

<p>Institution: ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 20 - LAW</p>
<p>Title of case study: <i>Welsh Legal History: Outreach to Communities</i></p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study relates to the work of Richard W. Ireland in raising awareness amongst the general public, community groups and relevant professionals of the legal history of Wales, and in particular of its criminal justice history. This impact has been enabled by regular public lectures, often in relatively remote rural locations, by public broadcasts on radio and TV, the provision and maintenance of a dedicated website, and in more focussed discussion with the archive and museum sector, drawing on Ireland’s published and ongoing research within the field.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Ireland’s research has been mainly, but not exclusively, concerned with the history of the criminal justice system and, since 1993, has concentrated on experience within Wales, based on close engagement with material in local and national archival repositories. The work is based on the conviction that a failure to give proper consideration to material from Wales has not only impoverished understanding of the legal past of the country (which has implications, for example, on contemporary discussions as to whether there should be a “separate jurisdiction” in Wales) but has also distorted more generally the narrative of development of criminal justice history within England and Wales as a whole. So, for example, the detailed study of crime and the responses to it in Victorian Carmarthenshire, which saw its widest expression in a monograph of 2007 (see 3c.), challenges the writing of the history of criminal justice which is biased in its concern with urban and metropolitan experience and skewed by a fascination with serious offending. Issues of cultural variables such as language, tradition, religion and rurality feature strongly within this text, as they do in later work (see 3b.). At the same time the understanding of factors which challenge established social frameworks, understandings and differences—such as the effects within the nineteenth century of the impact of changing demography and immigration (3f), or of photography (as productive of and responsive to problems such as establishing a concept of “identity” divorced from local knowledge, 3e.) continue to inform the work. The approach is unashamedly historical, yet the issues raised within it are relevant outside the specific period studied. The methodological foundations of the research, relying on the recovery of lives of “ordinary” people, even at the level of their (literally) everyday experience (see 3d.), inevitably demand reflection on the appropriate audience for that work: a history of “ordinary” people which was presented only to academic audiences would be an uncomfortable paradox, a discussion of its findings which ignored the insights gained from exchanges with residents of modern rural Wales would be blinkered. Research material can be initiated by, and its results presented within, a “non-academic” context before being “worked up” for academic peers (3a., for example, is a form of a paper which was a plenary address to a British Legal History Conference, but originated in a programme for BBC Radio Wales). Research which is anchored in “popular” rather than “official” perceptions of crime, criminality and the perceived appropriate response to it, does not, of course, involve the renunciation of academic theoretical engagement: on the contrary, it insists on challenging dominant theoretical models which ignore such issues, or which unthinkingly assume the priority of change over stasis, the local over the (imagined) national or the “legal” over the “social”.</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- a. R.W. Ireland, "Sanctity, Superstition and the Death of Sarah Jacob" in A. Musson and C. Stebbings (eds), *Making Legal History Approaches and Methodologies* (CUP, Cambridge, 2012) pp. 284-302 (REF2 submitted).
- b. R.W. Ireland, "'A second Ireland'? Crime and popular culture in nineteenth-century Wales", in R. McMahon (ed), *Crime, Law and Popular Culture in Europe since 1500* (Willan, Cullompton, 2008) pp. 239-261.
- c. R.W. Ireland, *"A Want of Order and Good Discipline": Rules, Discretion and the Victorian Prison* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2007) 302 pages.
- d. R.W. Ireland, 'Charles Hunt's haircut: getting down to the roots of a legal adventure' in P. Brand, K. Costello and W. N. Osborough (eds), *Adventures of the Law* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2005) pp. 219-233.
- e. R.W. Ireland, "The Felon and the Angel Copier: Criminal Identity and the Promise of Photography in Victorian England and Wales" in L. Knafla (ed), *Policing and War in Europe* (Greenwood, Westport Connecticut, 2002) pp. 53-86.
- f. R.W. Ireland, "'An increasing mass of heathens in the bosom of a Christian Land": the railway and crime in the nineteenth century' (1997)12 *Continuity and Change*, pp. 55-78.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research has conferred benefit, and had impact, on society outside the academic world at three levels: local (via addresses to societies such as Local History Groups and Women's Institutes (see 5 a, 5e)), national (via broadcasting, see 5b,) and international (via a website, see 5f). In general terms it has brought a knowledge of Welsh Legal History to a range of audiences largely unaware of that history. At a time of focus upon legal identity, uniformity and difference (due to the Devolution settlement) it has helped towards bringing historical context and insight to lay understanding. The engagement with these varied lay audiences (often elderly, often female) is important, since a knowledge of Wales's legal past (largely ignored even by professional legal historians beyond Wales) raises awareness of the social context within which the law has operated and draws attention to aspects of past Welsh experience (language, rurality, etc) which continue, and will continue, to be of significance in contemporary Wales ("It gave us a completely new perspective on the whole subject of law and order", 5a). It also seeks to contextualise, realistically and by reference to the study of archival sources, the operation of past criminal justice history, a subject which attracts considerable public interest, yet one in which, dogged by stereotype and sensationalism, the public are often poorly served.

More specifically the engagement has taken a number of forms. Addresses to public bodies, societies and associations have been prominent. Ireland has taken part, by invitation, in talks and lectures to a variety of clubs and societies within West Wales. These include Womens' Institutes, Local History Societies and the like, often in small villages. Around 35 such speaking engagements have been undertaken since 2008, and whilst some have been more general, many have involved presenting the results of specific research projects detailed above (crime and punishment in Victorian Wales, early criminal photography, women and crime, the Jacob case and Victorian prison life have been popular themes, see 3 a.) to 3.e) *supra*). It should be stressed that such latter presentations (and others considered below) are detailed and specifically related to original sources explored by the author and are not undertaken for personal reward. The result is a local population as informed of its legal-historical heritage as any. The contact also serves to challenge

any perceived barriers between the University and the locality within which it is situated.

In similar vein Ireland has taken part in broadcasts, both in discrete programmes (such as the BBC Radio Wales *Past Masters* programme on The Sarah Jacob Case (broadcast 26 April 2009) and in appearances on magazine programmes (*The Roy Noble Show* BBC Radio Wales). In 2013 a piece on which he worked and in which he appeared on early criminal photography and filmed, at his suggestion, in Ruthin Gaol appeared on BBC 1's *The One Show* (27 June 2013: note the director's comment "Without his research and participation the film would have been third-rate" in 5b).

Ireland has been involved, having been invited for a preliminary assessment of the material held, in consultations with staff of Dyfed-Powys Police in relation to the conservation, housing and display of the Force's important historic archive ("has provided invaluable advice and support that has made a significant impact on the future of the artefacts and archives" see 5c). Discussions arising out of this matter further led to a meeting also with the county archivists of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys (14 April 2011) with a view to the long term allocation, preservation and accessibility of the archive. On a related subject, but specifically addressing the issue of the public presentation of historical material, Ireland was also involved in a meeting (10 May 2012) with individuals from Dyfed-Powys Police and a designer working on a newly opened display of crime and punishment in Carmarthen, at which he briefed those present on the findings of his work on criminality in the County and advised accordingly ("with this invaluable insight we were able to recreate the prison cell...", 5d).

He established in 2008 and maintains (with technical assistance by Technoleg Taliesin) the website of the *Welsh Legal History Society/Cymdeithas Hanes Cyfraith Cymru*. A founder Committee member of this Society, Ireland devised the fully bilingual site not only to give details of the Society and its functions (to spread knowledge of, and promote research into, the history of law in Wales) but also (with the co-operation of archival repositories and private individuals) to establish a free online resource of research materials. The project is ongoing, but includes a freely accessible, searchable database of persons remanded to gaol in Carmarthenshire between 1844 and 1871. The website, as evidenced by the detailed analytics, an overall synopsis of which is provided at 5f showing 4876 visitors to the site viewing 36,230 pages from 2008-end July 2013)), is used by family and local historians as well as academics (as evidenced by name searches within the database). It is used internationally (in North America perhaps particularly, but widely elsewhere) as well as nationally and locally. It may be found at <http://welshlegalhistory.org/>. A presentation concerning this resource was made to delegates (largely members of the legal profession) at the important Legal Wales Conference in October 2009.

In all of these activities, public participation and debate is promoted or assisted through the responsible and informed involvement of a wide variety of individuals in engagement with high quality research in areas where there is otherwise public ignorance or, worse still, partial and stereotypical knowledge. Individuals are encouraged and assisted to understand the nature of historical information and its location, and to engage in their own interaction with it.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- a) Letter from Hanes Emllyn
- b) Letter from director (television)
- c) Letter concerning Dyfed-Powys Police Archive
- d) Letter concerning Carmarthen Crime and Punishment display
- e) Letter from Women's Institute
- f) Welsh Legal History Society website combined analytics.