



EMRYS JONES

Emrys Jones 1920–2006

EDUCATION WAS THE MAJOR twentieth-century route out of relatively disadvantaged backgrounds and many parents gave up much to ensure that their children could benefit from institutions and opportunities they had themselves been denied. Nowhere was this more the case than in South Wales, where grammar schools provided nurturing environments for many talented individuals who thereby escaped the relative poverty of the coalfield valleys.

So it was for geographer Emrys Jones (born in Aberdare on 17 August 1920) and his elder brother, Alun, who were raised in the Cynon Valley mining community of Aberaman. Neither of their parents, Samuel and Annie, was educated beyond primary school, and Samuel (self-educated and deeply interested in theology: the family attended the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel in Godreaman) followed their grandfathers by starting his working life in the mines, before joining the police. He enlisted in 1915 and was wounded in France; after a period of unemployment he returned to the police but then, because Annie declined to leave Aberdare when he was offered promotion, became a civil service clerk. His two sons won scholarships to Aberdare Boys Grammar School, a very different milieu from their Welsh-speaking home: English was their second language, learned at school. Emrys continued this tradition in his own home, and English was the second language for his and Iona's two daughters (who were born in Belfast and raised in Greater London); they continued to speak Welsh to him—as Kate expressed it to me: 'English just between the two of us would have felt wrong.'

In 1938, Emrys entered University College Wales, Aberystwyth to study geography—although his real desire was to be an architect; he was

awarded a first class degree in 1941. His elder brother Alun preceded him at Aberystwyth by two years: after gaining a degree in chemistry he became a schoolmaster, ending his career as a head teacher in Chesterfield and then, post-retirement, taking a degree in law. Their close cousin and next-door neighbour—Alwyn Williams—also went to Aberystwyth from Aberdare Boys Grammar School, graduating with a first-class degree in geology in 1943;¹ such was the ‘competitiveness’ in the family that he decided to match Emrys’ achievement and took a degree in geography in the next year (having already done two years of subsidiary geography courses)—he got a first too!² Emrys and Alwyn and their future wives—Iona and Joan—were very active in student life at the small college (only 700 students). Emrys was President of the debating society, for example, whereas Alwyn was the more ‘political’ and served terms as President of the Students’ Representative Council and Vice-President of the National Union of Students. Alwyn stayed on to do research for a Ph.D. in geology, obtaining a doctorate a year before Emrys was awarded his in 1947. Their paths overlapped again for four years in the 1950s—Alwyn was appointed Professor and Head of the Department of Geology at Queen’s University, Belfast, in 1954, when Emrys was a lecturer in geography there—and they remained close until Alwyn, who was knighted in 1983, died in 2004.³

Aberystwyth’s Department of Geography and Anthropology was one of the first to offer a full honours degree in geography, under the pioneering leadership of H. J. Fleure,⁴ trained as a zoologist and anthropologist but unable to follow his later interest in geology because eyesight problems precluded much fieldwork.⁵ His research instead focused on the interactions of people, societies and environments in evolutionary perspective, one of the earliest forms of sociocultural geography. Fleure left Aberystwyth for Manchester in 1930 and was replaced as chairholder by

¹ Alwyn’s father was the second son and Emrys’ mother the elder daughter of the same family, and both he and Emrys were very close to that set of grandparents.

² See D. E. G. Briggs and D. Edwards, ‘Sir Alwyn Williams’, *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, 51 (2005), 437–53.

³ Alwyn Williams was appointed Principal of the University of Glasgow in 1976. I am very grateful to Alwyn’s widow—Lady Joan Williams—for her reminiscences of Emrys, and to her son Gareth—Dean of Medicine at the University of Bristol—for putting me in contact with her.

⁴ The first was at the University of Liverpool in 1917: Aberystwyth followed a year later; R. J. Johnston, ‘The institutionalisation of geography as an academic discipline’ in R. J. Johnston and M. Williams (eds.), *A Century of British Geography* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 45–92.

⁵ See Alice Garnett, ‘Herbert John Fleure’, *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, 16 (1970), 253–78.

C. Daryll Forde, a geographer from University College London with similar interests overlapping human geography, anthropology, ethnography and archaeology. His sociocultural geography emphasised distributions of human activities, the cultural conditions of their creation, and the physical environments that nurtured them. Courses on 'Early civilizations' and 'Races of man' characterised the department, reflected in his extremely popular, long-lived text on *Habitat, economy and society*.⁶ This general theme, with a stronger archaeological bent and focused on the Celtic lands, also dominated his colleague Emrys Bowen's intellectual interests (Bowen replaced Forde as professor in 1946); the third permanent staff member when Emrys Jones was an undergraduate—Walter Fogg—was a North African specialist with field interests in Morocco.

Social anthropology and prehistoric archaeology dominated the teaching programme Emrys Jones experienced—with physical geography largely taught in the Department of Geology.⁷ But additional courses were available to his cohort because in 1939 the University College London Department of Geography was evacuated to Aberystwyth, including two of its leading academics—Charles Fawcett (the Head of Department) and Robert Dickinson. Dickinson had spent two years in the 1930s travelling widely in Europe and North America assimilating the work being done there on urban areas.⁸ Emrys later recalled Fawcett's lectures comprising a 'tremendous flow of information' while Dickinson's on North America were 'fire and brimstone . . . like an evangelical preacher'.⁹

⁶ C. Daryll Forde, *Habitat, Economy and Society: a Geographical Introduction to Ethnology* (London, 1934). On Forde, see M. Last, 'Forde, Cyril Daryll (1902–1973)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/58788>>.

⁷ On geography as practised at Aberystwyth then, see E. G. Bowen, H. Carter and J. A. Taylor, 'A retrospect', in E. G. Bowen, H. Carter and J. A. Taylor (eds.), *Geography at Aberystwyth: Essays Written on the Occasion of the Departmental Jubilee, 1917–18—1967–68* (Cardiff, 1968), pp. xix–xxxvi.

⁸ Dickinson published the results of those investigations immediately after the war, although much of the material was clearly prepared by 1939: R. E. Dickinson, *City Region and Regionalism: a Geographical Contribution to Human Ecology* (London, 1947); R. E. Dickinson, *The West European City: a Geographical Interpretation* (London, 1951). See also R. J. Johnston, 'Robert E. Dickinson and the growth of urban geography: an evaluation', *Urban Geography*, 22 (2002), 702–36.

⁹ These quotes are taken from Hugh Clout's notes of a telephone conversation with Emrys in 2002.

Rural Wales

Emrys graduated with a first-class B.Sc. (Hons) in 1941. His Welsh nationalism, strong liberal Nonconformism and pacifism led to him becoming a conscientious objector, and for two years he served in a Peace Pledge Union unit in Cardiff, mainly as a hospital voluntary worker.¹⁰ After a period of ill-health he returned to Aberystwyth as a research student in 1943, supported by a college studentship and then a University of Wales Fellowship. He studied, first, for an M.Sc. (on 'The evolution of settlement in the Teify Valley', awarded in 1945) and then a Ph.D. (on 'Tregaron', awarded in 1947). The subjects of his two theses clearly reflected the current Aberystwyth ethos.¹¹ He also gained teaching experience in the college's Extra-Mural Department; his application to University College London in 1946 indicated that most of his courses covered aspects of the 'Geography of world problems'.

The M.Sc. was the basis for one of his first academic papers, on 'Settlement patterns in the middle Teify valley', which reported 'settlement pattern analyses' based on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century maps, detailed analyses of village plans and dispersed 'squatter settlements', and, briefly, the growth of small urban centres.¹² A later paper reviewed several studies of Welsh rural settlement, offering a structure for such investigations and providing a first clear view of Emrys' evolving philosophy of geography—which remained with him throughout his career.¹³ He argued that studies of distributions had to distinguish among settlement density, settlement extent (usually with regard to physical

¹⁰ The Peace Pledge Union was established by Canon Dick Sheppard of St Paul's Cathedral, London, in 1933, and rapidly attracted 135,000 members.

¹¹ As, even more, did his chapters—on 'Man's needs for shelter', 'Primitive types of homes', 'Advanced types of homes', 'Clothes for protection' and 'Clothes for decoration'—in a heavily illustrated book, edited by Alan Davies, on *Man and his Life the World Over. The Story of Man as he Lives Today: his Home Life, his Work, his Beliefs, and how he Spends his Leisure* (London, 1948), pp. 163–244.

¹² E. Jones, 'Settlement patterns in the middle Teify valley', *Geography*, 30 (1945), 103–11. Dickinson had also done a great deal of work on rural settlements in Germany and may have lectured on this at Aberystwyth although his work—as in R. E. Dickinson, 'Rural settlements in the German lands', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 39 (1949), 239–63—was only published in the later 1940s and is not referred to in any of Emrys' papers on rural settlements. Emrys' early papers also included E. Jones, 'Sheep shearing in the Plynlymmon Mountains', *Wales*, 9 (1949), 15–21.

¹³ E. Jones, 'Some aspects of the study of settlement in Britain', *Advancement of Science*, 8 (1951–2), 59–65. A version of this paper was presented to Section E (Geography) of the British Association meeting at Birmingham in 1950.

limits—what he called, after Forde, ‘geographical circumstances’), and settlement nucleation/dispersion. Three separate relationships were identified: between individual dwellings and the land surface; between one dwelling and others (the degree of nucleation); and between human occupation and the physical environment—all three illustrated with a reworking of materials on the Lower Conwy valley. The key issue in the last of these relationships was whether physical or cultural factors are more important in accounting for a particular settlement distribution; he concluded that the former provide the ‘geographical circumstances’ whose role varies as cultures change.

These were Emrys’ only papers on rural settlement patterns.¹⁴ He was encouraged to move into ‘community studies’ by Alwyn Rees, a lecturer in Aberystwyth’s Extra-Mural Studies Department who taught a course on the social anthropology of modern communities and, stimulated by Forde, undertook a major study on Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa: Rees co-supervised Emrys’ Ph.D. with Emrys Bowen. Indeed, Emrys worked closely with Rees on his study, often driving him into the field and making some of the first draft sketches of the interior of Welsh farmhouses that were adapted for the final monograph; Emrys appeared in an S4/Croeso 2006 television programme that revisited those farmhouses, and he was shown sketching them again.¹⁵ Rees later co-edited a volume of essays drawn on the studies he promoted, including Emrys’.¹⁶ Some of them are summarised in Frankenberg’s overview on *Communities in Britain*: he refers to that substantial volume of Welsh studies as ‘partly therefore historical accident, if the appointment of three such remarkable professors of geography as H. J. Fleure, Daryll Forde, and E. G. Bowen may be so regarded’.¹⁷ (Another geographer influenced by Rees was Emrys’ fellow-student and friend W. M. Williams, who published two major monographs on rural settlements while on the staff of the Department of Geography at the University College of North Staffordshire, where he also initiated some of the earliest work in the UK

¹⁴ Which does not mean that they were not highly regarded. His supervisor E. G. Bowen, for example, wrote that Emrys took the story of settlement patterns in Wales a ‘stage further’: E. G. Bowen, *The Settlements of the Celtic Saints in Wales* (Cardiff, 1956), p. 145.

¹⁵ On Rees, see the entry regarding his papers, deposited at the National Library of Wales, at <http://www.archivesnetworkwales.info/cgi-bin/anw/search2?coll_id=360&inst_id=1&term=>>. His classic monograph which includes those sketches is A. D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside: a Social Study of Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa* (Cardiff, 1951).

¹⁶ E. Davies and A. D. Rees (eds.), *Welsh Rural Communities* (Cardiff, 1960).

¹⁷ R. Frankenberg, *Communities in Britain: Social Life in Town and Country* (Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 45.

on urban social areas, following Emrys Jones's pioneering studies of Belfast, before moving to a chair of sociology at the University College of Wales, Swansea.¹⁸)

For his Ph.D. Emrys returned to the Teify valley's main town—Tregaron—beginning his shift towards urban social geography that crystallised in the following decade. A first paper concentrated on the town's morphology and functions, very much in line with the contemporary geographical approach (such as it was) to urban studies,¹⁹ with but a brief mention of its separate neighbourhoods. Those neighbourhoods received greater coverage in a long essay that appeared in 1960 but was based on the thesis and contained little new material: interestingly, it was subtitled a 'sociology'.²⁰ At the outset, the town is divided into five localities, or neighbourhoods, having separate identities, with a discussion of their characteristic house types. But most of the essay considers the town as a whole, including analyses of its socio-demographic and occupational structures.

The core of Tregaron's society was the family:

The economic links which bind together town and country are not as strong or as enduring as the family relationships which permeate every aspect of life in this closely integrated society. Family influences most decisions, decides many destinies. It is never far from the surface of everyday life. (p. 92)

The strength of kinship ties is illustrated, stressing the importance of 'belonging' to a family associated with 'certain farms or houses or localities' (p. 98), and a particular church or chapel—'formal religion is a fundamental factor in the lives of the people . . . its influence is not confined within the institutions, for it is a pervasive element which penetrates all aspects of life in the community, and it is a decisive factor in the assessment of the status of the individual' (p. 106). Those religious institutions incorporate hierarchies of status and prestige.

¹⁸ W. M. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village: Gosforth* (London, 1956); W. M. Williams, *A West Country Village, Ashworthy: Family, Kinship and Land* (London, 1963); W. M. Williams and D. T. Herbert, 'The social geography of Newcastle-under-Lyme', *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies*, 2 (1962), 108–26; D. T. Herbert and W. M. Williams, 'Some new techniques for studying urban sub-divisions', *Geographia Polonica*, 3 (1964), 93–117.

¹⁹ E. Jones, 'Tregaron: a Welsh market town', *Geography*, 35 (1950), 20–31.

²⁰ E. Jones, 'Tregaron: the sociology of a market town in central Cardiganshire', in Davies and Rees, *Welsh Rural Communities*, pp. 66–117. A footnote (p. 115) indicates that the fieldwork was done between Jan. 1946 and Jan. 1947 and that all data cited refer to that period.

Leaving Wales

The Tregaron study brought a geographical perspective to some aspects of community sociology, therefore, but said little about the town's internal spatial structure: appearance of the main essay some thirteen years after the thesis was completed (in the same year that his classic book on Belfast was published—see below) gives a somewhat false picture of Emrys' academic development. He moved a long way between 1947 and 1960.

The first move was—as it turned out—his permanent departure from Wales. In 1947 he was appointed Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Geography at University College London (a year after his original application there). Its head was Fawcett, who had taught Emrys at Aberystwyth, but he was on leave at the time and the appointment to a vacancy created by Dickinson's departure to the United States was handled by R. O. Buchanan. In commending him to the College Secretary for a salary increment, Buchanan's letter noted that 'his academic work is considerably ahead of the normal for a man being given a first appointment';²¹ a decade later he engineered Emrys' move from Belfast (where he joined the Geography Department at Queen's University in 1950) to the London School of Economics.²² One of Emrys' UCL colleagues was Arthur Smailes, perhaps the first to be recognised as an urban geographer in the UK—and author of the first textbook in the field, although Dickinson's books were also influential.²³ There is no evidence that either influenced Emrys then,²⁴ but he did follow Dickinson in one respect; just as his predecessor had done a decade earlier, Emrys obtained a Rockefeller Scholarship in Social Science.

Newly married, Emrys and Iona spent the academic year 1948–9 in the United States (referring to it as their honeymoon), based at Cornell University but with major visits to Columbia and Syracuse Universities and the University of Chicago. He was initially attracted to Cornell by its then strength in rural sociology—indicating the continued influence of his Aberystwyth background—but was disappointed by what he encountered there. He obtained much greater stimulus from his Chicago visit, where he 'discovered' the urban ecology practised by its renowned School

²¹ I am grateful to Hugh Clout for this and much other information about Emrys' time at UCL.

²² See H. Clout, *Geography at University College London: a Brief History* (London, University College London, Department of Geography, 2003).

²³ A. E. Smailes, *The Geography of Towns* (London, 1953).

²⁴ Nor is there anything in the University College records to indicate what Emrys taught.

of Urban Sociology. That human ecology underpinned his teaching over the next three decades and he recommended its key books to his students (as exemplified by reading lists published in the LSE *Calendars*), such as Amos Hawley's *Human Ecology* (as Ray Pahl recalls): Walter Firey's *Land Use in Central Boston* most strongly influenced Emrys in his study of Belfast and later work.²⁵

Emrys' research agenda for the year was recorded in the Rockefeller archives as 'American sociological techniques and a sociological survey of urban community in U.S. centers', including an 'intensive study of a Welsh community in the U.S. (Utica, N.Y.) with special emphasis on the process of acculturation'.²⁶ This was not his first excursion into studies of the Welsh overseas: his final-year undergraduate dissertation at Aberystwyth had been on the Welsh colony in Patagonia, parts of which were eventually published in a joint paper.²⁷ The Utica work was presented in Emrys' first paper delivered at the annual conference of the Institute of British Geographers, in 1950—introduced by Alan Ogilvie, professor of geography at Edinburgh, as an 'essay in sociology'.²⁸ It was subsequently rejected by the Institute's *Transactions and Papers*,²⁹ and appeared in the *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*,³⁰ this was the first tangible evidence of his association with the London-based society for the promotion of Welsh culture that

²⁵ A. H. Hawley, *Human Ecology: a Theory of Community Structure* (New York, 1950). Walter Firey, *Land Use in Central Boston* (Cambridge, MA, 1947).

²⁶ Unfortunately, the Rockefeller Foundation archives have not retained copies of either his original application or final report.

²⁷ E. Jones and W. R. Owen, 'Welsh-speaking in the New World: II Patagonia', *Lachlann: Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap, Suppl. Bind V*, 1 (1958), 251–60. The other part of that 1958 paper reports on his Utica work. Emrys refers to his undergraduate dissertation in the discussion of a paper on the Welsh colony in Patagonia: E. Jones, 'Discussion of E. G. Bowen, "The Welsh colony in Patagonia 1865–1885: a study in historical geography"', *The Geographical Journal*, 132 (1966), 29–30, in which he expressed fears that acculturation would result in a loss of vital material about the settlement.

²⁸ E. Jones, *The Geographical Journal*, 143 (1977), 510 (see below, n. 40). He also recorded that in later years he was sometimes introduced as a professor of socialist geography, but thought that 'may have been due more to the fact that I was at the London School of Economics than to the colour of my geography'.

²⁹ *Ibid.*: this information was divulged at the same RGS meeting.

³⁰ E. Jones, 'Some aspects of cultural change in an American Welsh community', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1952, though published in 1954), 18–41. Aspects of the work were also presented in E. Jones, 'Welsh-speaking in the New World. I. The United States', *Lachlann: Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap, Suppl. Bind V*, 1 (1968), 241–50.

lasted until his death. It is presented as a ‘preliminary study’, but no other major papers appeared.

Welsh immigrants were among Utica’s earliest settlers, but the flow sharply diminished after the First World War, and by 1948 they accounted for only 4–5 per cent of the urban population. Emrys identified two types of emigrant: those who moved as a community and transferred their institutions with them—as with the Welsh in Patagonia; and those who moved as individuals/family members and whose continuance of the institutions and practices of their homeland depended on ‘the numbers that happen to reach the same locality and their willingness to regroup’ (p. 16): ‘In the first class . . . the individuals are there partly for the sake of their institutions, in the second the institutions are there for the convenience of the people, and are much more variable and liable to change.’ Utica’s Welsh community fell into the latter category—although most of its members had cultural roots in Caernarvonshire’s slate quarrying region.

Emrys used a local newspaper, the Utica Welsh Presbyterian Church yearbooks, and records of the city’s eisteddfodau as ‘measuring rods’ of the changes that occurred. By 1948 *Y Drych* was the only Welsh-language newspaper published in the USA, having appeared for more than 100 years. Until 1910 it was virtually a monoglot Welsh publication; by 1948 it was basically an English-language paper and there was a similar trend in the use of Welsh and English in the yearbooks and in the eisteddfod presentations. He associated these changes with the end of large-scale immigration and the assimilation of second- and third-generation residents. There was a

. . . contrast between the parental and filial generations . . . The Welshman came to the United States with a set of cultural values nurtured in Wales, most of them linked with language and religion. It was his function in society to pass on to his children that cultural heritage. If the education of the child was restricted within limits of the family group, this cultural equipment would appear practically unchanged in the next generation. [In the parts of Utica originally occupied] . . . the Welsh were in a majority . . . Small but numerous churches flourished on isolated hillsides; Welsh was the language of the home, the street, the store, the language of instruction. There are many cases of immigrants who lived long and full lives without ever having to learn a word of English [but later] the Welsh, however much they retained their individuality, were soon swamped in numbers; and although they could preserve their language and values in the church and the eisteddfod, in most phases of life they were face to face with another language and a new set of cultural values.

Children lived a dual role. Although the language of the home and of worship was Welsh, work, schooling and play were in English. (p. 27)³¹

As state education spread (with its goal of producing a ‘good American citizen’) intergenerational conflict was stimulated, with the assimilation of second- and later-generation immigrants into the ‘host culture’ reflected in the decline of the Welsh community’s own institutions. For a time its members may have participated in both the Welsh ‘in-group’ (family, church and church-related organisations) as well as the ‘American out-group’ (at work and recreation, in clubs, and through the media), but without a constant inflow of new migrants the in-group declined in size and influence—or, as Emrys put it, there was a cessation of ‘reinforcements from Wales’ (p. 32). Slowly the core church institutions lost influence, increasingly unable to ‘respond to the needs of a generation who knows little of the cultural values they once upheld’ (p. 40). More than fifty years later, he was writing in a somewhat similar, wistful, vein about the Welsh in London.

A developing philosophy

The work on the Teify valley, Tregaron and Utica—all completed if not published by 1950—together provide a clear view of the underlying philosophy of human geography which Emrys sustained throughout his career. The physical environment provides a ‘geographical circumstance’ within which human activities are shaped and expressed in the landscape; the key element in that shaping (and continual reshaping) is culture—specifically group culture comprising family, religion and language.³²

A major early statement characterised Emrys’ approach to human geography, although unfortunately (perhaps by the accident of when and where it was published) it failed to have the substantial impact that it

³¹ There are, of course, strong resonances of Emrys’ own childhood and youth in this description.

³² Interestingly, Emrys very rarely used the term ‘cultural geography’. In his only major publication with that title—‘Cultural geography’ in J. W. Watson and J. B. Sissons (eds.), *The British Isles: a Systematic Geography* (London, 1964), pp. 403–18—he described British ‘cultural complexity’ as comprising ‘a variety of languages, thought and traditions’ (p. 403) and discussed three aspects of that complexity—language, religion and nationalist movements. He concluded that ‘in national sentiment, religion and language forces exist that divide the British Isles into more or less distinct cultural areas’ (p. 418) that are slowly being eroded and giving way to a ‘more uniform way of life throughout the Isles’.

much deserved.³³ At the January 1951 meeting of the Institute of British Geographers, Freddie Martin spoke on ‘The necessity for determinism’, a paper published later that year in the *Transactions*.³⁴ Whether they contributed to the subsequent discussion is not recorded but both Emrys and his Aberystwyth friend Bill Williams were stimulated to respond in print—though not in the *Transactions*.³⁵

Martin rejected geographers’ then-popular ‘philosophy’ of possibilism, which contends that humans deploy their free will to choose among an available range of options within environmental constraints—Emrys’ geographical circumstances. Determinism (not environmental determinism with its overly simplistic mode of explanation, although geographers’ ‘particular business’ is to examine the influence of the physical environment) was, for Martin, the only viable scientific approach in studies of cause-and-effect, since all actions are determined in some sense—even if we can never ‘find the beginnings of individual causes nor the ends of individual effects in time’ (p. 4).

Williams (writing with philosopher A. C. Montefiore) responded by focusing on the vagueness of some of Martin’s claims, re-examining the issue using the concepts of necessary and sufficient conditions.³⁶ Emrys—in a paper published in the leading US journal of geography³⁷—focused on Martin’s assumption that geography is (or should be) a science wherein ‘laws must be formulated which could be applied in human geography with the same exclusiveness and rigor as scientific laws are applied in the physical world’ (p. 370), thereby placing cause-and-effect as a

³³ Brian Berry (a UCL graduate and leader of the ‘quantitative revolution’ at Seattle, 1955–8) writes (personal communication) that the ‘space cadets were too busy learning statistics, finding their way through the Schaefer–Hartshorne debates, and seeking out examples of spatial analysis than to pay attention to a paper by a young Welsh geographer . . . I cannot recall Emrys’ 1956 paper entering into the discussions’. But he does recall long discussions with Emrys at a Fulbright-sponsored conference in Oxford just before he left for the USA in 1955 which stimulated a life-long friendship.

³⁴ A. F. Martin, ‘The necessity for determinism: a metaphysical problem confronting geographers’, *Transactions and Papers of the Institute of British Geographers*, 17 (1951), 1–12: this was referred to by the Institute Secretary in his report of the meeting in that volume as provoking ‘a lively discussion in an evening session’ (A. E. Smailes, ‘Transactions, 1951’, *Transactions and Papers of the Institute of British Geographers*, 17 (1951), vii).

³⁵ Emrys told Jim Johnson (a student at Belfast at the time) that his paper was first submitted to the *Transactions* and rejected; Jim (personal communication) believes that it was also offered as a paper to be presented at a subsequent IBG conference, but declined.

³⁶ A. C. Montefiore and W. M. Williams, ‘Determinism and possibilism’, *Geographical Studies*, 2 (1) (1955), 1–11.

³⁷ E. Jones, ‘Cause and effect in human geography’, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 46 (1956), 369–77.

fundamental geographic concept. For Emrys, striving to identify laws in human geography involved ‘the uncomfortable feeling that human geographers are being asked to do the impossible’ (p. 371); since exceptions to any attempted generalisations are so frequent, ‘we are very unlikely to attain universal postulates—if indeed those are at all possible’. Furthermore, in contrasting the macroscopic ‘molar’ laws of classical physics with the indeterminacy of microscopic behaviour associated with quantum physics, he notes that if physicists are having difficulties developing universal postulates about nature, how much more difficult this must be for social scientists such as human geographers.

Emrys divided human geographers who accept Martin’s basic argument into two groups. The first see the difference between their discipline and physics as one of degree only—geographers’ universal postulates are more difficult to identify and allow for more exceptions than physicists’. The second believe in free will and deny the possibility of universal postulates because ‘human actions are not pre-determined . . . the course of human activity cannot, therefore, be accurately predicted’ (p. 373). General patterns might emerge when the actions of large numbers of people are observed but ‘however broad the generalisation, it may fail in strict application to any single phenomenon’ (p. 373; this statement encapsulates much of Emrys’ later work, especially his Belfast magnum opus). But is it necessary to ask ‘why’ and to search for ultimate causes—physical scientists do not? Rather ‘The most pressing question in science is “how” . . . “Why” can be left to the philosophers; for the scientist it is enough to ask “how”’ (p. 374).

In addressing ‘how’ questions, Emrys stressed that ‘Each problem is inexplicable outside the context in which it is framed. . . . This limits, both in time and space, the conditions which must be taken into account to explain a given phenomenon’ (p. 376). The ultimate explanation is not sought: rather ‘what we can and must do is to retrace our steps until all the ecological factors involved have meaning in terms of the geographic circumstance’. That meaning is given by the ‘historical and cultural background . . . [that] has to be the frame of reference within which’ explanations are sought. This leads to his summary argument that:

. . . our main task is to find a reasoned explanation for a phenomenon which is geographical—i.e. the ‘effect’ is the center of study, and the wider the context of causes which are examined the fuller will be the explanation. This is radically different from the concept that the geographers’ task is to examine one ‘cause’—the geographical, whatever that may mean—in many which give rise to a non-geographical ‘effect’. The latter can be interpreted as limiting our

subject to the strictly physical elements in the landscape, a restriction which would make nonsense of the entire study of human geography. (p. 377)

Human geographers may seek generalisations in macroscopic patterns—establishing statistically derived averages—but the search for ultimate causes is meaningless: ‘each circumstance must be set against the historical frame of reference wherein its origin lies, and it is in that context that the geographer will most nearly approach the solution of causes’.

Here we find the philosophical foundation to all of Emrys’ later work. Human geographers identify general (or aggregate) patterns whose origins are explored in their cultural-historical contexts and geographical circumstances. Since the latter interested him most, he never joined the ‘bandwagon’ of the ‘quantitative and theoretical revolutions’ which began to roll in human geography soon after this pioneering paper appeared and which, unfortunately, it appears not to have influenced.³⁸

Moving on

By the time his cause-and-effect paper appeared, Emrys had been working for six years at Queen’s University Belfast. His return to London in 1949 had been far from happy. He was ill—a major kidney complaint which affected him for the rest of his life—and unsettled at University College London. By then Fawcett had retired, Buchanan had moved to the LSE, and the new Head of Department—(Sir) Clifford Darby—was determined to restructure it;³⁹ he was so successful that by 1953 none of the staff he inherited remained in post. Emrys was still an assistant lecturer, very unsure of the role Darby wanted him to play—if any—and felt insecure.⁴⁰ He was stimulated by Paul Wheatley, with whom he shared

³⁸ On those ‘revolutions’ see R. J. Johnston and J. D. Sidaway, *Geography and Geographers: Anglo-American Human Geography since 1945 (sixth edition)* (London, 2004). Emrys’ paper is not referred to, for example, in early revolutionary ‘texts’—such as P. Haggett, *Locational Analysis in Human Geography* (London, 1965), R. Abler, J. S. Adams and P. R. Gould, *Spatial Organization: the Geographer’s View of the World* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971), and D. Amedeo and R. G. Golledge, *An Introduction to Scientific Reasoning in Geography* (New York, 1975).

³⁹ On Darby, see M. Williams, ‘Henry Clifford Darby 1909–1992’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 87 (1994), 289–306.

⁴⁰ Emrys told me (personal correspondence, 14 Jan. 2002) that ‘Fawcett withheld a lectureship from me because I had gone to Cornell with a Rockefeller Fellowship in Social Science [his emphasis]! (strangely for one who had started his career with a degree in mathematics). In his own words he “wasn’t sure if I was a geographer” at all. I felt neither fish nor fowl.’ This was not the sole example of such treatment at about that time. In 1977, when responding to his award of the Royal Geographical Society’s Victoria Medal, he noted with regard to social geography that

a room,⁴¹ but overall experienced a ‘fairly unhappy year’.⁴² Emrys was also clearly homesick for Wales—a Rockefeller Foundation staff member recorded after a 1950 interview that ‘His greatest handicap, however, is that he is Welsh and I am afraid he wants to go back to that harsh, foreboding and mystic environment.’ But he moved instead to another Celtic land: as Clout expresses it ‘A meeting between Estyn Evans [Head of the Department of Geography at Queen’s] and Darby resulted in Jones being offered a lectureship at the Queen’s University Belfast’ (p. 20). Estyn Evans—another Aberystwyth graduate trained by Fleure—had been the external examiner for Emrys’ Ph.D. a few years earlier and clearly influenced him substantially thereafter, as reflected in a later warm tribute.⁴³ James Anderson suggests that Emrys found the interdisciplinary openness fostered by Estyn Evans, stemming from their Aberystwyth roots, much more attractive than the more ‘closed’ approaches of either Darby’s emphasis on historical geography at UCL or the ‘Hartshornian orthodoxy’ in some other departments.⁴⁴

Emrys’ research intentions when he moved to Belfast are unknown: whether he planned to work on urban ecology following his exposure to it in the USA or whether he was steered towards it remains speculation. Estyn Evans had done some research on Belfast,⁴⁵ but, perhaps more importantly, was involved with organising the 1952 Belfast meeting of the

‘I was in at the very shaky beginning. I well remember giving my very first academic paper to the Institute of British Geographers, and Professor Ogilvy [*sic*], who was in the Chair, introduced it as a paper in sociology—in the days when the word sociology covered a multitude of sins and meant that, whatever it was, the paper was not geography. I can now also reveal that the paper was turned down by the editorial board of the Institute of British Geographers.’ E. Jones, *The Geographical Journal*, 143 (1977), 510. Emrys also told Hugh Clout of his unhappy time when he returned to UCL: he was not sure ‘whether Darby knew he was on the staff’ and ‘felt unwanted’—although sustained by the ‘intellectually exciting’ atmosphere in his shared room with Paul Wheatley.

⁴¹ Though appointed by Darby directly from his first degree at Liverpool, Wheatley was soon to leave for Malaya: after a spell at Berkeley, he returned two decades later to a chair at UCL before moving to Chicago. On Wheatley, see W. R. Mead, ‘Paul Wheatley (1921–1999)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/73583>>.

⁴² Clout, *Geography at University College London*, pp. 19–20.

⁴³ E. Jones, ‘Introduction’, in R. H. Buchanan, E. Jones and D. McCourt (eds.), *Man and his Habitat: Essays Presented to Emyr Estyn Evans* (London, 1971), pp. ix–xi, and E. Jones, ‘Obituary: Emyr Estyn Evans, 1905–1989’, *The Geographical Journal*, 156 (1990), 116–17. See also R. H. Buchanan, ‘Emyr Estyn Evans (1905–1989)’, in P. H. Armstrong and G. J. Martin (eds.), *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies: Volume 25* (London, 2006), pp. 13–33.

⁴⁴ R. Hartshorne, *The Nature of Geography* (Lancaster, PA, 1939).

⁴⁵ E. E. Evans, ‘The site of Belfast’, *Geography*, 22, 1937, 169–77; E. E. Evans, *Belfast: the Site and the City* (Belfast, 1944).

British Association for the Advancement of Science. The local organising committees for those meetings produced a handbook on the area—a series of handsome volumes bringing much local material to wider audiences. Emrys edited the Belfast volume and wrote its final chapter, on the city. This, his first published essay in urban geography, prefigured his research on Belfast's social geography over the next decade, during which 'I had walked every street, scoured its history, analysed its population in detail and mapped almost everything that was mappable.'⁴⁶

Much of Emrys' essay had a 'traditional' feel to it, stressing aspects such as site, situation and the internal land use pattern which characterised contemporary British geographical work on cities.⁴⁷ An introduction to the physical environment (the 'geographical circumstance') was followed by a discussion of the city's growth associated with nineteenth-century industry. The contemporary distribution of industries was mapped, along with residential areas distinguished by housing type. And then he turned to the cultural context:

Even the most cursory examination of the social structure of Belfast must take into account, however briefly, religious differences and their distribution. The schism between Roman Catholics and Protestants has far-reaching effects in the life of the community which call for investigation, more particularly in relation to the problem of segregation and its development in the last 150 years. (p. 209)

Census data were deployed to portray the city's religious composition and a survey of primary schools to map where the separate groups currently lived. He speculated that 'Segregation appears to have been accentuated in the present century' (p. 211), argued that 'the social links of economic classes and religious groups present a problem to the social scientist', and concluded that:

It is premature to make any deductions, for the detailed mapping and analysis of the social groupings in the city has barely begun. Its main problem lies in the clash of two cultures, the native and the 'planted', and a full knowledge of this, important to the planners of the future, will have to await a thorough sociological investigation.

This introductory essay structured his research during his Belfast years. He collaborated with Estyn Evans (one of his very few joint papers)

⁴⁶ E. Jones, 'Foreword', in F. W. Boal and S. A. Royle (eds.), *Enduring City: Belfast in the Twentieth Century* (Belfast, 2006), p. xi.

⁴⁷ E. Jones, 'Belfast: a survey of the city', in E. Jones (ed.), *Belfast in its Regional Setting: A Scientific Survey* (Belfast, 1952), pp. 201–11.

in a more detailed paper on the city's growth and morphology, covering not only the landscape and industrialisation but also housing types and post-World War II housing problems.⁴⁸ Much more important and innovative, however, was work taking up the sociological challenge he set in the original essay. He was one of the small number of people to gain access to the 1951 small-area census data (for what became known as enumeration districts). Quite how this came about is not clear (a footnote in his Belfast book is not helpful⁴⁹) but it enabled him to map socio-economic and sociocultural distributions at a much finer scale than previously feasible.

The first publication using this material, published in a non-geography journal, argued that:

The main task of the social geographer is to analyse the relationship between social groups and their environment and to identify the regional differentiation of such relationships.⁵⁰

A population density map identifying three zones—a relatively empty (at night-time) core, a high density inner zone, and an outer zone of lower densities in some sectors—was used to evaluate the relevance of 'Chicago School' ecological theories of the internal structure of urban areas, Emrys concluding that Burgess's zonal scheme could 'be applied quite plausibly to East Belfast' (p. 5) but Hoyt's sectoral schema appeared more relevant to the city's west.⁵¹ He queried why the two parts differed, and criticised both schemes:

... the way in which each [zone and] sector is built up is deterministic, and it is strange indeed if ecological determinism differs so much on either side of the Lagan that two parts of Belfast support two different idealised schemes.

There are echoes here of his earlier papers on rural settlement patterns. He criticised the assumption of a single determinant of urban residential patterns—the economics of accessibility. The 'Chicago school' models were based on empirical studies of cities whose physical environment provided little constraint to urban development and incorporated

⁴⁸ E. Evans and E. Jones, 'The growth of Belfast', *Town Planning Review*, 26 (1955), 92–111. See also E. Jones and L. Symons, 'Urban and industrial land use', in L. Symons (ed.), *Land Use in Northern Ireland: the General Report of the Survey* (London, 1963), pp. 152–61.

⁴⁹ E. Jones, *A Social Geography of Belfast* (London, 1960), p. 288.

⁵⁰ E. Jones, 'The social geography of Belfast', *Journal of the Social and Statistical Inquiry Society of Ireland*, 20 (1954), 1–18.

⁵¹ E. W. Burgess, 'The growth of the city: an introduction to a research project', *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, 18 (1924), 85–97; H. Hoyt, *The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods in American Cities* (Washington, DC, 1939).

... ecological and economic processes, operating automatically as they do, [that] eliminate the human or cultural element. Is the cultural element to be a residual category? ... Society is not mechanical, nor is the land use of a city determined mechanically. Cultural values must be assessed, and their role in forming the urban pattern decided. (p. 7)

A much more attractive approach was Firey's study of the role of values as an influence on land use in central Boston,⁵² and Emrys used south Belfast to apply what was becoming his characteristic approach to human geography. Cultural values operate within the 'geographical circumstance':

I will try to show to what extent they operate in South Belfast—the physical basis which might play a primary deciding role, and the cultural values around which we have to reassess deterministic economic principles.

He concluded from mapping neighbourhood types that, although the physical environment constrained patterns of urban and industrial development, social factors influenced its initial nature in different areas, creating patterns that once in place very much constrained the future:

Initial impulses, though governed by the landscape, can give rise to a chain of reactions which is social. To understand its origin we must go back to the physical, although to understand the regions today we must understand cultural factors. (p. 12)

A further paper—also not published in a geographical journal—focused on religion as the key cultural variable within Belfast's social structure.⁵³ The emergence of residential segregation in the mid-nineteenth century was outlined and census data used to suggest that segregation had since increased, especially as a result of 'bitter rioting' between 1920 and 1923. But wards are 'too large to disclose any accurate information' (p. 175) and for 1951 he mapped the distribution of Roman Catholics using the 231 enumeration districts, with populations averaging *c.* 2,000, to pick out the great concentration along the Falls Road, where some districts comprised 87 per cent or more Roman Catholics (who formed little more than a quarter of the city's population), plus several smaller clusters. This map is then generalised by producing an index of segregation for each district—Emrys' only excursion into any form of

⁵² Firey, *Land Use in Central Boston*.

⁵³ E. Jones, 'The distribution and segregation of Roman Catholics in Belfast', *Sociological Review*, 4 (1956), 167–89.

statistical analysis⁵⁴—followed by another unique element in his published research results: he tests ‘the hypothesis that the degree of segregation varies in relation to socio-economic class’ (p. 185), concluding that segregation is more marked in lower socio-economic status districts: higher status areas have more mixed populations in terms of religious affiliations.

In a third paper he for the first time identified himself as an urban geographer who ‘shares with all other geographers the problem of delimiting regions’ (p. 151).⁵⁵ While accepting that few boundaries separate sharply contrasting areas and few regions are homogeneous—‘for the most part our categories are abstract concepts and our lines arbitrary’—he maps five major townscape regions (presumably on the basis of extensive field work, which is not mentioned). Again, their distributions are compared to the Burgess and Hoyt models: the former was rejected, the latter only partly accepted, and he concluded that:

The pattern of the urban landscape in Belfast today cannot be explained in terms of geometric patterns which follow mechanistic development, the ‘laws’ of growth and decay, or economic sorting out by demand, or the restriction of sector growth. The explanation lies in the history of the growth of the town, together with the history and use and social value of the land into which it was expanding. This land use can best be dealt with by the geographer . . . It is in relation to these . . . [changing] values, the products of man’s use of the land and later of his regard for having the right kind of neighbour, that the urban landscape of Belfast can best be explained. (p. 161)

A final pioneering paper explores the importance of socio-spatial boundaries resulting from ‘the voluntary segregation of human groups arising from conflict in a city community’ (p. 97).⁵⁶ He suggests a ‘kind of interdependence which makes a certain amount of co-operation essential, however dissimilar the component parts of the community are’ (p. 102) in rural areas, but the situation in Belfast was very different. A map shows the most segregated areas, many of which were highly segregated in 1886 (when there were religious riots) and remained the main areas of conflict after the separation in 1922 (almost all of them fell within the area where a curfew was in force between 1921 and 1923):

⁵⁴ The index is difficult to interpret. It ranges between 0 and 1, where 0 is 27 per cent Roman Catholic—the city-wide figure. Differences between 0 and 27 and 27 and 100 are then standardised so that both 0 and 100 are represented by 1.

⁵⁵ E. Jones, ‘The delimitation of some urban landscape features in Belfast’, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 74 (1958), 150–62.

⁵⁶ E. Jones, ‘Problems of partition and segregation in Northern Ireland’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 4 (1960), 96–105.

Incendiarism and terrorism led to scores of families moving from localities in which they had been a minority and resettling among neighbors of their own religion. This made absolute the segregation of very large areas of the city. Some districts remain so to this day.

Segregation, and the tensions that it both reflected and exacerbated, was much greater in working- than middle-class areas of the city, reflecting ‘a response to social conflict and of its varying degree in different social classes’ (p. 105). But geographers only map this: their

contribution, much as it might aid the student of politics, is itself limited because it stops short of analyzing the social and political tensions which arise in the geopolitical situations outlined . . . [their] methods can lay bare problems and suggest by correlations and mapping techniques whole fields of inquiry for the student of society, whose task is to further understand the conflicts so revealed and attempt their solution. (p. 105)

These papers had little apparent impact on geographers in the 1950s: what did was their crystallisation, along with a great deal of other material, in Emrys’ magnum opus—*A Social Geography of Belfast*⁵⁷—which Fred Boal has rightly called a classic seminal work of ‘stunning breadth’.⁵⁸ It contained little general material, focusing on the specifics of Belfast rather than any putative generalisations regarding social geography—which is undefined. The Preface tells us that ‘Little had been published previously on Belfast from the geographical or social point of view, and the field was wide and tempting. In many ways it was too wide, and much of what has been attempted was limited by the fact that I worked single-handed’ (p. xiii).⁵⁹ Generalisation was not entirely eschewed, however, and he

. . . tried to make the book more than purely descriptive by attempting to write it within the more general framework of a particular theory of city growth in which both physical and social elements are considered. . . . The landscape is as much the outcome of social values as of physical background and history.

⁵⁷ Jones, *A Social Geography of Belfast*. The book soon went out of print and such was its popularity that University Microfilms, through its London subsidiary Quantum Reprints, brought out a Xerox version in 1965.

⁵⁸ F. W. Boal, ‘The classic work: *A Social Geography of Belfast*’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 31 (2007), 554–8.

⁵⁹ Interestingly, Boal—‘The classic work’—notes that Emrys never referred to his own work in his urban geography lectures at Belfast. The book does refer to several undergraduate dissertations on relevant topics, however, suggesting that he had some influence on his students there: one of them was Jim Johnson, who taught urban geography at UCL in the 1960s and 1970s, and authored an early text on the subject: J. H. Johnson, *Urban Geography* (Oxford, 1967).

But much was left undone ‘not only geographically, but in closely related fields like sociology, social history and the economics of land values’.

After just over a page of introductory matter, the book moved into what was by now the established framework for Emrys’ studies: a chapter on the setting (the physical background), three on the city’s growth and six on land use (culminating in one on ‘urban landscape regions’) before a further three on ‘social geography’ and a final three on ‘sectors’. The early chapters develop on the already-published papers with additional material on the evolution of the port, retailing, and the internal structure of the city centre (presumably based on more fieldwork).

The three chapters in the section on social geography deal with population, industry and occupations, and religion. The first maps and describes in some detail a range of demographic characteristics and the second focuses on employment structure and rates (notably for females) and socio-economic ranking. Both are empirically informative, but no more. That on religion re-uses and expands the *Sociological Review* paper, with maps of the distributions of Jews, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Methodists as well as Roman Catholics plus the material on segregation. Its final section is on ‘social regions’, based on two criteria—population density and socio-economic status—with no reference to religion.

The first two of the final chapters, in the section on ‘sectors’, deal with housing conditions in industrial and residential Belfast. The other provides a synthesis of what has been presented through cartographic analyses of the city’s ‘landscape and demography’: ‘rarely have these elements been so haphazardly scattered in space that they have suggested a mere random distribution’ (p. 266). His maps revealed patterns ‘of landscape on the one hand and . . . of urban society on the other. The work of the urban geographer is their elucidation.’ Such general patterns are deserving of study on their own account but if any generalisation

. . . can be made concerning social distributions, for example, they arise from the behaviour of many individuals; differences in individual behaviour are lost when numbers are so great that they have to be dealt with statistically [here he refers to his 1956 paper on ‘Cause and effect’], but a statistical treatment may well reveal a pattern. Individuals do not conform to such a pattern—they contribute to it.

So do the patterns revealed in Belfast have any wider generality? The ecological theories associated with Burgess and Hoyt, introduced to geog-

raphers by Harris and Ullman,⁶⁰ are outlined—but immediately criticised as ‘largely idealistic and descriptive . . . [with] a deterministic-mechanistic approach’ (p. 271). And then he turns again to Firey, who places ‘human factors’ centrally within his urban ecology, stressing cultural context and the social values applied to the land:

Firey’s main thesis [is] that the unique pattern of a city can be explained only in terms of non-rational social values. On the whole, the study of Belfast suggests very strongly that such values are central to any explanation of today’s pattern.⁶¹ (p. 274)

And they were largely in place before much of the area was urbanised.

This substantial book illustrates Emrys’ conception of human geography—and especially of urban social geography as it evolved in the subsequent decade. He revisited it in his (posthumously published) introduction to another book published nearly fifty years later:⁶²

Every city is unique—geographically because it has a location shared by no other, and historically because it is an expression of a rich pageant of life over the years peculiar to that city. It is these characteristics that give it its personality and demand that it has a unique name. Moreover the lives of its people—and what is a city but its people?—are etched in the landscape they have created; its streets, houses, mills, churches, monuments all bear an ineradicable social imprint.

His approach to geographical study remained consistent over more than sixty years, and his Belfast book illustrated it supremely, even if it was rarely highlighted there: for him, the detail of the specific place was much more important than any vague generalisations. This influenced a number of other scholars, who found Emrys’ approach a valuable bridge between ‘traditional’ urban studies which over-emphasised the singularity of individual places and highly quantitative work which emerged from North America and went in the entirely opposite direction towards nomothetism.

⁶⁰ C. D. Harris and E. L. Ullman, ‘The nature of cities’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 242 (1945), 7–17.

⁶¹ The term ‘non-rational’ is never critiqued: decisions regarding where to live and how to use a piece of land may be entirely rational, but not within the relatively narrow confines of an economic theory dominated by concepts of accessibility and travel cost. Later, he defined the ‘irrational’ as ‘what is normally illogical or unreasonable: it does not fit into the accepted order of the day’: E. Jones, *Space and Place: the Estyn Evans Lecture, 1974* (Belfast, Department of Geography, The Queen’s University, 1976), p. 5.

⁶² E. Jones, ‘Foreword’ in Boal and Royle, *Enduring City*, p. xi.

Return to London

By the time the Belfast book appeared Emrys had returned to London. Michael Wise had been appointed to a chair at the LSE following Dudley Stamp's retirement, creating a vacancy elsewhere in the Department of Geography.⁶³ R. O. Buchanan, who had appointed him to UCL a decade earlier, encouraged Emrys to be a candidate for a post in social geography.⁶⁴ The job was attractive but there were financial difficulties if this were to be at lectureship level: Emrys and Iona had two daughters, London housing was a lot more expensive than Belfast's and the salary on offer was, in real terms, not at all commensurate with what Emrys was earning as a senior lecturer at Queen's (he was promoted in 1958).⁶⁵ Buchanan persisted and eventually obtained permission for a readership to be created (which also involved the University of London agreeing to it carrying the status of 'appointed teacher'). An appointment committee was established including H. C. Darby (Emrys' head in his last year at UCL) and E. G. Bowen (who taught and supervised Emrys at Aberystwyth). Its report notes that the committee was 'well acquainted with the field of possible candidates [and] do not consider it necessary to hold a meeting or advertise the vacancy'. Emrys was recommended for a Readership in Social Geography; he accepted on 3 November 1958 and took up the post on 1 January 1959.⁶⁶

Two years later, when Buchanan retired, Emrys was one of six applicants for the vacant chair. The appointment committee (which again included Darby) opted for him, with the LSE's Director, Sir Sydney Caine, writing to the University of London's Vice-Chancellor that although he 'is a young man for appointment to a chair, being just 40', nevertheless during his two years at the school 'those who have been in contact with him have gained a rapidly increasing respect for his abilities'. And so he became a Professor of Geography in the University of

⁶³ Stamp's chair carried the title Social Geography although he would have preferred Applied Geography.

⁶⁴ Buchanan was also President of Section E (Geography) of the British Association when it met in Belfast: Emrys' work as editor of the conference handbook and the paper he gave undoubtedly enhanced Buchanan's opinion of him.

⁶⁵ I am grateful to Professor David Jones of the LSE Department of Geography for arranging access to Emrys' file there. This records that his current salary at Belfast was £1,500 p.a. above the Readership minimum at the LSE.

⁶⁶ The Director's report to the Standing Committee said that Emrys had accepted with 'some hesitation . . . not at all clear that he will gain very much in financial terms for some years at least' — and he was offered only £45 as a contribution to his moving costs of £90.

London, remaining until slightly early retirement in 1984 at the age of 64, when he was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus. He retained formal links with the School for another ten years, being engaged to undertake a diminishing amount of teaching: his final contract was for four undergraduate lectures on urban geography in 1994.

On arrival in London, Emrys soon became involved in a range of activities. Within the LSE itself he played little role in administrative matters outwith the Department of Geography, although after a rotating system was introduced he acted as Convenor (the LSE's term for Head until 2006) for three periods—1966–9, 1973–8, and 1981–4. Outside the LSE, however, he was much more active. He was, for example, a founding member of the Regional Studies Association, established in 1966, and as its Chairman between 1968 and 1970 did much to build the foundations of this extremely successful society which links academics to professional practitioners.⁶⁷ He had already served on the Council of the Institute of British Geographers (1956–8), was on the Council of the Royal Geographical Society (1972–5) and immediately thereafter chair of its Research Committee and Vice-President (1975–8 and 1978–83 respectively).

Two specific tasks that Emrys undertook had major impacts on the discipline. In 1965, (human) geography was omitted from the new Social Science Research Council (SSRC). Four geographers led by Robert Steel, then of the University of Liverpool and later Principal of the University of Wales, Swansea, and including Emrys Jones decided, without formal backing from any learned society or other organisation, to approach the SSRC Chair (later Lord) Michael Young to inquire whether he would hear a case for human geography to be added to the Council's disciplinary portfolio. His response was positive, and Emrys chaired a panel to develop that case, with much of the detailed work undertaken by its

⁶⁷ See M. Wise, 'The origins of the Regional Studies Association', in P. L. Garside and M. Hebbert (eds.), *British Regionalism, 1900–2000* (London, 1989), pp. 115–28. The RSA was established at the time when Walter Isard was promoting the Regional Science Association internationally: see W. Isard, *History of Regional Science and the Regional Science Association International: the Beginnings and Early History* (Berlin, 2003). Wise notes that members of the 'British Group of the International Centre for Regional Planning and Development' invited Isard to address them in 1964 and considered affiliating with his organisation as a British Section but decided not to because, in part, its constitution 'contained a prohibition on, among other things, activities attempting to influence legislation' (p. 125). The RSA was established on 9 April 1965, with Emrys Jones as Vice-Chairman: a separate British Section of the Regional Science Association was also established but the former has undoubtedly been the more successful. See also A. Pike *et al.*, 'Editorial: *Regional Studies*: 40 years and more', *Regional Studies*, 41 (2007), S1–S8.

secretary—Michael Chisholm. Against considerable opposition within the discipline, they prepared a case promoting human geography as a social science (which some ‘traditionalists’ found difficult to accept) and this was accepted by the full Council in 1967, following Young’s clear lead.⁶⁸ Emrys was at the SSRC Council meeting when geographers were formally welcomed to membership; he was a founding member of its ‘Human geography and planning committee’.⁶⁹

The second major task was his chairmanship of the Geography Panel of the Council for National Academic Awards. Between 1965 and 1992 this exercised close oversight of degree-level programmes offered by a range of institutions (polytechnics and a variety of colleges) which lacked separate degree-awarding powers. As Emrys noted in an application for leave from the LSE, this was a very time-consuming task, not least in the extensive visits made to the institutions—most of which involved him.

Alongside those calls on his time, Emrys carried a standard teaching load. For most of his twenty-six years at the LSE he taught undergraduate courses in social geography and, after 1963, settlement geography (it did not become urban geography until 1968). He also participated in the introductory human geography course in most years. Increasingly he shared the teaching of social and urban geography with younger colleagues from both the LSE and King’s (those were the days of the Joint School of Geography involving the two colleges), enjoying debating epistemological issues with Simon Duncan, David Green, Barrie Morgan, Tony Warnes and others, but retaining his own firm views—as too did they: the result, as Tony Warnes remembers, was not a coherent approach to social geography but rather what he terms a ‘happenstance collection of enthusiasms with place and spatial dimensions’. Emrys brought a wide knowledge to those courses, particularly of British social and cultural geography: several remember his detailed disquisition (without notes) about the Jewish settlement of Leeds on a field course and his wide knowledge of architecture (undoubtedly reflecting his early career ambitions).

⁶⁸ The case was later published in a revised form in M. Chisholm, *Research in Human Geography* (London, 1971).

⁶⁹ This episode in geography’s history is set out in M. Chisholm, ‘Human geography joins the Social Science Research Council: personal recollections’, *Area*, 33 (2001), 428–30, and R. J. Johnston, ‘Institutions and disciplinary fortunes: two moments in the history of UK geography in the 1960s—II: human geography and the Social Science Research Council’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 28 (2004), 187–203.

The LSE department was in the forefront in providing formal post-graduate training through taught M.Sc. degrees, with a general one in geography and another on regional and urban planning. Emrys was involved with colleagues in their establishment (that on regional and urban planning involved staff from the economics and government departments as well as geography), and taught on them—he gave a course in urban geography on the general M.Sc. for many years. He also supervised a large number of postgraduates who recall his ‘light touch’ assistance making, in Ray Pahl’s words, ‘the idea of doing research fun’.⁷⁰ All who worked with him during those years remember him with great warmth, and yet felt that they never really knew him, that he was a very private, self-contained man, although entertaining and convivial in company and generous with his time to graduate students finding their way in the academic world. And there was a feeling that he believed his achievements were not fully recognised: some associated this with attitudes to his Second World War pacifism, others with his perceived sympathy for students during the 1968 ‘troubles’ at LSE, when he was departmental convenor. The honours came, but late in his career.

Apart from a broadcast lecture on late Victorian Belfast, Emrys did no more research there,⁷¹ in part, it is suggested, because of political controversy which followed the book’s publication.⁷² Instead, his years at the LSE involved him in three main scholarly activities—and the years of his retirement with another.

⁷⁰ Ray recalls Emrys thinking up the title for his Ph.D. thesis (R. E. Pahl, *Urbs in Rure: the Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire*, London, London School of Economics, Geographical Papers 2, 1965) during a trip to a publisher’s office by tube.

⁷¹ E. Jones, ‘Late Victorian Belfast: 1850–1900’, in J. C. Beckett and R. E. Glasscock (eds.), *Belfast: the Origin and Growth of an Industrial City* (London, 1967), 188–99. A previous lecture was also published by the BBC: E. Jones, ‘Belfast’, in T. W. Moody and J. C. Beckett (eds.), *Ulster since 1800 Second Series: a Social Survey* (London, 1957), pp. 90–8. Ceri Peach suggests that one reason for the absence of any further research on Belfast was that Emrys was unable to get access to the 1961 census enumeration district data: they had been provided to some economists, who aggregated them up to the wards and destroyed the only copy of the original data. Emrys did, however, write the geography portion for the fifteenth edition (1974) *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry on Northern Ireland, which he revised in the 1980s. It has subsequently been revised and updated by others, but he remains listed as one of the co-authors on the *Britannica Online* edition. (I am grateful to Ken Pletcher, of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, for this information.)

⁷² Emrys apparently received some unpleasant mail (personal communication from his daughter, Kate Hennessey).

The geography of London

Emrys' first major project—which occupied much of the 1960s—was producing an *Atlas of London* to display the detailed pattern of the city's economic and social geography from 1961 census enumeration district data and other sources.⁷³ This was conceived to serve a range of users who heretofore could not portray the city's complexity cartographically in any great detail. A meeting in 1962 attracted representatives from the London County Council, five county planning authorities and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to the LSE, with an introductory memorandum noting 'an urgent need for a factual basis for planning and research in the London region' and outlining the sorts of data that should be mapped and at what scales.⁷⁴ Work progressed, although fund-raising and the massive work involved in drafting the maps and preparing them for printing (on Ordnance Survey maps converted to metric scales) meant that it was fairly slow:⁷⁵ Emrys' colleague, Dan Sinclair, joined him in leading the project and overseeing the work of the researchers and cartographers.⁷⁶

The case for an atlas was presented to the Royal Geographical Society in 1965.⁷⁷ An atlas is needed as 'a statement of what we know portrayed by special techniques. It brings together the seemingly most diverse elements of physical environment and society because they are all expressed in the same spatial terms' in an integrated format (p. 330). Much of the presentation and the subsequent discussion was technical, with sample maps deployed to illustrate the arguments involved in a novel project of a size, scope and complexity with which geographers until then had little experience—one commentator noted that it was being undertaken in a 'consistent and properly detailed way' (p. 342).

⁷³ An earlier idea—to investigate the vertical layering of large buildings in London, which he discussed with Ray Pahl—sadly lapsed.

⁷⁴ I am grateful to Michael Wise for providing me with a copy of the Minutes of this meeting. Emrys and several other members of the Geography Department were active members of LSE's interdisciplinary Greater London Group, founded by W. A. Robson, Professor of Public Administration: one of its first tasks—in which Emrys was involved—was preparing evidence for the Royal Commission on the Government of Greater London. On Robson see B. Crick, 'Robson, William Alexander (1895–1980)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31622>>.

⁷⁵ Emrys spent much time fund-raising for the project, which eventually got some support from the Frederick Soddy Trust and from Robert Maxwell at Pergamon Press, who published the *Atlas*.

⁷⁶ See D. Castle and J. Fielding, 'The Atlas of London: problems in compilation', *The London Journal*, 11 (1968), 85–93.

⁷⁷ E. Jones, 'The London atlas', *The Geographical Journal*, 131 (1965), 330–40.

The project eventually bore fruit with the publication of two tranches of maps comprising *The Atlas of London and the London Region*.⁷⁸ As well as the 1961 census enumeration district data it included material from a range of original sources in a collection of 70 large sheets (most of them *c.* 63 cm × 47 cm) the first of which covered the physical, historical and administrative background (4, 3, and 1 sheets respectively); there were 30 under the heading ‘Social’—using 1961 census data to depict population numbers and change, age and sex structure, housing tenure, household facilities, immigrants, and socio-economic status in either dot or choropleth form—and the final 32 (‘Economic’) covered land use and employment patterns and transport use. Each map’s sources are indicated and there is a brief description of the geography portrayed.

Producing the *Atlas* involved Emrys in other publications focused on mapping socio-economic data, especially introducing the then novel enumeration district data to geographers—Belfast was frequently used as the exemplar of what was still termed ‘sociological mapping’: *The Social Geography of Belfast* had appeared but ‘social geography’ was not a widely deployed term.⁷⁹ But although the interpretation of maps remained central to most of Emrys’ research, cartography per se was not to become one of its foci, and once the *Atlas* was published he undertook no more major projects of that type—indeed, despite his continued use of maps as fundamental devices for displaying patterns, he expressed dissatisfaction with them as a medium for studying change:

Change is such an obvious element in a city; physically and socially the city is always in flux. Yet the very techniques a geographer uses tend to bring this to a halt. A map is static: it is a slice of life: action is frozen. The truth lies in the film’s action, the stills you select tell you little enough of the story; and invaluable though our maps are, unless we know something of the processes which give rise to the patterns they reveal, they become nothing more than historical documents almost as soon as they are drawn.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ E. Jones with D. J. Sinclair, *Atlas of London and the London Region* (Oxford, 1968). Interestingly, this appeared almost contemporaneously with a very similar volume for Paris, illustrating the significant cartographic advances at that time: J. Beaujeu-Garnier and J. Bastié (eds.), *Atlas de Paris et de la région Parisienne* (Paris, 1967).

⁷⁹ E. Jones, ‘Sociological aspects of mapping in urban areas’, *Geography*, 46 (1961), 9–17.

⁸⁰ E. Jones, ‘City growth and urban development’, *Transactions of the Bartlett Society*, 1 (1962–3), p. 20. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the census data on which so much social geography depended because they freeze patterns at a certain time of the day—‘the census waits until we have retired for the night’.

Nor did he undertake any significant research on London for some time.⁸¹ His first major paper on the city did not appear until 1980, taking advantage of the availability of a detailed 1638 catalogue of houses and their values to map London's social geography by parish—although he called it an ecological approach rather than social geography.⁸²

Socio-spatial polarisation was the topic of a further paper, setting the contemporary situation in its historical context.⁸³ A number of variables taken from the 1981 and 1991 censuses was mapped, though at the borough scale only (i.e., thirty-two divisions), to show that alongside the long-standing 'social polarity' reflecting socio-economic class there was a new dimension based on London's growing racial and ethnic heterogeneity.⁸⁴ The main conclusion, based on visual analysis of cartographic material only, was that 'concentrations are rare and ghetto formation absent; dispersal is fairly evident' (p. 36). Some clusters are identifiable which are also visible in the townscape; 'in the suburbs, the general acceptance of new elements in the population gives some encouragement to those who see the future in terms of a multi-racial society rather [than], as was first cherished, the one in which the ethnic elements would be assimilated by the host society' (p. 41).

This work—and Emrys' later studies of the Welsh in London, discussed below—is characterised by cartographic description and verbal analysis, with virtually none of the statistical and 'theoretical' frameworks adopted by many urban social geographers from the late 1960s on. Indeed, apart from a table of indices of dissimilarity (produced by another researcher) in one of the papers on ethnicity,⁸⁵ Emrys totally avoided the technical approach—regressions and factorial ecologies are notable by their absence. So too is much of the theoretical basis used by others, as the work on Belfast showed.

Indeed, Emrys stood apart from the discipline's 'quantitative and theoretical revolutions', with which he was uncomfortable largely because

⁸¹ He did provide a brief afterword (pp. 112–13) to a new atlas, using 1971 census data and deploying computer mapping technology, compiled by several of his LSE postgraduate students: J. Westaway, J. Shepherd and T. Lee (eds.), *A Social Atlas of London* (Oxford, 1974).

⁸² E. Jones, 'London in the early seventeenth century: an ecological approach', *The London Journal*, 6 (1980), 123–34.

⁸³ E. Jones, 'Social polarization in post-industrial London', in J. O'Loughlin and J. Friedrichs (eds.), *Social Polarization in Post-Industrial Metropolises* (Berlin, 1996), pp. 19–44.

⁸⁴ Wards were used to map birthplace data from the 1981 census in an earlier paper—E. Jones, 'Race and ethnicity in London', in K. Hoggart and D. Green (eds.), *London: a New Metropolitan Geography* (London, 1991), pp. 176–90.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

of the economic and other determinisms which he perceived underpinned much of their theory and analytical procedures. His detailed studies of Belfast and London involved only verbal analyses of maps. Ecological models were sometimes valuable as pegs on which to hang a descriptive account but they lacked reference to cultural values, which for him were foundational. Thus not only did south Belfast suburbs 'owe their character more to the immediately preceding landscape of parks than they do to the so-called natural landscape' but in addition before Belfast expanded there 'the surrounding land was already differentiated into various types of land use, and was invested with social values'.⁸⁶

This unwillingness to join the 'quantitative and theoretical bandwagon'—indeed, any bandwagon, as illustrated by his satirical poem 'The paradigm cycle'⁸⁷—was apparent in Emrys' writing in a number of ways. His strictures were most characteristically expressed in book reviews (of which he wrote a large number, especially for *The Geographical Journal*). Thus on Haggett's pioneering (and 'brilliantly done') text on locational analysis, while accepting that it would be foolish to ignore the position it embraced, he claimed that of the various pairs of 'spectacles available to the geographer . . . [it] may not be the best' and cited earlier, comparable trends in sociology being categorised as 'the misapplication of mathematics and science . . . pseudo-mathematics, borrowed jargon and the quantification mania . . . Heaven forbid that geography should go through this same stage', and concluded that

. . . locational analysis . . . is primarily descriptive: it is the application of order rather than its discovery. The spectacles by no means enable us to see the whole truth. Indeed they may cut out vital aspects which the human geographer cannot dispense with.⁸⁸

Haggett was criticised for including Burgess and Hoyt in his book but finding no room for Firey, who 'argued convincingly that the ecological pattern in Boston was not due to distortions of any of these geometrical models: the distortions themselves were basic. In Firey's ecological theory room had to be found for the non-rational adaptation of space.'

Emrys was not given to pontifications about theory and method in geography, however, and penned few critical works. A small number of essays carried his basic arguments, as in statements about geography

⁸⁶ E. Jones, *A Social Geography of Belfast*, pp. 255 and 280.

⁸⁷ E. Jones, 'The paradigm cycle', *Area*, 17 (1985), 169.

⁸⁸ E. Jones, 'Review of P. Haggett, *Locational Analysis in Human Geography*', *The Geographical Journal*, 132 (1966), 267–8.

entering ‘an age of mathematical extravagance’, ‘old doubts about the validity of dealing mechanistically with human behaviour—which was, after all, what human geography was about’,⁸⁹ and his identification of ‘fundamental areas in social geography which were not amenable to positivist methodology’.⁹⁰ He was no kinder to post-positivist approaches; political economy was dismissed as ‘locationless, universal; holistic to the extent that the discipline we knew is irrelevant and must disappear. The baby has gone with the bathwater.’⁹¹ He rejected approaches that produced a ‘remoteness and abstraction of generalisations on a universal—or international—level’, remaining firmly ‘rooted in traditional approaches’:⁹² for him

The scientific aims at universals, the behavioural at individuals. In between, those elements which are culture-specific must be considered. Geography may well find strength in relevance, but it is not simply relevance to existing social problems; in thought it must be relevance to specific culture systems.⁹³

. . . subjectivity . . . [is] the only way to get at the heart of the matter.⁹⁴

Creating social geography

This clearly stated attitude underpins the second thrust of Emrys’ work at the LSE, especially during his first two decades there. Social geography was not a new term which he and some of his contemporaries had invented; as Dunbar has shown, however, earlier uses largely treated it as synonymous with human geography, and no clear identity or manifesto for a defined sub-field had been established prior to the 1970s.⁹⁵ Emrys titled his Belfast book ‘A social geography’, having used the term in only one of the papers that pre-dated it. But he offered no definition other than suggesting that ‘parts of the book may be of interest because they show in more detail than has been attempted before the distribution of

⁸⁹ E. Jones, ‘Contemporary British geography’, *Geoforum*, 10 (1979), 215–18.

⁹⁰ E. Jones, ‘Post-positivist social geography’, *GeoJournal*, 9 (1984), 241–5.

⁹¹ E. Jones, ‘Review of D. T. Herbert and D. M. Smith, *Social Problems and the City: Geographical Perspectives*’, *Regional Studies*, 13 (1980), 154.

⁹² E. Jones, ‘New perspectives on an old science’, in S. Rokkan. (ed.), *A Quarter Century of International Social Science: Papers and Reports on Developments 1952–1977* (New Delhi, 1979), pp. 95–110.

⁹³ E. Jones, ‘Contemporary British geography’, p. 218.

⁹⁴ E. Jones, ‘On the specific nature of space’, *Geoforum*, 15 (1984), 5–9.

⁹⁵ G. S. Dunbar, ‘Some early occurrences of the term “social geography”’, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 93 (1977), 15–20. See also T. W. Freeman, *A Hundred Years of Geography* (London, 1961), pp. 173 ff.

social elements'.⁹⁶ But his LSE Readership was in social geography, on which he taught undergraduate courses throughout his career there.⁹⁷

There was almost certainly pressure to define and identify the main elements of his claimed sub-discipline—undoubtedly led by publishers wanting pioneer textbooks for a potentially expanding market. But they had to wait. Meanwhile Emrys published a short introductory text on human geography (probably linked to his sections of the first-year undergraduate course taught jointly with first Tom Elkins and then Michael Wise).⁹⁸ This had clear roots in traditions that underpinned Emrys' education at Aberystwyth, with the first half dealing with 'divisions of mankind', population movements, and obtaining food. The second half considered the contemporary world, with chapters on farms and villages, mining and manufacturing, (two on) towns and cities and one on communications. Human geography was defined as studying 'those aspects of human life which, through a continual and changing interaction with nature, have given rise to distinctive landscapes and regions' (p. 13), analysing relationships that 'are often between particular groups of men and a man-made environment: and the latter has been the outcome of other relationships between different groups of men and a less transformed environment. It is important to view these relationships with all the historical depth that they imply' (p. 17)—though interestingly with no reference to cultural, let alone social, geography as a viable subfield within that enterprise.⁹⁹ (Culture gets only one listing in the index—referring to a five-page discussion of cultural differences of mankind, emphasising language and religion.)

⁹⁶ E. Jones, *A Social Geography of Belfast*, p. xiii.

⁹⁷ The booklists for those early courses in the LSE *Calendars* include several books in human ecology (by Burgess and Bogue, Hawley, Reiss and Hatt, and Theodorson), in population geography (Beaujeu-Garnier, Saville, and Zelinsky) and J. M. Houston's *Social Geography of Europe* (London, 1953).

⁹⁸ E. Jones, *Human Geography* (London, 1965). This book was translated into Catalan as *Geografia humana* (Barcelona, 1965) and a US edition was published by Praeger in 1965.

⁹⁹ At about the time this book was published, Emrys provided a rather different definition of his discipline at the start of one of his papers given to the Cymmrodorion Society. 'To most other disciplines, a geographer is a person who pushes his finger into other people's pies. His excuse is that every facet of human activity has a special [*sic*—I'm sure this should have been 'spatial'] aspect—the world is his pie. His primary concern is with distribution, but this would be sterile indeed if he could not explain distributions in historical or sociological terms': E. Jones, 'The changing distribution of the Celtic languages in the British Isles', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1967), p. 22.

His first attempt at a definitive statement was produced a decade later in the introduction to a collection of *Readings in Social Geography*.¹⁰⁰ Its subject matter was broadly defined as ‘the spatial component of human behaviour’ (p. 1) and the subdiscipline as involving:

... the understanding of the patterns which arise from the use social groups make of space as they see it, and of the processes involved in making and changing such patterns. (p. 7)

This fits Emrys’ career-long approach to geography as studying the perceptions and use of environment and space, with one added component—the focus on ‘social groups’.¹⁰¹ These, he notes, can be defined in many ways ‘from statistical differentiation to vague notions of community, with its countless definitions, and to culture groups’ (pp. 8–9) without giving any further lead—though by implication he differentiates social from cultural, with the latter focusing ‘on the works of man rather than man himself’ (p. 2). The book’s approach is largely inductive: social geographers have been slow ‘to build a coherent theory’ (p. 1),¹⁰² and so it begins with selected excerpts on spatial patterns, followed by others on concepts of space and on processes (mainly migration at various scales).

The focus on groups remained at the core of Emrys’ social geography, with a review of the sub-discipline’s history concluding that:

What will bind the studies we call social geography together are their focus on the social group as a unit of study, and their common concern with the spatial implications of social processes.¹⁰³

This was the theme of the textbook that Emrys published two years earlier with his former student, John Eyles—*An Introduction to Social Geography*.¹⁰⁴ John recalls the experience of writing the book (over three

¹⁰⁰ E. Jones (ed.), *Readings in Social Geography* (London, 1975).

¹⁰¹ In this he followed Ray Pahl—one of his LSE postgraduate students—who defined it as ‘the study of the patterns and processes involved in understanding socially defined populations in their spatial setting’—which makes the social groups more passive than they are in Emrys’ definition. R. E. Pahl, ‘Trends in social geography’, in R. J. Chorley and P. Haggett (eds.), *Frontiers in Geographical Teaching* (London, 1965), p. 81.

¹⁰² He is quoting A. Buttner, ‘Social space in interdisciplinary perspective’, *The Geographical Review*, 59 (1969), 417–26. Elsewhere, he wondered whether ‘the slowly emerging study of social geography can develop concepts of its own . . . At the moment it is content to borrow from sociology, and to use social structure as a measure of analysing distributional aspects of society’: E. Jones, ‘New perspectives on an old science’, p. 103.

¹⁰³ E. Jones, ‘Social geography’, in E. H. Brown (ed.), *Geography Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Oxford, 1980), p. 260.

¹⁰⁴ E. Jones and J. Eyles, *An Introduction to Social Geography* (Oxford, 1977). For John Eyles’ reflections on Emrys and social geography, see J. Eyles, ‘Emrys Jones and the invention of social geography’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 31 (2007), 558–62.

years) as ‘not only delightful but instructive . . . Emrys was a quiet, collegial man but he argued with passion on those things he saw as vital to understanding how the social and physical landscape are shaped by human activities and values’ (p. 561).

The opening chapter on ‘Social geography—a group approach’ introduced the book’s four dominant themes (p. 6): social geography is about space and the meanings people give to it; a function of social science is to seek order; social scientists seek to explain the order they identify; and from that understanding they should both identify the geography of social problems and seek ways to ameliorate them. This may indicate a slight shift in Emrys’ position. He had previously always stressed that the order he sought was specific to the place being studied, with general models offering only slight aid in providing explanatory accounts. That crucial caveat is partly missing here—though the Chicago models are referred to as implying a ‘deterministic approach’ (p. 8) whereas Firey’s ‘enable us to stress cultural definitions of space . . . the world is not necessarily the neatly measured and categorized universe of the geographer’ (pp. 8–9).¹⁰⁵ Perhaps it is implicit that textbooks must generalise more than individual studies, and the stress on the specific circumstances is necessarily reduced.¹⁰⁶

Two main types of social group are identified: primary groups—or ‘groups-in-the-mind’, which are characterised by informal, face-to-face interaction, notably in the family; and secondary groups—or ‘groups by association’, such as neighbourhood communities, which become increasingly important with growing societal complexity. Those groups are largely racial and/or cultural:

. . . an individual has little choice over which culture, set of beliefs, and so on he learns. He is born and socialized into a particular culture. It is the task of social geography to examine the distribution of all these particular groups and then consider the processes that led to their areal concentration, dispersal or grouping. (p. 15)

Other, non-ascribed, secondary groups are those formed to pursue common interests, for either expressive (personal satisfaction) or material (common goal) ends, such as trades unions, business groups and political parties. These also use space, their activities can be mapped, and inter-group

¹⁰⁵ Perhaps it is of relevance that the Preface tells us that John Eyles was responsible for most of that chapter.

¹⁰⁶ As suggested in chapter 7 of the book, which Emrys wrote.

conflict (as with the ascribed family and cultural groups) may be spatially expressed.

The book's structure largely follows that of the earlier *Readings*. After one chapter on conceptions of space there are two on patterns, drawing on a wide range of studies to illustrate social variations in space and the order identified—largely through mapping (including some results of statistical analyses of the mapped data, without any technical detail). A series of chapters on processes considers mobility and segregation as well as macro-processes such as urbanisation—again, as in all of Emrys' work, with a large number of maps and diagrams underpinning the discussions.

Finally, two chapters on 'Planning' introduce a new component to Emrys' social geography. The first discusses 'A fair society—concepts and measurement', concentrating on the distributions of income, housing conditions, and the territorial social indicators pioneered by David Smith,¹⁰⁷ as indicators of disadvantage. The final chapter on 'Public policy and social planning' focuses on area-based policies as examples of social planning as social engineering. The book concludes that social geographers must be involved in 'the policy field if they want their discipline to be truly problem-oriented' (p. 262)—while noting that some geographers may prefer not to work within the current institutional structure but rather adopt a more 'conflictual' approach. Nevertheless, the final sentence expresses the belief that:

... it is likely that many social geographers will pursue their traditional academic concerns which form the bulk of this book, i.e. the examination of socio-spatial phenomena in a non-policy context in order to identify patterns as a first stage of attempting to explain such occurrences in terms of the significant process operating, and eventually by the practical application of theory. (p. 263)

Cities and urbanisation

Emrys' concerns with 'urban social problems' were evident in some of his Belfast writings—about social housing, for example—and were crystallised in his inaugural lecture at the LSE when he identified himself as an urban geographer, although at the end he referred to urban social geographers, whose studies were in their infancy.¹⁰⁸ In reviewing the sub-discipline's current state he re-emphasised his unease with studies that stressed techniques and models, pressing that urban geographers have a

¹⁰⁷ D. M. Smith, *The Geography of Social Well-Being in the United States* (New York, 1973).

¹⁰⁸ E. Jones, *The City in Geography: an Inaugural Lecture* (London, G. Bell for the London School of Economics and Political Science, 1962).

‘different viewpoint, and a different conceptual framework: one which must also be logically consistent with . . . [their] view of geography as a whole’ (p. 11). They begin with maps portraying spatial relationships—‘A map has done its job if it has helped to define a problem and raise a question’ (p. 12)—investigated holistically and ‘never severed from the past’.¹⁰⁹ He then turned to contemporary changes within urban studies, and their concern with planning future urban environments in the context of observed trends. Once again, his caution comes through—‘urban geographers should sometimes remind themselves and others that their generalisations are nothing more than a statement of what is happening and has happened in the past: man makes the process; he need not be in the grip of it’ (p. 22). Thus:

. . . we are not in the grip of some inevitable processes which press us this way or that, compelling this solution or the other. . . . Planning in the true sense should have the imagination to free itself from the past and the present, to examine concepts other than those on which our own ideas are based. (p. 25)

He was convinced that ‘we fashion our cities and are not fashioned by them’ and hoped that:

. . . urban geographers—and planners—will free themselves from the restrictions of their own urban tradition and set their problems in the background of urbanism the world over, so that ultimately we will have contributed a little to the better understanding of how society works, and establish a more confident basis for planning the future . . . (p. 31)

By then he was doing just that, through the Joint Unit for Planning Research at University College London, of which he was Joint Director between 1966 and 1977. Working with (Lord) Richard Llewelyn Davies, Peter Cowan and others, he was involved in a range of planning investigations;¹¹⁰ as a consultant to the United Nations on urban planning in Venezuela, for example, and in developing plans for, among other places, Milton Keynes (the home of the Open University, which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1990—conferred in a ceremony at St David’s Hall, Cardiff),¹¹¹ Peterlee and Swindon. On the basis of this experience and

¹⁰⁹ I doubt, however, whether Emrys would have associated himself with those geographers who, according to Hart, ‘honestly believed that if only we made enough maps the reason for having made them would somehow eventually become clear, and the “field research question” would emerge’: J. F. Hart, ‘No dead rabbits’, *The Geographical Review*, 91 (2001), 322–7.

¹¹⁰ On Davies see M. Fraser, ‘Davies, Richard Llewelyn (1912–1981)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31369>>.

¹¹¹ In his presentation speech, geographer W. T. R. Pryce recorded that Milton Keynes’ residents have Emrys among others to thank for ‘the original ideas that have led to the superbly attractive

accumulated expertise, he was invited to visit Australia (1968) and Japan (1972) and to attend several of the Delos International Planning Symposia (1963, 1970, 1972) run by Constantinos Doxiadis, where he met such scholars as Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan, Margaret Mead, and Arnold Toynbee, as well as others who became his graduate students and later protégés (such as Lila Leontidou), and explored another urban culture.¹¹² Rather more specialised work was his membership (as one of three geographers) of the Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments, which took over four years to produce its very detailed, substantially researched report.¹¹³

Although this consultancy work did not lead directly to academic publications—one of the few was a short essay on Venezuelan urban problems, drawing a contrast between slums in western ‘developed’ countries as the last stage in urban decay and *ranchos* (the local term for squatter settlements) which were ‘the first stage in urban growth, vital and dynamic’ (p. 424)¹¹⁴—it strongly influenced much of his writing on cities. Indeed, it led him to extend his basic approach to geography by considering not only the physical environment as a constraint to human behaviour—albeit one that was altered with changes in value systems and technological capabilities—but also the built environment. The latter was portrayed as a ‘formidable [constraint] because of the use we have already made of our environment, because we have inherited a settlement pattern and invested in a complex pattern of cities and industries and transport links’.¹¹⁵ Those constraints should not be considered as another form of environmental determinism, however: ‘in building an environment we may often be reducing the freedom of action of individuals and groups’.¹¹⁶ Planning should minimise this and not be so concerned with ‘bricks and mortar as moulders of life and as creators of incongruence’; incongruence can become congruence when ‘a different set of values has been evoked and a different quality of life’ introduced to a receptive milieu (p. 17).

layout of their city’: I am grateful to Fraser Woodburn, Registrar of the Open University, for providing me with a copy of the Presentation Speech and of Emrys’ reply.

¹¹² On Doxiadis, see <<http://www.ekistics.org/Doxiadis.htm>>, and a Wikipedia entry at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantinos_A._Doxiadis>.

¹¹³ *Report of the Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments*. (London, HMSO, Commd. 4166, 1969).

¹¹⁴ E. Jones, ‘Aspects of urbanization in Venezuela’, *Ekistics*, 19 (1964), 420–5.

¹¹⁵ E. Jones, ‘Resources and environmental constraints’, *Urban Studies*, 6 (1969), p. 343.

¹¹⁶ E. Jones, *Space and Place*, p. 5.

He opposed anti-urban approaches which portrayed the city as a dying concept:

I fail to see how cities can be biologically condemned: I fail to see why we must accept the perpetuation of the more obvious evils of city life because of their supposed inevitability; and I refuse to accept running away from the city as an answer to our problems. Cities should be great enough to ennoble our civilisation and pleasant enough to live in. Today our heads are in the city—our hearts in the country—and our bodies are torn by commuting. Our hearts must be in the city too, and our cities must be worthy of our hearts.¹¹⁷

But to be worthy they must be substantially changed: just as ‘the farmer is severely constrained by the past’, by the elements of the eighteenth-century rural landscape, so

Living in the past is even more familiar to dwellers in towns and cities. They have inherited structures from past centuries which in no way ideally serve our purposes today. . . . Our cities echo the past, mainly because most people seem to want to build for eternity, permanent and stable and unchanging.¹¹⁸

So how could those constraints be broken? Emrys identified two types of planning—trend and normative: the former is much easier to practice, being basically a ‘tidying process’ taking on-going changes at their face value. He—following his colleague Llewelyn Davies—wanted a more flexible, open-ended approach, reflecting the greater freedom of location now available to many activities. The available extremes were very high density concentrations and low-density suburbia, with a range of intermediate possibilities between which choices ‘should rest on the needs of society and its social values’ (p. 260). Some high-density concentrations would undoubtedly be maintained because ‘the city in its traditional compact form has produced all that is best—as well as all that is worst—in civilization’ but real incomes are likely to increase substantially and if planners react by presenting ‘today’s middle class environment to tomorrow’s working class’ this will merely perpetuate present forms. Again, Emrys returns to his theme of building to last:

We have assumed too easily that form has an effect on society, that if we build a school catchment area, add a few shops, playing fields, a church and a pub this will produce a neighbourhood. This is nonsense. A neighbourhood is the product of society. Our towns must be such that society can express itself within

¹¹⁷ E. Jones, ‘City growth and urban development’, pp. 19–20.

¹¹⁸ E. Jones, ‘The future habitat’, in R. H. Buchanan, E. Jones and D. McCourt (eds.), *Man and his Habitat: Essays Presented to Emrys Estyn Evans* (London, 1971), pp. 251–2.

the least number of constraints. . . . Successful planning today is that which will enable the next generation to plan successfully. (p. 262)

But there is no blueprint to match these aspirations, just a call to preserve the best of the past, not ‘the trivial and banal, the bric-a-brac of society’.

Alongside these general essays on urban futures, Emrys produced two extremely well-received short books written for general audiences, both of which were translated into several languages. *Towns and Cities* was a masterly synthesis of the urban literature in the mid-1960s,¹¹⁹ carrying the realisation that it is possible to look for ‘universals, for common elements, shared manifestations’ when every city is also unique—‘a discrete entity occupying a unique position and having a unique history’ (p. 5). In this way apparent chaos can be ‘resolved into intelligible patterns’ while recognising that ‘ultimately it is with man’s behaviour we are dealing, and . . . it is society that makes the pattern we are trying to discover’ (p. 142). Hence his emphasis yet again on irrationality, on behaviour that ‘disturbs too simple a pattern and too simple an explanation’, in accounting for the unique within the broad generalisations produced by general overviews.

Fourteen years later, *Towns and Cities* was replaced in the Oxford Paperbacks University Series by *Metropolis*, which focused on ‘great cities’ within an historically structured framework.¹²⁰ This guided him from ‘The metropolis in early civilizations’ through ‘Metropolis today’ to ‘The transactional metropolis’, with the last third of the book devoted to ‘The future metropolis’ and two of its major problems—environment and people. His views of constraints inherited from the past were brought to the fore: ‘We can hardly look forward to a brave new world. Rather it is too often having to put up with what we have’ (p. 129). The future will combine two major trends—sprawl and increased concentration—and probably no more than an ‘exaggeration of aspects of the present’ (p. 161). Metropolises will dominate, and despite many contemporary problems we must never forget that ‘Civilization has found its apogee in metropolis’ (p. 212): further advances require that we foster metropolitan milieux.

Between the publication of these two books Emrys—with Eleanor van Zandt, an American writer and editor specialising in arts and crafts—

¹¹⁹ E. Jones, *Towns and Cities* (London, 1966). This was translated into Swedish (Lund, 1968), French (Paris, 1973), and Italian (Faenza, 1975), with a US edition (Westwood, CT), published in 1981.

¹²⁰ E. Jones, *Metropolis: the World’s Great Cities* (Oxford, 1990). This was translated into Spanish (*Metrópolis: Las Grandes Ciudades del Mundo* (Madrid, 1992)), Italian (*Metropoli, le Più Grandi Città del Mondo* (Roma, 1993)), and Catalan (*Metrópolis: Las Grandes Ciudades del Mundo* (Barcelona, 1997)).

brought out *The City: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, a superbly illustrated volume dealing with the same themes as *Towns and Cities* and *Metropolis*, but aimed at the ‘coffee table market’.¹²¹ The pictures and diagrams portray past and present cities, from all parts of the globe, while those showing contemporary architecture and planned environments point the reader towards the future. Too few geographers have done this, bringing their knowledge, presentational skills and views of the future to wide audiences. Emrys did so with these three books.

Emrys was also involved in a number of other publishing ventures aimed at bringing geography to a wider audience. Early in his career he contributed articles on various North American cities for *Chambers Encyclopaedia*, for example, and in the 1970s he was involved in several major projects. Most notable, he was consulting editor for a major Elsevier project which resulted in *The Atlas of World Geography* and *The Encyclopaedia of World Geography and its Peoples*, which were published under a number of separate imprints in different countries.¹²² There were also essays in other collections setting out his views on both social geography and urbanisation for general readerships.¹²³

London’s Welsh

The last of Emrys’ major projects—which occupied much of his retirement—was his study of the Welsh in London. In some respects this was research into the context for almost sixty years of his own life, for London’s Welsh institutions were among the cores of his activities there.

¹²¹ E. Jones and E. van Zandt, *The City: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (London, 1974). A US edition was published as *The City* (New York, 1974).

¹²² For example E. Jones, *The Atlas of World Geography* and *The New Encyclopaedia of World Geography* (London, 1977 and 1978)—the latter, which was mainly a country-by-country gazetteer, had a brief introductory section on ‘Aspects of geography’ presented as an abridged version of *The World and its Peoples* ‘to which 200 specialist authors contributed under the chief editorship of Professor Emrys Jones’. This was published in nineteen volumes as the *Marshall Cavendish Illustrated Encyclopaedia of the World and its Peoples*; much of it comprised a traditional gazetteer of countries, places and commodities, but it also included substantial essays on contemporary academic geographical topics (written by academics)—such as central place theory, location, and geopolitics—indicating an intended audience of school students as well as general readers.

¹²³ Examples include E. Jones, ‘Tomorrow’s city’, *Biology and Human Affairs*, 44 (1979), 86–93; E. Jones, ‘The growth of cities’, in J. Murray (ed.), *A Cultural Atlas of Africa* (London, 1979), pp. 73–7; and ‘Europe: land, peoples and languages’, in A. Bullock (ed.), *Faces of Europe* (London, 1980), pp. 17–25.

Emrys joined the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion in 1947, almost as soon as he arrived in the city, and remained an extremely active member until his death. He was elected to its Council in 1978, remaining a member until 2002, during which time he served as Chairman (1983–9) and President (1989–2002), receiving the Society’s Medal—from the Prince of Wales—in 2001. He published several papers in its *Transactions*, including the pioneering paper on Utica rejected by the IBG’s *Transactions* in 1951, and contributed to the history produced to mark its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary.¹²⁴

The Society was founded to encourage and promote the practice and development of literature, science and art of special interest to Wales and the Welsh people, and has been deeply involved in many national institutions—not least the University of Wales and the National Museum.¹²⁵ Although London-based it has a wide membership, and its monthly meetings in London are complemented by events elsewhere (in order to maintain contact with other Cambrian organisations), not least at the National Eisteddfod—at which, in 2005, Emrys was received into the Gorsedd of Bards (Gorsedd Beirdd Ynys Prydain), a distinction also achieved by his old friend Harold Carter. And its formal meetings are followed by receptions characterised by Welsh conviviality, which Emrys much enjoyed.¹²⁶ As its historians note, by the end of the eighteenth century:

The Cymmrodorion Society’s achievement had been that it had created a centre of corporate life for the London Welsh; indeed it was the only manifestation of Welsh identity in the capital. Its aims and standards were such that the gentry, in Wales and in London, thought it necessary to be associated with it and many of lesser status were proud to be a part of it. (p. 4)

Two centuries later, Emrys most certainly was.

The Cymmrodorion Society was not his only Welsh ‘home’ during the decades of exile, however. Emrys and Iona took up residence in Hemel Hempstead in 1960 (where he served as a Governor of both the local

¹²⁴ E. Jones and D. W. Powell, *The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion: a Concise History 1751–2001* (Aberystwyth, 2001).

¹²⁵ I am indebted to John Elliott, Chairman of the Cymmrodorion Society and Emrys’ obituarist (*The Guardian*, 15 Sept. 2006), for much valuable information about the Society and Emrys’ roles within it.

¹²⁶ Emrys drank little, and certainly neither beer nor spirits, reflecting not only his background (his mother was a teetotaler who had taken the pledge as a girl) but also the kidney problems that were the cause of his ill-health in the 1940s and 1950s—but this in no way reduced his enjoyment of those occasions.

Grammar School and Dacorum College of Further Education; he was also on the executive of Hemel Hempstead's Arts Trust) and he joined the Watford Welsh Society. In 1981, they moved to the first of their two homes at Berkhamsted, and he transferred to the Welsh Society there, being a very active member, committee member for more than two decades, and enthusiastic participant in a wide range of activities: he led both local field trips in the London region (focusing on its changing architecture) and excursions to Wales, for example; he devised puzzles for the society's annual Christmas parties; and he participated in 'fun' Eisteddfodau.¹²⁷ Welsh remained at the core of his religion too, with monthly attendance at Welsh-language services at Watford's Clarendon Road Presbyterian Church until the 1970s. He then became a regular worshipper at a High Anglican church in Hemel Hempstead (where his funeral service was held); his daughter, Rhianon, who died in 1980, is recorded in its Book of Remembrance and he continued to worship there after the move to Berkhamsted because he felt closer to her in that setting. He died in the Hospice of St Francis in Berkhamsted on 30 August 2006.

Emrys was undoubtedly most at home with a relatively small number of friends, many of whom shared his Welsh connections and deep cultural roots; they all recall a warm, entertaining, learned friend with a wealth of Welsh stories and jokes—and a wonderful speaking voice. The memories he left are many and varied: David Hooson recalls being with him deciphering Welsh miners' gravestones at a defunct pit near San Francisco. Emrys was also a bibliophile, with a massive collection of treasured books—including many Anthony Trollope, Charles Dickens and Laurence Sterne first editions¹²⁸—and Bill Mead records him stroking a book lovingly on the last occasion he visited him. Emrys was an avid attendee at antiquarian book fairs and his collections included many facsimiles: he was apparently devastated at not getting one of the limited edition of copies of the first Welsh Bible of 1585 when it was produced by the University of Wales Press—and overjoyed when he eventually obtained one.¹²⁹

Given the depth of his commitment to the London Welsh, it is perhaps not surprising that Emrys chose to study them in detail in a long-term

¹²⁷ I am very grateful to Glynden Trollope for the information on Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted.

¹²⁸ Intriguingly, his cousin Sir Alwyn Williams also collected Trollope first editions—and is said to have boasted that he 'pursued every Trollope in the Kingdom'—Briggs and Edwards, 'Sir Alwyn Williams', p. 451. There is no evidence that Emrys undertook a similar quest!

¹²⁹ Emrys' grandson is also a bibliophile.

project whose first output appeared in 1981.¹³⁰ This study of London's Welsh in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was based on detailed mapping of home addresses and institutions from a range of sources—including membership of the Cymmrodorion Society. It was set in the context of other studies of migrant assimilation—such as his own in Utica—but he discovered that the Welsh in London were atypical of other migrant groups, characterised instead by comparative affluence and an apparent 'freedom to live where they wished' (p. 464): unlike the Germans, French and Dutch, they were not clustered into either 'a Welsh quarter or . . . a locality which was peculiarly Welsh'. Their residential distribution suggests that they were 'well assimilated and with few of the economic and social disabilities which usually characterise migrant ethnic groups . . . [but] This does not mean that they had lost their identity' (p. 469), as exemplified by their stereotyping in various broadsheets. There was a focus to their lives, however, in Clerkenwell, home of both the London Welsh Association and, on the west side of Gray's Inn Road, the Welsh Charity School.

A second paper on the nineteenth century appeared in 1985¹³¹—in a collection dedicated to his Aberystwyth teacher, Emrys Bowen—in which he set out his overall goal

. . . to study the Welsh in London as an ethnic group, in the same way as several of my students have studied the distribution and acculturation of New Commonwealth immigrants: and in the same way as I studied a Welsh minority in the United States. (p. 149)

Much of the essay comprises brief vignettes of the situations of individual Welsh in London then, interspersed with cartographic analyses, based on census material and membership of various Welsh churches. As for the earlier centuries, he concludes that there is no evidence of substantial residential segregation but that the London Welsh 'preserved a corporate identity of a kind and made a specific contribution to London life, as well as maintaining a number of cultural foci which are only now beginning to disappear' (p. 167).¹³²

¹³⁰ E. Jones, 'The Welsh in London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Welsh History Review*, 10 (1981), 461–79.

¹³¹ E. Jones, 'The Welsh in London in the nineteenth century', *Cambria*, 12 (1985), 149–69.

¹³² J. Segrott, 'Language, geography and identity: the case of the Welsh in London', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 2 (2001), 282–96, records that there is now one Welsh-medium school in London.

And there it seemed the project had ended, until the appearance in 2002 of a final magnum opus—*The Welsh in London 1500–2000*.¹³³ This is an edited volume, with Emrys contributing nearly 60 per cent of the total, covering the period from the Tudors to the twentieth century. Although illustrated by distribution maps, the overall goal is ‘to explore what happened to those people who made a new home in London and yet continued to care about their own institutions and who were keen to preserve their own culture’, making it a book ‘about ordinary people; the stress is on choirs, not on soloists’ (p. x)—a marked change from all of his previous work, which concentrated almost entirely on mapped analyses of aggregate data, with the social groups largely defined by others (such as census authorities).¹³⁴ Alongside material drawn from the earlier papers, therefore, it reports the results of a great deal of archival research (using such sources as seventeenth-century rent rolls and deploying surnames as vital evidence), exploring the lives of a largely invisible group, who nevertheless had a ‘peculiar language and a distinctive cultural inheritance’ and determined for themselves the extent they wished to operate within a self-identified group by retaining their differences: ‘They were strangers, but not total strangers; foreigners, but not different enough to warrant being treated very differently from the hosts’ (p. 1).

Emrys estimates that Welsh people comprised some 7.5 per cent of London’s population in the seventeenth century. Many were fully assimilated into London’s economy (particularly the law and publishing in the seventeenth century), society and neighbourhoods (as exemplified in the chapter on the eighteenth century—‘The age of societies’), and a majority probably ‘could not have cared whether they counted as Welsh or not . . . nine out of ten would have been driven to migrate out of sheer economic necessity; they settled quickly and merged with the community at large, and soon their origins were no more than a nostalgic memory’ (p. 55). But some, mainly members of a prosperous professional and commercial elite, wished to sustain a separate cultural identity and were involved in institutions which constituted ‘a golden period in London Welsh history’. Some of those institutions were committed to religion and Christian teaching—in Wales itself as well as London—and much of their work was charitable, as with the Welsh Trust, the Society for the

¹³³ E. Jones (ed.), *The Welsh in London 1500–2000* (Cardiff, 2002).

¹³⁴ He told a reporter from the *Western Daily Mail* in 1998 that ‘I’m not terribly interested in the great Welshmen in London like Aneurin Bevin [*sic*] but in the ordinary people who came in numbers and in what they did in London.’ I am grateful to Michael Wise for a cutting of this report—which is undated.

Propagation of Christian Knowledge, the Society of Antient Britons and, of course, the Cymmrodorion Society. Their roles are discussed through outlines of not only the activities of members themselves—whereas the membership fee for the Cymmrodorion meant that only ‘the literati, the gentry and those who wanted a convivial life’ could join, nevertheless ‘charity remained a central aim’ (p. 72)—but also the situations of recipients of their ‘good works’. Beyond the charitable work, however, they were somewhat nostalgic and out of touch with events in Wales itself—‘What they immersed themselves in was the Wales of the past . . . they overcompensated for having left Wales with a romantic love of their native land and an overwhelming desire to protect its culture. The Wales they loved was a romantic dream’ (p. 80)—most of them having migrated before the Methodist revival, for example.

This slowly changed during the nineteenth century, as new migrants (many associated with either the growing milk trade—a poor migrant group occupying a niche within the economy that the host population was reluctant to fill—or retail drapery, or gardening) brought with them the traditions of the chapel, whose sober congregations displaced the rather more convivial societies: the main task of the reconstituted Cymmrodorion Society in 1820 was to organise *Eisteddfodau* in Wales—‘What more natural than to have a co-ordinating committee in London to oversee the entire scheme?’ (p. 94)! But London-based pressure groups did play important roles, in establishing the University College at Aberystwyth, for example, as well as the National Library of Wales, so that by the century’s end Emrys could argue that:

. . . they had secured a modest but distinctive role in the shopping streets of the metropolis, built impressive chapels which were now the centres of intense social activity, and made a considerable contribution to social changes in Wales which would transform the educational and cultural future of the homeland. (p. 127)

Within London, they were widely distributed with no evidence of major concentrations—although there was a preference for the west rather than the east (most arrived at Paddington). But there were many local clusters:

Some were more attracted to those areas where they surmised that there were Welsh communities already in being, and their knowledge of London was confined largely to hearsay and very limited information. The presence of a Welsh chapel was enough to identify a locality—for example, Ealing; the presence of friends or relatives confirmed it; the discovery of a Welsh dairy nearby set the seal; and thus was the vast, anonymous city cut down to size and made manageable. Loosely knit though it was, here was a ‘community’ to which the

newcomer could become attached—if he or she so wished—tenuously or enthusiastically. (pp. 132–3)

And what the enthusiasts did is chronicled from a wide range of sources. Late in the twentieth century there was a substantial decline in chapel membership and Welsh-medium education, however. The *Cymmrodorion* continues, but today:

London Welsh life no longer has the clarity and directness of the mid-twentieth century simply because so few institutions have met the challenge of changing conditions, particularly the increasing dispersion of the community and the markedly less traditional Welsh ethos of the migrants. In addition, technological changes enable communication and social intercourse to be less dependent on formal societies congregating at fixed points. Identifying the Honourable Society of *Cymmrodorion* with a specific place . . . (and this being, significantly, the Baptist chapel in London) may well give way to *Cymmrodorion@tinyworld.co.uk* . . . (p. 160)

Emrys' contributions to *The Welsh in London* are a superb conclusion to his career,¹³⁵ a labour of love undertaken over several decades, a major piece of mature scholarship brought to completion by embrace of the modern world—it was produced on a laptop and was the basis for a Welsh-language TV programme. And they have their own poignancy, for they chart the decline of a way of life which sustained Emrys throughout his own long residency there, with the waning of communities that had offered 'the reassurance of being with their own kind' and an increasing proportion deciding that they can 'cut free at last from the encumbrances of their heritage' (p. 203). Emrys wonders whether we dare look into the future, but does so optimistically: 'however few of the Welsh are left in London, it is likely that they will still seek some kind of association, be it formally or on the internet, whether to sing hymns or to play rugby, and thus continue the history of the Welsh in London' (p. 203). But will there still be distinguished scholars to chart that history and its geography, to illustrate the roles of culture in the making and remaking of places as well as work to maintain some aspects of the heritage—in his last years, Emrys told Michael Wise that he was a member of a group hoping to sell Welsh food in London through what 'was probably the last . . . Welsh dairy in Clerkenwell'?

¹³⁵ Although he apparently planned more, telling Michael Wise in a letter (23 May 2003) that he was trying to bring the work into the twenty-first century while making a television programme on the project. And he continued to take the Berkhamsted Society members on field trips to see London's changing architecture, saying 'There's still a magic about London.'

The Welsh in London appeared just before Emrys was belatedly and so deservedly elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2003. He had received the Royal Geographical Society's Victoria Medal in 1977—the citation referring to his 'contributions to social and urban geography and his work on Belfast and London'¹³⁶—and a year later was awarded an Honorary D.Sc. by Queen's University. The Open University—for which he did much work supporting course development by the geographers there¹³⁷—similarly awarded him an Honorary D.Univ. in 1990. And then in 2001 he was awarded the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion's Medal.

* * *

Emrys never deviated from the conception of geography that he learned at Aberystwyth from Daryll Forde, Emrys Bowen and Alwyn Rees, although he modified it as he encountered new challenges. The subject matter of human geography—that which we can map—is a social creation, reflecting the values and aspirations of its creators and those who preceded them. It is set within a constraining physical environment (whose parameters change with varying cultural perceptions and technological capabilities), and it becomes a constraint itself, whose bounds on behaviour should be released by sensitive planning, especially in urban areas. The key is culture, the shared values of social groups.

And where better to illustrate this than in his home country, which Emrys left physically in 1947 but returned to frequently and never left either spiritually or linguistically.¹³⁸ He was a member of the College Council of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth between 1972 and 1986: he visited each spring, staying with Harold Carter, who graduated a few years after Emrys and followed him as a pioneer urban geographer. For many years Emrys led a field trip into the Aberystwyth hinterland for alumni, illuminating the geography of the landscape for a lay audience (a full coach) from his great knowledge not only of the landscape but also its history, language, literature and music. He was made a Fellow of the

¹³⁶ In *The Geographical Journal*, 143 (1977), 510.

¹³⁷ In his presentation speech when the Open University awarded Emrys an honorary degree, Dr Rees Pryce referred to his involvement in five courses, including two on 'the social and cultural identities of present-day Wales' (see above, n. 111).

¹³⁸ The visits were not always positive experiences, however. The *Western Daily Mail* interview reports him as saying 'he could have wept when he last visited Aberdare'.

College in 1995; he was presented at the ceremony by Harold Carter, who remarked on Emrys' 'complete commitment to Wales, its language and its culture'.¹³⁹ In 1993 he gave the Llandaff Lecture to the Old Students' Association, later published by his Welsh home in London, The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, under the title 'Where is Wales?'.¹⁴⁰ His stimulus was a book on *When was Wales?*, in which he found geography was disappointingly 'no more than the stage on which the drama of history unfolds' (p. 123).¹⁴¹ For Emrys, geography was as relevant as history to understanding Wales, because geographical values and attitudes have been crucial in creating its distinct identity—'we live in the world that we perceive, and as if geographers never existed', and 'peoples' behaviour is governed by the way they see the world, not the way geographers see it' (pp. 124–5).

Since its colonisation by England, Wales has been portrayed as occupying the edge of the Anglo-Celtic world, marginalised economically, socially and politically. But it is still a place, invested with meanings—and for Emrys going there meant 'coming home'. The University College at Bangor may be remote to the English, but it is 'not remote from the place that gave birth to it, the culture it represents, or the people it is meant to serve. Yet that is the attitude we are up against if we accept a relativist locational view and are prepared to submit to the market forces of an external power-base. The periphery is expendable' (pp. 132–3). In concluding, Emrys restated his core geographical belief:

These comments have moved in geographical terms from description through explanation to understanding; from the absolute and objective to the relative and subjective and finally to the irrational and experiential. The three stages give three answers to the question in the title. First Wales is where the atlas tells us it is. Secondly it is a relatively poor neighbour of a richer neighbour, which is being increasingly marginalised. Thirdly it is that place which is the cradle of a unique culture. It is only by reasserting the values of our own culture—within our own place—that we achieve not just self-respect, but a sense of well-being. (p. 134)

To some, Wales may be Ultima Thule—the end of the world—but it is also the centre of their world. 'Identity is established by locality' within which, for the Welsh at least:

¹³⁹ I am grateful to Robert Dodgshon for obtaining a copy of the citation.

¹⁴⁰ E. Jones, 'Where is Wales?'. *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, NS 1 (1995), 123–34.

¹⁴¹ G. A. Williams, *When was Wales? A History of the Welsh* (London, 1979).

... the main cultural element is undoubtedly language ... most of the people feel they belong simply because they have been born to a distinctive social environment, but they also couple this with the tangible signs of their surroundings. It is this feeling of belonging which fixes a place, which gives it a permanence, an absolute quality which removes it from comparisons or the problems of distance-decay. There is no distance decay in the feeling of Welshness; and it is part of the land.¹⁴²

Here, in the final paragraph of one of his last publications, Emrys summarises not only his approach to geography but also his whole life.

RON JOHNSTON

Fellow of the Academy

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¹⁴² E. Jones, 'Ultima thule', in L. Leontidou (ed.), *Launching Greek Geography on the Eastern EU Border* (Lesvos, 2000) pp. 98–9. In an essay published in Welsh—E. Jones, 'Yr iaith Gymraeg yn Lloegr, c.1800–1914', in G. Jenkins (ed.), *Iaith Carreg Fy Aelwyd: iaith a Chymuned yn y Bedwaredd Ganrif am Bytheg* (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 225–53—Emrys also claimed that 'Although it is tempting to connect a language to a specific country, it rarely works in practice. Nothing confuses national boundaries more than language, it being such a faithful reflection of the continuous movement of people' (p. 225: the translation is from J. Segrott, 'Language, geography and identity' p. 285.)