude employing the comparative element of four nations history at multiple levels.[61] Shifting to the urban centres of Britain, this chapter now explores a space that linked both the experiences of the poor and poverty as it was studied and defined by others. Perhaps one of the smallest, and most personal, manifestations of poverty, the home, was also the subject of intense national concern by the first decades of the twentieth century.[62] From the late 1890s onwards those who sought to reform poverty studied the 'wider social, political, cultural, and economic relations' that poor families built around their homes and, crucially, found them wanting.[63] Their investigations, ranging across the British Isles, were inherently local in focus but also, at the same time, conscious of their place within a national debate.

Dundee and Dublin were two such cities where the conditions of the poor were put under the lens of the investigative microscope. The report of the Dundee Social Union, in 1905, ranged across housing, family income, and child health and mortality, and bore the stamp of the reforming zeal of the Union's founder, Mary L. Walker.[64] The Dublin investigation of 1913 was more official—ordered by the Local Government Board for Ireland, its specific remit was 'to inquire into the housing conditions of the working classes in the city of Dublin'.[65] The cities, the investigations, and the nature of poor living conditions uncovered were different but, as a comparative approach reveals, there were also broader prevailing similarities.

In both cases the housing of the poor was the subject of intense criticism. This was particularly true of tenements. By far the most common type of poor housing in both Dublin and Dundee, the poorly maintained

and overcrowded tenement drew near-identical condemnation in the two studies. In Dundee they were 'old' and structurally unsound, in Dublin 'exceedingly old … and … in an advanced state of decay'.[66] In each case investigators uncovered homes beset by what, in recent decades, has been termed 'fuel poverty'.[67] Better houses in Dundee had built-in ovens, but in older or worse quality tenements 'old-fashioned' grates set into walls sucked heat from the room through thin brickwork or leaking windows.[68] Floors were often out of repair in Dublin, and investigators found that many window frames were warped or crumbling and landing windows were 'not infrequently absent'.[69] Investigators, probing the physical dimensions and conditions of poor homes, came quickly to shared beliefs that the tenements were to blame.

Yet their studies of tenement life in the two cities cast light on different shades of working-class existence. Poor families had to make space for homes amid chronic lack of space, of money, of warmth, and of belongings.[70] Walker and her fellow inspectors presented four case studies of tenements that exemplified just how different poor households could be even within the same building. Variations in family size, circumstances and income created a microcosm of interconnected lives in each building; the young couple in Room Nine, for instance, paid their widowed single neighbour to take in their baby during work hours.[71] In Dublin investigators uncovered a tendency among many of the residents to decorate their rooms during the Christmas period, despite the damp and decay, but also noted that at no time did the shared spaces of the tenements such as the toilets seem in anything 'even approaching a clean condition'.[72] This was, perhaps, a spatial distinction that hints at where residents saw the responsibilities and attendant costs of their homes end. Although these observations did not change the belief of investigators in either city that the tenement was at the heart of urban decay and poverty, they do reveal the myriad fluctuations and differences that governed the lives of the poor.

It is the context in which poverty and its reform were played out, however, that is most fruitfully enhanced by a comparative four nations approach. The poor of both cities suffered particularly in the winter months, and coal became a subject of confrontation. Two thefts of coal in Dundee reveal the significance of local circumstance when sympathy for the poor was forced up against the law. In 1877 Margaret Higgins, who helped herself to 14lbs of coal from the side of a wagon, was released from the court with a mere 'admonition'. Although the

prevailing argument in the court had been that this was simple opportunism rather than deliberate theft, there was also clearly sympathy for the poor woman trying to warm her family in a cold May.[73] In 1882, however, three women were sentenced to prison for the theft of coal. Even though one protested in court that 'she had not a penny in the house that morning to buy a bit of fuel' and all claimed the coal they took had been spillage, a spate of thefts from the yard in question seems to have hardened the opinion of the court.[74] Sympathy for the poor relied very much on specific context.

Despite the significance of local contexts, investigators in Dublin and Dundee were by no means unique in their activities or conclusions. Across the four nations dozens of social investigators were busily engaged in smoothing over the local exceptions they uncovered in an effort to render their findings more representative of poor homes on a national level. The debate between Rowntree and Bosanquet with which this chapter began was just one of many in the first decades of the twentieth century. A. Bowley and L.R. Burnett-Hurst examined Northampton, Warrington, Stanley and Reading to try and ascertain a truly representative example of poverty. Maud Pember Reeves turned to Lambeth, to argue that the state needed to step in as the guardian in poor homes, and Lady Florence Bell examined her home town of Middlesbrough in an attempt to redress what she saw as the lack of representative homes in an industrial city in these debates.[75] Many cited the works of previous authors, stretching back to Charles Booth's monumental study of poverty in London in the 1890s, as inspiration.[76] The personal histories of researchers were often directly tied to national debates about poverty. Pember Reeves came to her study of Lambeth from working with mothers and studying infant welfare in London slums, while Mary Lily Walker, the driving force behind the Dundee study, had begun her work among the poor in London alongside, Octavia Hill.[77] Rowntree, in introducing his study of York in which he had visited hundreds of homes and engaged in intricate research into the expenditure of individual families caught in poverty, saw no contradiction in claiming, the entire point of his study was to show how conditions in the city were 'like many other slum districts'.[78] The point of understanding the local nature of poverty was, for these reformers, to build a typical picture of urban poverty.

* * * * *

In concluding this Pocock-inspired journey around the four nations in search of poverty and the poor, it is natural to return, finally, to London. Not only because, as the 1911 National Conference demonstrated, London was the administrative centre of the four nations, but also because it was the wellspring for so much of the debate surrounding poverty. It was London, as Gareth Stedman Jones has argued, that 'symbolized the problem of the existence and persistence of certain endemic forms of poverty' that seemed to so threaten 'Victorian civilization'.[79] It was where Charles Booth, as so many social investigators noted, codified his landmark study of poverty.[80] It was also, at least for the Liberal politician Charles Masterman, where the 'homogeneous civilisation' of middle-class 'suburbans' resided. And, although his writing should be seen in the light of the recent Progressive defeat in the London County Council elections, Masterman's 1909 *Condition of England* is an indication of just how the national debate over social reform had centralised in an urban and Anglocentric fashion. He painted a critical portrait of the suburban London middle-class reading about poverty in their newspapers and, in following the rise of taxes and aware of the 'forces fermenting' in the slums, 'becoming everyday more impatient with the complaining of the poor'.[81] Overemphasised, perhaps, but another example of how by the 1900s the debate over poverty had come to preoccupy society at a number of levels.

What has emerged from this study of poverty across the four nations is the emphasis reformers and investigators increasingly placed on the solution of poverty on a national level. A four nations approach, shifting across Britain, has demonstrated how thoroughly local approaches to poverty, from the Poor Law conferences of north Wales to the examinations of households in Dundee, York, Dublin and other towns and cities, were related back to the national level. In his study of imperialism in British culture during this period, Brad Beaven has noted 'the complex layers of society through which the imperial message was transmitted and filtered'. Debates over the meaning and nature of Britain's imperial project had a 'distinct presence' at a 'national but also at a municipal level'.[82] The same seems true of the national debate over poverty although Beaven's conclusion, that the national level of discussion 'was neither uniform nor static' but was 'filtered through local elites and communities', arguably holds less true here.[83] In returning to the centre, the centralising urge that saw social reformers in this period busily search for an archetypal model of poverty becomes more stark. Unlike Beaven's

understanding of imperialism, here local understandings of poverty and the poor were filtered back up to a national average.

Throughout the material drawn together for this study there are, it is important to point out, flashes of variation and localism. The delegates at the 1885 North Wales Poor Law Conference, for instance, insisted on only comparing their unions with south Wales and not England. The issue in question, the chairman argued, was 'not one between England and Wales but between two opposite systems of management in Wales'.[84] Likewise the scale of this project, while not reaching the level of 'simplistic generalisations' that Helen Burke has warned of, has not offered so deep a consideration of the local stratifications of poor relief that her study of the Irish Poor Law in just the South Dublin Union uncovered. By necessity the scope of a four nations approach means that some of the intricacies of detail are lost.[85] As a methodology, though, it has served to illustrate the growing sense among those trying to tackle poverty that their efforts were part of a broader national struggle where, ultimately, the contextual specifics of poverty they discovered were subordinate to the wider urge to define poverty nationally.

At the outset of this chapter, it was claimed that a four nations approach could shed light on both the study of poverty and the lives of the poor, and demonstrate how these were caught up in the building of an urban, Anglocentric depiction of poverty. In actually turning to the source material it is striking how rapidly the voices of the poor themselves have become sidelined. This is partly a consequence of the shifting scales of analysis demanded by a four nations approach—the vast majority of sources left behind about poverty by the poor themselves are individual and contextual in nature and can be hard to place alongside the broad-brush sweep of reformist literature—but as this chapter has shown it was also a process of marginalisation inherent within the process of building a national understanding of poverty. Those who studied poverty, and got to grips with its local variations, were also those who silenced the voices of the poor in their conclusions. This was, as the study of the Shetland and Orkney Islands has illustrated, particularly true of the rural fringes of the four nations. Even when social investigators turned their attention to poverty in the countryside it was always subordinate to the urban.[86] The powerful materialist overview of twentieth-century poverty undertaken by Ian Gazeley, notably, covers both rural and urban investigations but even just a glance at the exhaustively collected array of poverty investigations he has brought together in the

period 1899–1914 speaks volumes about the primacy of the urban and the English in this textual outpouring.[87] From Rowntree onwards the quest for the representative slum, the typical poor home and the average impoverished family, eroded regional specifics and gravitated naturally toward an urban model rooted somewhere in England.

Ultimately a four nations schema does not provide the perfect solution to the problems inherent in writing a British history of poverty or deprivation in this period. Perhaps most troubling is the marginalising of the voices of the poor. Further care would need to be taken, in a more developed study, to draw these quieter voices to the fore; here the unexpectedly strong nature of the dialogue between reformers at different levels rendered the voices of the poor somewhat muter than was anticipated at the outset. What it does offer, though, is a clear sense of why the local and the national should be married together and why, to quote Anthony Brundage, 'important points of intersection' should be critically examined.[88] For although London was where, in events such as the 1911 Conference, these strands were drawn together and the perceived national problem of poverty discussed, the geographical scope of the four nations from which this evidence was drawn was never set in stone. The logical next step, perhaps, would be to take the story further. Pocock's Antipodean approach to the four nations, cast in the context of his native New Zealand, mirrors General Booth's schema for ending poverty. Booth's tireless belief in a 'New Britain' built upon a labour colony 'over-sea' in Australia or Canada saw the Salvation Army founder draw upon a language of Britishness in the struggle against poverty that extended well beyond the British Isles.[89] Drawing the historiography surrounding these colonial endeavours into a wider schematic of British poverty represents the type of challenge that social and cultural history must in turn pose to Pocock's formulation of the four nations.[90] For, like the changing perceptions of British identity in this imperial age, experiences of poverty did not stop at the emigration docks.

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Wales and Socialism, 1880–1914: Towards a Four Nations Analysis

Martin Wright

The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British socialist project was bold in its declarations of Britishness. Robert Blatchford, one of its most influential propagandists, commented that the staff of his hugely popular *Clarion* newspaper 'were Britons first and Socialists next'.[1] Such views were often conflated with English patriotism. H.M. Hyndman, pioneer of British Marxism, launched his socialist career in 1881 by arguing for an *England for All*. Edward Carpenter, prophet of fellowship and author of one of the most widely sung socialist anthems, urged that 'England Arise'; socialists in all parts of Britain sang the song, apparently without questioning its national exclusivity. Nor was their patriotism deemed inconsonant with socialist internationalism. George Lansbury described himself in 1912 as 'a Socialist without adjective'. 'Socialism', he argued, 'was devoid of creed, sect or nationality—it was a world movement.'[2] This did not, however, dilute his love of country, even if he did tend to ignore the fact that there was more than one nation in mainland Britain. 'I love England,' he wrote in 1934, 'I think of this island as a jewel set in the sea'.[3] Lansbury's geographical imprecision was

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shared by other socialists, some of whom seemed not to recognise any boundaries between the nations of the British Isles. Edmund Stonelake, of Aberdare, observed in 1904 that 'the Taff Vale decision … would come to be looked upon as a landmark in the history of England'.[4] That Stonelake could appear indifferent to the fact that Taff Vale (the site of a crucial industrial dispute four years previously) was in Wales (just a few miles from his home), and that a legal decision arising from the dispute was a milestone in British (rather than simply English) history, is remarkable. Considered alongside the other statements presented here, it suggests that the national consciousness of the first generation of modern British socialists was a complex phenomenon.

The same was true of the following generation. Most were quite clear about their British frames of reference. Aneurin Bevan made his focus explicit on the first page of *In Place of Fear*: 'A young miner in a South Wales colliery, my concern was with the one practical question, where does power lie in this particular State of Great Britain, and how can it be attained by the workers?'[5] Thus, when the first majority Labour government came to power, the nation of its nationalisation programme and National Health Service was unambiguously British. This did not mean, however, that socialists abandoned all vestiges of their sub-British, four nations identities. Bevan, once famously described as a 'projectile from the Welsh valleys', frequently used Welshness as a political tool.[6] In 1945 he told an audience in the south Wales valleys: 'I believe that for a Welshman to vote Tory … is an act of naked treachery to his country'.[7] He could also demonstrate an acute sensitivity towards what he saw as a unique and priceless Welsh culture.[8] Ultimately, however, Bevan's cultural observances were submerged within a British political consciousness. The same was true of his colleague in the 1945 Labour government, James Griffiths. A product of the linguistically Welsh anthracite region of the south Wales coalfield, he was less ambivalent about his Cymric identity than Bevan. As Dai Smith has put it, he exhibited more 'Welsh hywl' and less 'Bristolian sang-froid' than his Monmouthshire colleague.[9] He celebrated his Llanelli constituency as 'the symbol of all that is most precious in our Welsh way of life … the strong fortress of our language and traditions',[10] and he became the first Secretary of State for Wales in 1964. Nevertheless, in 1943 he had argued strongly against devolution to Wales on the grounds that the country's ties with Britain, through industry and social services, were too strong to break.[11] K.O. Morgan is correct in his assertion that Bevan and Griffiths 'embody

different aspects of the same Welsh Labour ethic' and that, despite representing culturally different aspects of Welshness, 'there was no fundamental conflict between them'.[12] Crucially, they were united by the extent to which their Welshness was accommodated within a British political framework.

As labour historiography developed in Britain it reflected the ideological tendencies expressed by Bevan and Griffiths. Most early historians of British socialism adopted an unquestionably unionist framework,[13] and after the Second World War, as the New Jerusalem took shape, mainstream labour historiography became an exercise in detailing the construction of its revered ramparts. This process, it was argued, had its 'origins' in the late nineteenth century, during which British labour experienced a supposed 'turning point', before undertaking its 'Forward March' to the socialised British state of the mid-twentieth century.[14] The unionist assumptions of this historiography were powerful indeed. It viewed the British working class as a politically homogenous whole, to which sub-British national identities were marginal. To Eric Hobsbawm, for example, much of Wales was 'little more than a mountainous agricultural annexe' culturally steeped in 'pseudo Druidism', and its Labour movement 'had little contact with the rest of the [British] nation' until it accepted the (implicitly positive) 'nationalising influence' of socialism.[15]

Even as a more critical socialist historiography emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, the national pluralism of British socialism remained relatively marginal to the chief concerns of labour historians. It is true that E.P. Thompson recognised sub-British national diversities in the framing of his classic *Making of the English Working Class*, and that his work, along with that of authors such as Perry Anderson, represented a distinctly English—as opposed to British—socialist intellectual tradition.[16] It also had counterparts in Wales, such as Gwyn A. Williams and D.J.V. Jones, and in Scotland, such as Hamish Fraser.[17] In general terms, though, 'history from below' tended to ignore explicit questions of national identity in favour of regional and local analysis (in contrast, perhaps, to more mainstream political history), and this was particularly true of work concerning the socialist movement in the seminal period from the 1880s to the First World War.[18] The development of labour history societies in Scotland, Wales and Ireland (in 1966, 1970 and 1973, respectively) stimulated interest in grassroots labour history immensely, but it did not result in a significant growth of interest in the question of national identity within a labour or socialist context.

Socialist scholarship in the British Isles thus neglected an important facet of its subject: a tradition within British socialism contesting the mainstream view that national identity was not a valid part of socialist consciousness.

A rejection of Marx's and Engels' assumption that 'the working men have no country' has been an important element of socialist discourse in the British Isles.[19] In 1901 Swansea-born G.A.H. Samuel ('Marxian' of the *Labour Leader*) argued that 'So far from Socialism extinguishing nationality, I look to see nationality a thousand times accentuated by Socialism—each man proud of his own nation and wise enough to respect the nation of another.'[20] Nor was he alone. A significant minority of early twentieth-century socialists sought to fuse their socialism with their national identity. James Connolly, the Edinburgh-born Irish martyr of the 1916 Easter Rising, saw socialism and nationalism as mutually reinforcing ideals, with himself a bridge between the two, 'interpreting Socialism to the Irish and interpreting the Irish to the Socialists.' He recognised that 'a Socialist movement must rest upon and draw its inspiration from the historical and actual conditions of the country in which it functions', and contended that national and social questions were inseparable.[21] A generation later, Christopher Murray Grieve, better known as the Scottish author Hugh MacDiarmid, attempted a similar synthesis of nationalism and socialism. First in the Independent Labour Party (ILP), and then in the Communist Party, he contended that there existed a 'difference in political psychology and economic and social requirements between England and Scotland', and that Scottish self-government would be a 'short cut to Scottish Socialism'.[22]

Socialist historiography began to engage with this pluralism in the 1980s. David Howell drew attention to what he called 'suppressed alternatives in the crucial areas of socialism and nationalism' in an examination of the lives of James Connolly, John Maclean and John Wheatley,[23] and by the 1990s, socialist historians, such as Raphael Samuel, were discussing the concept of four nations history.[24] James D. Young observed in 1993 that 'inside the world of British socialist historiography, the word "British" simply meant English', and that 'at the heart of British thought and behaviour was the tacit assumption of English socialists' hegemony over the British radical and socialist movements'.[25] Linda Colley examined the interplay between class and nation;[26] Paul Ward unpicked the relationship between Englishness, patriotism and socialism, and identified British socialism as one of Britain's 'invented traditions';[27]

and Eugenio Biagini illuminated a plurality of national expressions within the wider radical traditions of the British Isles.[28] The current chapter aims to contribute to this four nations radical and socialist historiography by considering the growth of socialism in Wales in the crucial period from the 1880s to the First World War.

As yet, Wales has been marginal to the 'New British History', and its socialist movement has barely featured in the discussions outlined above.[29] This is not because Welsh labour history is undeveloped. Far from it: there is a rich Welsh labour and socialist historiography.[30] Most of it, though, sidesteps the national question. Welsh labour historians have tended to shy away from questions that might compel them to engage with what they have perceived, in the words of Chris Williams, as 'the anachronistic rootlessness of Welsh nationalism'.[31] Much of the work that does address the national dimensions of Welsh socialism has, moreover, been published in Welsh, and is therefore not easily accessible to most British historians.[32] This critical mass of Welsh-medium historical work is a core strength of Welsh historiography. There is, however, a need to create a bridge between it and wider British historiography. This chapter is intended as a step towards the construction of such a bridge.

Perceived as marginal by many socialists, Wales was nevertheless integral to the rise of the British labour movement in the twentieth century. The country thus occupies a historically paradoxical position within British socialism: simultaneously at its margins and core. The resolution of this paradox is necessary if we are to develop a fuller four nations understanding of socialism in Britain. This involves the invidious task of identifying what was specifically Welsh (a fiercely contested adjective) about socialism in Wales, and considering it alongside what might be considered more generically British influences. Central to this conundrum is a process of interplay between Wales, the rest of the four nations, and the wider world. The most significant relationship within this interplay is that between Wales and England, which dominates the discussion below. It should be recognised, however, that other relationships made a significant contribution to the development of Welsh socialism, and as a wider four nations socialist historiography develops, our understanding of the process will doubtless become considerably more complicated.

The influence of the internal geography of Wales itself must also be considered. The power of regionalism is a central theme in Welsh history. The history of the Cymru Fydd movement, culminating in the fatal conflict between north and south played out at the Newport meeting

of the South Wales Liberal Federation in 1896, provides a contemporary example of the way in which the regional heterogeneity of Wales could complicate and frustrate national political aspirations and processes.[33] The same factors influenced the development of socialism, the geographical context for which was provided by the rapid industrialisation of the south Wales coalfield and its attendant processes of mass in-migration, linguistic and cultural change, and industrial organisation. The rapidly changing demography of south Wales led William Harris of Pontllanfraith, the Welsh-speaking secretary of the South Wales Labour Federation, to reflect in 1919 that the region had become 'more cosmopolitan than … almost any of the other industrial districts in Britain'.[34] This had profound implications for the development of the socialist movement, which was initially a regionally driven south Walian phenomenon, and which ideologically reflected the cosmopolitanism of its host society. As socialism spread across Wales into areas that had been less affected by demographic change, however, the powerful influence of the country's physical and social geography meant that there were several (albeit overlapping and inter-penetrating) physical and imagined manifestations of Wales engaged unevenly in the movement's development. The outcome of this process was a political ideology that, beneath its façade of class-based internationalism, was conflicted and redolent with unresolved issues of national identity.

The following discussion will analyse the Welsh roots of this ideology in three ways. First, it will examine some of the people involved in the early days of Welsh socialism. Then it will explore the nature of their ideas, and finally it will survey the debate over political structure that Welsh socialists conducted in the years prior to the First World War. It will conclude by suggesting some ways in which this study of one part of the four nations might be developed into a more comprehensive four nations history of socialism.

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Socialists arrived in Wales from the mid-1880s onwards. They came from London, Bristol, Chester, Liverpool and other parts of England. They came by train, by bicycle and in horse-drawn propaganda vans. They brought with them newspapers and pamphlets published in the great urban centres of Britain. Many were perplexed by Wales. H.M. Hyndman visited Llanberis in 1886, and was disconcerted when the slate

quarrymen he met declined to speak English.[35] John Bruce Glasier, who travelled into Wales in a *Clarion* propaganda van in 1899, was looking forward to travelling through the heart of 'wild Wales'. When he discovered, however, that much of his intended route went through country occupied by monoglot Welsh speakers, he was so shocked that the tour was abandoned and the van promptly removed by train to Shrewsbury.[36] Such awkward trans-national encounters were frequent, and served to create a stereotypical image of early socialists as foreigners bringing alien ideas into Wales. The reality was more complex.

One of the first recorded socialist missions into Wales was undertaken by the Socialist League's Frank Kitz and Sam Mainwaring in August 1887. The two propagandists took the train from London to Cardiff, made their way up the Rhondda to Aberdare and Merthyr, and back again, holding numerous meetings and distributing the contents of an 'enormous sack' of socialist literature along the way.[37] On the face of it, this would seem to present an obvious example of 'outside agitation'. Kitz, who was born in London's East End, was the son of a German exile, and his foreign accent was apparent to his Welsh audiences: at one meeting in Pontypridd he was told that 'he had no business in Wales because of his German origin'.[38] The same could not be said of Mainwaring, however: the son of a collier, he was a native Welshman.[39] A fluent Welsh speaker, he addressed meetings in the language during the tour,[40] and his background demonstrates the plural national dimensions of early Welsh socialist history—as well as its wider international context. Born in Neath in 1841, he worked in Aberdare in the 1860s, spent some time in America in the 1870s, and lived in London in the 1880s. He was a product of influences and experiences from all of these contexts: a Unitarian religious inheritance; experience of industrial capitalism in Wales, America and England; the works of William Morris, Karl Marx, August Comte and the American socialist Ira Steward; and, importantly, the Welsh radical newspaper *Y Diwygiwr* (*The Reformer*), edited by David Rees of Llanelli.[41] If Kitz's and Mainwaring's visit provides an example of a cosmopolitan incursion into late nineteenth-century Wales, Welshness was part of its cosmopolitanism.

Further examples of socialists involved in such trans-national interplay may be found by examining the growth of the early Welsh socialist societies. These were established in the early 1890s in the coastal towns of the south, chiefly in Swansea and Barry, where the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) was active, and in Cardiff, where the Fabian Society

prospered. Sam Mainwaring settled in Swansea, where he was joined by more activists who introduced a range of influences from different parts of the four nations and beyond. Arguably the most important of these was a young colliery owner, E.A. Cleeves. Originally from Yorkshire, Cleeves had married a girl from Neath, although the name of his sub-urban Swansea house, *Chez Nous*, and the fact that he kept a French governess, might suggest that he looked more to France than to either Wales or England for his cultural inspiration.[42] Cleeves appears to have retired from the socialist movement in Swansea by the end of the 1890s, but some of his successors in the region shared his 'outsider' status. Matt Giles was another Englishman who, by the early 1900s, was described as the 'sun of the local Labour constellation' in Swansea. He worked for Fry's Chocolate of Bristol, serving as their publicity agent in Swansea.[43] Bristol, which was home to an active socialist society and a lively socialist culture, was a centre crucial to the development of Welsh socialism. It supplied south Wales with a persistent stream of socialist speakers during the 1890s, and in this respect Giles was part of a critical link between south Wales and western England.[44]

Elsewhere along the south Wales coast the socialist movement exhibited similarly exogenous characteristics. In Barry, socialist activism was initiated by a Londoner, Sam McCorde.[45] He agitated alongside an ex-tin miner from Cornwall, John Spargo.[46] Spargo was instrumental in carrying the socialist message into the south Wales coalfield, where he made contact with other socialist incomers. These included Moses Severn of Pontypridd, originally from Nottinghamshire, who had lived in Yorkshire and Derbyshire; in 1895 he wrote *The Miners' Evangel*, one of the earliest socialist tracts to be written within the south Wales coalfield.[47] In Cardiff too, attempts to establish an SDF presence had an alien air about them, being led by a Glaswegian, a German and two Russians.[48] It is possible that incomers were less susceptible to community censure, and felt freer to proclaim new and controversial ideas. Alongside them, though, were indigenous Welsh socialists. These included William Morris of Swansea, an engineer, Rechabite and devotee of Morris and Ruskin,[49] and Matthew Sheppard of the Barry SDF, a native of Undy in Monmouthshire, who sang in Welsh (despite not speaking the language fluently) at SDF social events.[50]

Perhaps the most interesting example of the joint involvement of incomers and locals in early Welsh socialism was within Cardiff's Fabian Society. Prominent among the incomers was Sam Hobson, an Irishman

from County Down, who moved to Cardiff (after an English schooling) in the late 1880s. Hobson managed to draw at least three of the four nations into his identity, as described in a (self-penned) newspaper skit of 1894: 'Being thus an Irishman and a Welshman, Mr. Hobson has qualified as an Englishman'.[51] His efforts to establish socialism were aided by another new arrival of Irish extraction, Dr Charles Parr, who was often seen addressing meetings in Cardiff's Hayes in 'a delicious Dublin brogue' in the early 1890s.[52] Parr and Hobson were joined by a range of speakers from across the four nations in this period, including Katharine St. John Conway (England), James Ramsay MacDonald (Scotland), Keir Hardie (Scotland), Hubert Bland (England) and Henry Halliday Sparling (Ireland).[53] Their prominence, however, should not eclipse an important indigenous element within Cardiff socialism. The man that Hobson considered to be the intellectual leader of the Cardiff Fabians was a Welsh-born, Welsh-speaker from Gelligaer: R.E. Thomas. Thomas introduced Hobson and Parr to the *Fabian Essays in Socialism*, and he represented a fusion of Welsh sensibilities with the universalist notions of socialism: 'his revolt', recalled Hobson in 1917, 'was at bottom directed against a system that had degraded his people from brave and chivalrous warriors into coal-miners and tinplate workers.'[54] Arguably more important was another doctor, David Rhys Jones. A native of Cardiganshire, Jones had emigrated to Australia and studied in London, before settling in Cardiff, where he translated socialist propaganda into Welsh and spoke Welsh on socialist platforms. He also extended the reach of socialism beyond cosmopolitan Cardiff into the heartlands of Wales. He was instrumental in establishing a branch of the Fabian Society in his native Cardiganshire, and he contributed extensively to Welsh language newspapers, such as *Υ Celt* and *Υ Genedl Gymreig* (*The Celt* and *The Welsh Nation*).[55]

The rural Welsh heartlands of the west and north also produced their own indigenous socialists. The Fabian group that Jones helped to establish at Llandysul was rooted in the chapel-going society of Cardiganshire and operated entirely through the medium of Welsh, causing considerable confusion at Fabian headquarters.[56] There were also figures such as John Owen Jones ('Ap Ffarmwr'), the agricultural trade unionist from Anglesey, and Evan Pan Jones, the Mostyn-based land reformer, whose ideas represented a Cymric socialism which blended elements of socialist ideology with more traditional Welsh agrarian radicalism.[57] The most important of this group, though, serves to demonstrate the limitations of approaching Welsh socialism from a strictly geographical perspective.

Robert Jones Derfel was a prolific contributor to the Welsh press and authored numerous socialist pamphlets, including, in 1889, the first Welsh tract of the British 'Socialist Revival', *Aildrefniad Cymdeithas* (*A Re-organisation of Society*).[58] His Cymrophone socialism was not made in Wales, however. A native of Llandderfel in Meirionnydd, he left Wales in the 1840s to settle in Manchester. He died there in 1905, as much a Mancunian as he was a Welshman.[59] His life therefore raises fundamental questions about the national dimensions of socialism. Manchester was, of course, one of the epicentres of the nineteenth-century working-class movement. Derfel's presence there connected Wales to the wider British movement, and placed the city alongside Bristol as a crucial centre in the genesis of Welsh socialism. His trans-national British life is another illustration of the difficulties involved in defining exactly what constituted a 'Welsh socialist'.

The above discussion suggests that the dynamic of Welsh socialism evolved out of a multifaceted interplay between Wales and other parts of the four nations, Wales and the wider world, and between different regions of Wales itself. Its agents—the pioneers of socialism—were active elements in what Keith Robbins has described as the blending process at work within modern British history.[60] The idea that they were alien is, at best, a stereotype. Some were—all stereotypes contain elements of reality. Some, however, were natives; others were natives returning from periods abroad, and yet others were natives in exile. Further research is required to provide a fuller picture of the background of the movement's rank and file. What this selective survey suggests, though, is that we need to replace such stereotypes with a more nuanced understanding of the national composition of the early Welsh socialist movement.

* * * * *

It is relatively easy to analyse the backgrounds of individuals. Ultimately, though, socialism is an abstract ideal that transcends the individual, and analysing the national composition of an ideal, which is the next task, provides a greater challenge. Opponents of socialism in pre-First World War Wales portrayed it as an alien, urban, unhealthy (and often implicitly English) ideological imposition upon the Welsh people.[61] Socialist agitators were, in the view of W.F. Phillips (a nonconformist minister who made a career out of his virulent opposition to them) 'sowing socialist tares in the nationalist wheatfield of Wales'.[62] According to

Phillips, Welsh Liberalism, Christianity, the Welsh family and the Welsh language were all equally threatened by socialism.[63] Socialists, who were attracted to industrial Wales due to the obvious opportunities it offered for agitation, conversely argued that their ideals were inherently in harmony with Welsh sensibilities. Scottish-born Keir Hardie—who as MP for Merthyr Boroughs from 1900 to 1915 forged a strong relationship with Wales—was foremost among those advancing this view. In 1903, he described south Wales as 'the cockpit in which the great questions affecting labour were being fought out',[64] and during his tenure at Merthyr he went to some lengths to acquire Welsh credentials. These included using Welsh at political meetings and indulging in a solo performance of the Welsh national anthem at the 1908 ILP Annual Conference.[65] For Hardie, socialism was integral to a wider Celtic identity. 'All Celtic people are, at heart, Communists,' he argued in 1907, and 'the love of Socialism' was one of the strongest 'qualities for which the people of Wales are most famous'.[66] Hardie could call upon Welsh socialists, born and bred, to support him in this view. Chief among them was T.E. Nicholas, a Congregationalist minister at Glais in the Swansea Valley, who edited a Welsh section in the Merthyr-based *Pioneer* newspaper and argued that the red dragon and the red flag, far from being in opposition, were natural partners.[67]

The debate over socialism and Welshness was conducted with considerable intensity in the years prior to the First World War, and was more complex than the dichotomy outlined above allows. To understand it we need to analyse both the nature of socialist ideology from the point of view of its national content and to consider the ways in which socialist ideas were communicated across national spaces. Socialism came into Wales primarily from England: along the rail lines from London, Bristol, Crewe and Chester; on steamships from Liverpool; in sacks of literature like Kitz's and Mainwaring's; in the heads of socialist propagandists; and in the press. It met an intellectual need. When C.H. Perkins of Swansea's Junior Liberal Association hosted a meeting addressed by John Fielding of the SDF in 1887, Perkins explained that 'Mr. Fielding had come from London to give them information they very much lacked in Swansea'.[68] Once this need had been met, and socialist societies had been established in the cosmopolitan southern coastal towns, their members began to travel up into the south Wales valleys on propaganda missions, distributing literature and speaking to audiences of colliers, among whom the socialist message chimed with their everyday experience of

industrial capitalism. This process was significantly accelerated by the great coal dispute of 1898, during which 100,000 miners were locked out for six months; socialist agitators like Willie Wright (a former miner from Yorkshire) and Keir Hardie moved among them, pushing home the socialist lessons of the strike.[69] Consequently, small socialist groups (chiefly branches of the ILP) became established in the coalfield, and Welsh socialism began to develop its own internal dynamic.

This dynamic was extended to north Wales in the early 1900s, particularly after the bitter lock-out at Bethesda's Penrhyn slate quarries between 1900 and 1903. Not only did the lock-out attract the attention of socialists from beyond Wales, but locked-out quarrymen moved to south Wales to work, settling in districts where the ILP had become established, and when they returned home they took socialist ideas with them.[70] By around 1907, north Wales had begun to establish its own indigenous socialist movement.[71] Although still clearly socialist, this movement was different in character to that of the coalfield. Far less influenced by in-migration, it was more closely related to established Welsh political traditions, and it operated almost entirely through the medium of Welsh. Thus, when the north Wales labour movement launched its own newspaper, *Y Dinesydd Cymreig* (*The Welsh Citizen*), in 1912, it was a wholly Welsh-medium enterprise (unlike the bilingual *Llais Llafur—Labour Voice* (of Ystalyfera), or the predominantly English *Rhondda Socialist* (of Blaenclydach) and *Pioneer* (of Merthyr)). It also showed far more respect towards established Liberal traditions than did the more heavily Marxian-influenced southern socialist press.[72] Across Wales more generally the activity of socialists was supplemented by the diffusion of socialist knowledge through the non-socialist press, which not only reported the activities of socialists elsewhere in Britain, Europe and America, but also published popular expositions of socialist ideas in both English and Welsh.[73] The activities of literary and debating societies also provided an important site for the transmission of socialist thought.[74] All of these processes allowed socialism, originally an external ideology, to become implanted within a specifically Welsh national context; it became particularised.

The extent to which this process resulted in the creation of a distinctly Welsh strain of socialist ideology within the British socialism of the four nations is debatable. The question has wider dimensions than the purely socialistic. Despite the insulating capacity of the Welsh language, a Welsh intellectual world did not exist in isolation from other influences.

A lively debate was conducted in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Welsh press about the intellectual integrity of Welsh ideas, with contributors either celebrating what they considered to be a unique 'unity of thought and feeling' upon which their national identity was based, or lamenting that Wales was 'a nation of copyists'.[75] Even the most determinedly Welsh thinkers were subject to a heterogeneity of influences, and this could be argued as particularly true of socialists. One example of a staunchly Cymric socialist was David Thomas of Talysarn, near Bangor. A champion of Eisteddfodau, Thomas wrote Welsh literary and grammar guides and studied Welsh history. He also worked tirelessly for the north-Walian Labour movement and wrote the single most important work on socialism to be published in Welsh, *Y Werin a'i Theyrnas* (*The Common People and their Kingdom*) in 1910. Nevertheless, he did not inhabit an insular Welsh world. Some of the impetus towards his acceptance of socialism came from his experience of living in the Black Country in England as a young man, and he was widely read in English literature. He was attracted to socialism through Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England* and he avidly consumed the publications of the Fabian Society.[76]

Socialists could assemble their own version of socialism by selecting from the wide range of ideas communicated in the socialist press, and sometimes combining them with other ideologies. Derfel—presented above as an illustration of a Welsh socialist with a geographically fractured personal identity—provides an equally good example of such ideological hybridisation. He came to prominence in the 1850s as an ardent Welsh nationalist, an Eisteddfod-winning bard, a Welsh Baptist preacher and an advocate of Welsh civic development. Derfel was also involved, during the 1860s, in the world of Manchester radicalism, where he supported the ex-Chartist Ernest Jones in his efforts to seek election to parliament, and he advocated causes such as women's suffrage. He then discovered the work of Robert Owen and, after a period of personal breakdown, became converted to Owenite socialism and freethought.[77] These were not, however, the only influences upon Derfel. The Marxism of the SDF, the romantic communism of William Morris, and the European nationalism of Kossuth and Mazzini all played a role in shaping his ideology. His writing closely imitated that of Robert Blatchford and his advocacy of the 'religion of socialism' owed much to both his own Baptist inheritance and to John Trevor's Labour Church movement. In short, Derfel's socialism was an eclectic synthesis of elements from the whole range of socialist ideology

and beyond. It was obviously Welsh, but what made it Welsh, in an ideological sense, is rather difficult to specify.[78]

T.E. Nicholas considered himself Derfel's direct ideological heir, and wrote socialist poetry in Welsh, for which he won numerous bardic chairs.[79] His colleagues, Robert Silyn Roberts (a Methodist minister at Tanygrisiau near Blaenau Ffestiniog)[80] and David Thomas, similarly made determined efforts to promote socialism within a specifically Welsh framework. Thomas' declared aim was 'teaching Socialism to speak the Welsh language [and] saturating it with the history and traditions of the Welsh democracy'.[81] It is difficult to argue, though, that the synthesis he produced in *Y Werin a'i Theyrnas* was explicitly Welsh. Out of eighty sources listed in the book's appendix, only seven could be considered to have distinctly Welsh content: two brief accounts of the Labour movement in Wales, a text on Robert Owen, three Welsh-medium Fabian tracts (two of which were translations of English works) and a report on the Welsh Land Commission. Among the remaining texts influences included reports on housing in Dundee, Toynbee's *The Industrial Revolution*, Villiers' *The Socialist Movement in England*, William Morris, John Ruskin, Peter Kropotkin, Robert Blatchford and the *Daily Mail Year Book*.[82] All this clearly presents a problem in attempting to isolate and define a specifically Welsh socialist ideology. If the inspiration and sources of socialists like Derfel and Thomas, who were explicit about their intentions to make socialism Welsh, were overwhelmingly foreign to Wales, where can Welsh socialism, as an ideology, be deemed to begin or to end?

There is one criterion that may help in the resolution of this problem: language. Derfel, Nicholas, Silyn Roberts and Thomas all communicated primarily through the medium of Welsh. This was an active choice. In a very real sense, their medium was their message. In the years prior to the First World War they collectively created a Welsh-medium socialist discourse that penetrated all parts of Wales. Apart from Thomas' *Y Werin a'i Theyrnas*, this included another full-length guide to socialism: *Sosialaeth*, written by D. Tudwal Evans, a nonconformist minister at Newport, Gwent, in 1911. They also produced a range of pamphlets, such as Silyn Roberts' *Y Blaid Lafur Anibynnol: Ei Hanes a'i Hamcan* (*The Independent Labour Party: Its History and Purpose*) (1908) and Nicholas's *Cyflog Byw* (*A Living Wage*) (1913), and translations of key English socialist texts. Most significant, perhaps, were their contributions to the press. From around 1908 until the First World War,

Welsh newspapers and journals of all types hosted extensive discussions on aspects of socialism conducted in Welsh. Silyn Roberts illuminated the pages of the Blaenau Ffestiniog-based *Glorian* (*The Scales*), Tudwal Evans contributed to the Baptist *Seren Cymru* (*The Star of Wales*), T.E. Nicholas held forth in the nationalist *Geninen* (*The Leek*) and David Thomas added his voice to the pages of the socialistic *Dinesydd Cymreig* (*Welsh Citizen*). In addition to these prominent authors must also be considered the lesser-known individuals who, week by week, contributed their poetry and observations to fora such as Nicholas's *Adran Gymreig* (*Welsh Section*) in the Merthyr-based *Pioneer*. Considered as a body, the work of these Cymrophone socialist authors represents a major initiative in the linguistic adaptation of socialist ideology, and arguably serves as a measure by which a Welsh socialist tradition may be defined. It stands testament to the linguistic and cultural pluralism of British socialism.[83]

It was, however, work undertaken very much against the grain of its time, and in the teeth of formidable problems. Some of these were specific to the Welsh language itself. Derfel, a recognised master of Welsh composition, observed that the language did not easily lend itself to technical discussions of socialist ideas.[84] There was not even a single accepted Welsh word for socialism. The term that Derfel attempted to popularise in the 1890s, *cymdeithasiaeth*, was not widely adopted; by the early twentieth century it had largely been replaced by the English-derived *sosialaeth*. This failure to coin a distinct Welsh term was arguably emblematic of wider difficulties involved in Cymricising socialist ideology. The problem was intensified by the fact that the socialist publishing industry was largely in English-speaking ownership, based in the cities of England and Scotland and unsympathetic (for financial reasons, if no other) to the publication of Welsh texts. Thomas resorted to self-publishing *Y Werin a'i Theyrnas*, having had the project turned down by the ILP's press, and he struggled to make it a success. Even when publishers could be found, the difficulties in finding competent Welsh typesetters meant that Welsh text was often mangled in the printing process, giving the impression that the socialist press was indifferent to the Welsh language. This impression reflected a wider reality which limited the effectiveness and influence of Cymrophone socialism.[85]

The dominant language of socialism, as Ieuan Gwynedd Jones has noted, was English.[86] For the majority this too was an active choice, arising from the regional dominance of a British socialist consciousness

in the areas of critical mass—population and industrial organisation—
on the rapidly anglicising south Wales coalfield. Nurtured by organi-
sations like the Central Labour College, which promoted a fiercely
anti-particularist form of working-class education,[87] this British socialist
ascendancy was built upon the dominance of the South Wales Miners
Federation, which stressed a class- and occupation-based international
solidarity at the expense of a politically expressed national conscious-
ness. Advocates of Anglophone, British socialism, whether indigenous
Welsh or in-migrant, asserted that their nationalistic Welsh comrades had
no grievances that were specifically their own. 'The national question of
Germany, of Russia, of France, of Spain; and, indeed, of England and
even of Wales,' argued one of them in 1911, 'has been discovered to be
an international one after all.'[88] It is tempting to define the particular-
ist, Cymric socialism espoused by Thomas and his colleagues in binary
terms, against this aggressively anti-particularist, ostensibly international-
ist British socialism. Such a definition would, however, be fraught with
difficulty. Although the two factions regarded one another with some
suspicion, they undoubtedly considered themselves part of the same
movement. Both legitimately represented a face of Wales—a nation, as
Alfred Zimmern famously observed in the 1920s, with several conflicting
internal identities.[89] The ideological pluralism of socialism in Wales was
an inevitable reflection of the position of Wales within the four nations.
It also had a counterpart in debates over organisational structure.

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Organisational structure was one of the most important issues facing
the socialist movement in Britain before the First World War. Socialists
argued extensively about which organisations should represent them and
which political strategies they should adopt,[90] and Welsh socialists were
involved in these pan-British debates. Activists in Cardiff and Newport
debated the so-called Manchester Fourth Clause in the 1890s;[91] the
Bedlinog ILP considered the virtues and drawbacks of 'socialist unity'
in 1901;[92] and Ben Tillett's 1910 electoral campaign at Swansea was
part of a UK-wide ferment over the relationship between socialists and
the Labour Party.[93] In addition to this, though, Welsh socialists were
involved in a series of more specific discussions about geography: should
they organise as Welsh or as British socialists?

The first attempt to establish a regional structure in Wales was made in March 1894, at a conference in Swansea, which aimed to adopt a constitution and programme for a 'Welsh Independent Labour Party'. After some debate it was agreed that, rather than the 'Welsh ILP', the name of the organisation should be the 'ILP of South Wales and Monmouthshire'.[94] This limiting of territorial ambition at an embryonic stage in the development of Welsh socialism was of deep significance. It was the first sign that Welsh socialists (not unlike their Liberal contemporaries) would not be easily organised along national lines, and it suggested that regional rather than national consciousness would be a more important driving force within Welsh socialism. By May the new body had become the 'South Wales ILP Federation':[95] the ambition of reaching beyond the heads of the valleys had been abandoned. Indeed, there were some who were more inclined to reach across the Bristol Channel—a tendency that reflected the important influence of Bristol upon nascent Welsh socialism. A meeting in November 1896, instigated by the Newport ILP and attended by representatives from Bristol, Cardiff, Treharris and Newport, established a federation of socialist societies from south Wales and the west of England, which, although relatively short-lived, was a clear expression of territorial ambiguity within the nascent Welsh socialist movement.[96]

By the end of the 1890s, as the ILP cemented an ascendancy in south Wales, and after much debate and numerous aborted organisational initiatives, Welsh socialists settled upon a South Wales ILP Federation as their first durable structure.[97] Wales was drawn into the British ILP in regional blocks; in the process, its national identity was structurally undermined. The emergence of the Labour Representation Committee and the Labour Party in the early 1900s, with a London headquarters as a focal point, accentuated this tendency. After 1907, however, as a socialist movement began to emerge outside the south Wales coalfield, a challenge to the organisational dismemberment of Wales was launched. Led by David Thomas, it was supported by socialists from all parts of Wales, to whom, in the words of Deian Hopkin, 'Wales and not the world was the centre of their socialism'.[98] Thomas set out the case for a 'Welsh ILP' in the socialist press in 1911, arguing:

Those of us who are Welshmen in blood and language feel strongly that the Socialist movement cannot hope to succeed in Wales (outside certain

districts), unless it is established upon a distinctly National basis; the twin movements of nationalism and [socialism] must grow up together as one…

He asserted that all the ILP districts in Wales and Monmouthshire should be united in one division, that an agricultural programme and rural propaganda should be devised in order to extend the movement beyond the industrial districts of Wales, and that the study of Welsh political history should be promoted 'with a view to establishing the historical continuity of the present Labour movement in Wales with the democratic movement of the last century'.[99] Thomas and his supporters met at the Carmarthen National Eisteddfod in August 1911, with the aim of establishing the proposed body.[100] The challenge they presented, although led by a north-Walian socialist, represented not just a regional voice of Welsh socialism, but also an alternative national vision for it.

It was not, however, universally well received. Keir Hardie politely advised that it would be better to continue organising along regional lines before attempting the creation of a Wales-wide structure.[101] The influential Merthyr *Pioneer* was less diplomatic, accusing Thomas and his supporters of representing a 'spurious sentiment'. The geography of Wales, it argued, made unity between north and south impossible; the Welsh nation, it suggested provocatively, barely existed. Mobilising the assumptions of British-internationalist socialism, it launched a full assault upon what it termed 'Welsh exclusiveness', which it considered anathema to working-class solidarity.[102] Thomas and his supporters managed to rally some support.[103] They were, however, a small and ever-weakening minority when weighed against the burgeoning British-oriented Labour movement of the south Wales coalfield. As the First World War approached, the issue of the structural identity of Welsh socialism remained essentially unresolved, and the conflict of 1914–1918 only served to marginalise the issue. Priorities changed; the war served to intensify the promotion of British values in Wales, and international events, not least the Russian Revolution, re-cast alignments within the socialist movement. By the 1920s Thomas' initiative seemed anachronistic; it was on the way to becoming one of the suppressed alternatives of British socialist history.

This had important consequences. It meant that some left-wing Welsh intellectuals who had been sympathetic to the ILP gravitated after 1925 towards Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru, creating a schism within the nationalist left in Wales. The idea of a particularist Welsh socialism was never

completely extinguished, however. The Communist Party attempted to develop a nationalist left position in the inter-war years, which was expressed by figures such as John Roose Williams and Idris Cox.[104] The organisational position of Wales also continued to be a controversial issue within the Labour Party,[105] and debates about the country's regional and ideological integrity reverberated through the twentieth-century Labour and socialist movements. Socialists such as Huw T. Edwards in the 1940s and 1950s, and Robert Griffiths and Gareth Miles in the 1970s persisted in reminding the socialist movement in Britain of the Welsh element of its four nations plurality,[106] and, as the consequences of devolution embed themselves into British politics, the aspiration of a distinctively Welsh socialist project—no matter how complex such a thing may in reality be—is yet again of relevance.

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If such aspirations are to be anything other than an anachronistic dream they need to be understood within a sound historical context, and such a context must extend to a fuller understanding of socialism as an agent within the history of the four nations. This examination of the early socialist movement in Wales, by illuminating the national ambiguities at the root of the last century's socialist project—the complexities and possibilities inherent within its people, its ideas and its structures—has attempted to initiate a route towards such an understanding. It has hinted at some of the ways in which a wider four nations analysis of British socialism might be conducted. In the first place, the socialist movement—notwithstanding its collectivist aspirations—was a movement of individuals. A large scale prosopographical study of British socialism—not just of its leaders, but its rank and file also—provides one potential approach to a deeper understanding of the four nations dimensions of the movement they created. Given recent advances in the digitisation of sources such as Census returns, this is now more possible than ever. Such a study would need to include as many parts of the British Isles as possible, and would help to illuminate the connections between demographics, population movements and the genesis of the socialist movement. It also needs to be connected to a consideration of the development of ideologies and political structures. How did the backgrounds and experiences of socialists influence the variegated ideological texture and the political strategies of the socialist movement across the four

nations? And how did the socialist ideologies of the different parts of the four nations differ? How do all of these things relate?

This is a challenging agenda. A full understanding of the pluralistic past that has been obscured by the monolith of British socialism can only be achieved by the painstaking deconstruction of that monolith, and this is something that will require the collective effort of historians from across the four nations. Such an effort would surely resonate with the spirit of the socialists that would form its subject. After all, to them collective effort was an article of faith.

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