

Bridging “The Great Divide”: The Evolution and Impact of Cornish Translocalism in Britain and the USA

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THE ROLE OF TRANSNATIONALISM and diaspora in historical migration studies tends to be under-theorized and problematic. The term “transnational” began to be used by sociologists and anthropologists in the mid-1990s, having been coined by Linda Basch *et al.* in 1992. It is taken to refer to processes by which immigrants “forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement,” making the sending and receiving communities a single area of action.¹ Whether we refer to transnational social spaces, transnationalism, or transnational social formations, we are talking about sustained ties of persons, networks, and organizations bound across “international” borders in the name of ethnic, racial, religious, linguistic, locality, occupation or nation-state of origin, class, gender, or any other factor.² These phenomena are characterized “by a high density of interstitial ties on informal or formal levels,” linking “a community in its present place of residence and its place of origin, however distant, and between the various communities of a diaspora.”³ However, it has become apparent that not all modern migrants engage in such high-level transnational connections. Some engage with their communities of origin sporadically or not at all. Indeed, Morawska has noted that assimilation and transnationalism often co-exist in the lives of immigrants and their children.⁴

The concept of diaspora is as eclectic and problematic as transnationalism, for it too has a variety of meanings. It does not just describe the dispersal of a people resulting from expulsion or involuntary exile, but also encompasses those who have moved from their homeland as labor migrants, for trade or imperial reasons, or as a part of a cultural diaspora.⁵ It broadly refers to dispersed communities in a period of migration. However, Stephen Vertovec offers a different and intriguing new interpretation of diaspora that he contends “has arisen as part of the postmodern project of resisting the nation-state, which is perceived as hegemonic, discriminatory, and culturally homogenizing.” According to him, an alternative agenda has been devised for the notion of diaspora—one that advocates the recognition

of hybridity, multiple identities, and affiliations with people, causes, and traditions outside the nation state of residence.⁶ Peggy Levitt takes this one step further by arguing that implicit in this interpretation is the question of whether life across borders involves resistance to the nation-state and allows previously marginalized groups to challenge the social hierarchy.⁷ Moreover, she sees transnational communities as the building blocks of diasporas that may or may not take place.⁸ Transnationalism highlights that significant networks exist and are maintained across borders. And by virtue of their intensity and importance, Glick-Schiller maintains that these actually challenge the very nature of nation-states.⁹

Transnationalism has taken on increased importance in recent years as migration is rapidly changing communities at both points of origin and destination.¹⁰ The cultural repercussions of this are now being felt on a global scale: the influence of what were once migrant populations on the socio-cultural and economic life of major metropolitan centers and the linkages to “homelands” has reinvigorated debates about diasporas and placed transnationalism in the limelight. The implications of transnationalism therefore make it a key political issue. And yet, as Nancy Foner notes in her study of immigration to New York City, transnationalism is nothing new.¹¹ Indeed, as if to confirm Foner’s observation, Randolph Bourne observed in his essay *Trans-National America* (1916), that America was becoming not a nationality, but a trans-nationality.¹² And more recently Ewa Morawska and Willifred Spohn have reminded us that migration also changed and reproduced communities in the nineteenth century.¹³

However, as highlighted by Elliott Barkan, there has to be recognition that the concept of transnationalism encompasses a whole range of behaviors, attitudes, and values that cannot be comfortably fit within most delineations of transnationalism. He suggests the need for an alternative model, that of translocalism. Arguing that immigrant experiences are—and have been—much more varied than any one model would represent, he defines translocalism as situations where immigrants do not maintain multiple, intense, routinized bonds and networks with sending communities. Instead their ties with their communities of origin are likely to be moderate and periodic, somewhat casual and uneven and not routine.¹⁴

This article explores a case study of a sub-nation-state migration. In doing this, the taken for granted and banal “national” flagging of transnationalism might be peeled away, revealing a more fluid, layered and contested picture. Using Barkan’s model of translocalism, this article will argue that at the height of migration during the nineteenth century there were some examples of transnationalism among the Cornish, but as mi-

gration to the United States diminished during the twentieth century, translocalism became more the norm. It then argues that translocalism has taken on increased significance in the last quarter of a century with the Cornish in Britain making an effort towards ethnic revival for political reasons and encouraging their American cousins to become involved in this process. This has resulted in drawing attention to the presence of a global diaspora of well over six million people, most of whom are the descendants of the half a million people who left Cornwall during the “great migration” (ca. 1825–1920).¹⁵ The Cornish case permits an investigation of the changes in the formation and dynamism of translocal relations and of the meaning and relevance of a diaspora to a small national group.

CORNISH MIGRATION TO AND TRANSLOCALISM IN THE USA

A former independent Celtic kingdom, Cornwall is a small peninsula at the far southwest of Britain that has never been legally incorporated into Shire England. It is inhabited by the indigenous Cornish and more recent English immigrants. At no time during the first half of the nineteenth century could it boast a population greater than 375,000, yet Cornwall’s size, both in terms of territory and population, is disproportionate to the impact the Cornish have made on the global mining economy.

By the late eighteenth century Cornwall had emerged as a center of technological innovation in deep-lode mining and steam engineering and was one of Britain’s earliest industrial regions with a distinct and specialized extra-regional commodity export: copper ore. This, together with tin, provided the main output of Cornwall’s mining industry. By the mid-nineteenth century Cornwall had established a clear comparative advantage in metal mining in a similar way that Lancashire had in cotton textile manufacture. As an expansive, confident, thrusting industrial region, it was beginning to export both its technology and its skilled labor force.¹⁶

This was initially to South and Central America, in response to a rapidly developing global mining market.¹⁷ Cornish miners, confident in the belief that they were pre-eminent in the mining world, made shrewd, rational decisions when considering migration—an advancement strategy designed to maximize gain and minimize risk.¹⁸ The 1860s heralded the long, drawn-out process of de-industrialization as Cornish copper, then tin sank into a terminal decline created by the restructuring of the global mineral economy prompting increased migration. Thousands of Cornish miners left after the 1860s, making use of pre-existing migration networks.

Cornwall therefore witnessed one of the highest levels of migration from England and Wales during the nineteenth century, making it an emigration region comparable with any in Europe.¹⁹ The United States was throughout the nineteenth century the most popular migration destination for Cornish migrants. Dynamic migrant networks developed, characterized by outward migration, onward migration, return and repeat migration. Cornish migration to the United States of America was significant up until the late nineteenth century, a time when vibrant communities dubbed “Little Cornwalls” emerged, but then fell away gradually from the early twentieth century. The Cornish were an important yet overlooked immigrant group that helped to settle the American West in particular.

Much of this migration was connected to mining that resulted in discrete settlement patterns. By the 1830s Cornish mining immigration was well established in the lead-mining region of Wisconsin, where by 1850 there were already as many as 4,500 Cornish, comprising half of the populations of Dodgeville, Mineral Point, and Hazel Green, three quarters that of Linden, and a quarter of the population of Shullsburg.²⁰ Those mining migrants who arrived during the California gold rush were soon joined by many thousands more after the commencement of deep-lode mining in the Sierra Nevada, Rocky Mountains, and other western mining fields.²¹ Around five thousand Cornish migrated to Gilpin County, Colorado, between 1870 and 1914; at Central City they made up over 50 percent of the population and 70 percent of the mining workforce.²²

By the late nineteenth century, Cornish miners and their families were to be found in virtually every state where there was mining or quarrying activity.²³ In 1898 there were estimated to have been ten thousand pureblood Cornish in the lead-mining region of Wisconsin; the 1890 census for Linden suggests that 90–95 percent of residents who had Cornish ancestry.²⁴ By the turn of the twentieth century the Cornish accounted for 55 percent of the population of Wolverine, Michigan, almost 18 percent of that of Calumet, Michigan, and 98 percent of the population of New Almaden, California.²⁵ Over 60 percent of the population of Grass Valley California was Cornish in 1894, and by 1911 three-quarters of its population were noted to have been Cornish by descent. “It . . . almost seemed that [I] had stepped into a unknown country,” wrote Edmund Kinyon in 1911, amazed at the odd ways of the Cornish of Grass Valley and the unintelligible dialect that they spoke.²⁶

Although living in communities thousands of miles from Cornwall, many immigrants remained closely connected and involved in the affairs of their sending communities. This was made possible through newspapers

and because of the repeated comings and goings of migrants, travel and communication made easier by cheaper, speedier transatlantic passages, the development of the telegraph, and a more efficient postal service. One of the obvious ways in which the sending and receiving communities were linked was through financial remittances. Rowse noted that in 1869 Camborne men in California and Nevada were remitting around £15,000–£18,000 to their families each year, and in 1894 the *West Briton* reported that the Idaho Mine in Grass Valley California had paid about \$4,500,000 in dividends, a goodly portion of which had gone home to Cornwall.²⁷ The *Cornish Post and Mining News* estimated that in 1905 wages paid in Montana amounted to over two-and-a-half million dollars, a significant proportion of which was remitted to Cornwall.²⁸

Homeland ties were also manifested in collective actions. In 1909 Hallesveor Chapel in the Cornish town of St. Ives received fifteen pounds from Cornish expatriates in Mohawk, Michigan, who had raised the money by choir singing at concerts there and at neighboring Calumet, the funds collected being split between the Methodist Episcopal Chapel in Mohawk and the chapel in St. Ives.²⁹ In 1913 Camborne Rugby Club received over seven pounds from Camborne “old boys” resident in Butte, Montana, a much-needed boost for club funds.³⁰ Here we have some examples of transnational behavior through regular monetary contributions of the kind manifested in many modern immigrant communities. But to suggest that this was the norm would be inaccurate. There were many immigrants who chose not to maintain close financial connections with their families and sending communities, remitting only sporadically or not at all.

Did the Cornish exhibit other manifestations of transnational behavior? It was not merely financial remittances that traversed migration networks but equally important social remittances.³¹ On the American side, ideas about politics and religion influenced life in Cornwall and America. The *West Briton* of 1894 commented on the fact that Grass Valley was unlike many other western mining camps because of the number of Cornish that predominated. For example, because they were staunch Methodists, shops and mines closed on Sundays and a large number were in attendance at the Methodist chapel.³² Visiting Methodist preachers were common on both sides of the Atlantic, and Cornishmen were encouraged to become members of friendly societies, transnational social networks that were conduits of information and mobility facilitating job opportunities. The Cornish also brought their enmity of the Irish with them to the United States, a resentment that was intricately bound up with the domination of the expanding mining labor market and compounded by sectarianism and political

differences. The Cornish were mainly Republicans, and the Irish Democrats. Although both were Celtic, the similarity ended there, for the antagonism and mutual dislike each bore the other, as was manifested at Butte, Montana,³³ was the “most explosive and divisive internal threat to the mining labor movement in the West.”³⁴

On the Cornish homeland side, the 1885 election saw radical candidate C.A.V. Conybeare successfully contest a seat in the new constituency centered on Camborne-Redruth and known as the Mining Division. Conybeare’s message with its anti-landlord stance of democracy against oligarchy struck a chord with miners newly enfranchised after the Franchise Act of 1884. Moreover, many of these recently had returned to the Camborne-Redruth area from the mines in Nevada, with a more defined set of ideas about what constituted fair labor relations. There, profitable mining had been carried on without miners having to pay for tools or explosives, or wait for wages.³⁵ In fact, Cornwall had traditionally been a Liberal stronghold, but the vote of disgruntled return migrants began to confront and challenge the older Liberal establishment.

In terms of the further flow of ideas and information between America and Cornwall, items of news and letters from mining camps in America and Cornwall were increasingly swapped in the late nineteenth century, as well as notices of births, marriages, and deaths.³⁶ The receipt of regular news in both sending and receiving communities lessened the tyranny of time and space to such a degree that even those who never had migrated from their native community could participate in a transnational way of life. By the turn of the twentieth century many Cornish people were so familiar with the United States that it was considered almost the parish next door, with American accents discernible in Cornwall’s mining communities. Other tastes and values also revealed their contact with an American way of life. In 1891, a newspaper, the *Redruth Independent*, was described as “fairly American in character.”³⁷

The formation of Cornish societies, occurring simultaneously in North America, Australia, England, Wales, and South Africa, could be seen as evidence of increased enmeshment with sending communities. In the United States there were Cornish societies in many of the major cities, including Boston, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit, and New York, and in such states as California, as well as Anglo-American clubs in places like Centerville, Montana. But, were these transnational organizations? At a superficial level, Cornish societies functioned as social clubs where acquaintances were renewed and new ones formed at dinners, picnics, and other functions, and they also acted as benevolent institutions to facilitate dis-

cussions on political and economic issues of the day. By becoming a member of a Cornish association, those of Cornish birth or descent were reaffirming and strengthening their links with Cornwall and also to one another as an immigrant group, exemplified by the Southern California Cornish Association on the occasion of their annual social gathering in 1934. The Reverend Burden, offering an invocation, declared: "We have joined hands with Cornish folk across the main! Hail One and All, Old Cornwall."³⁸ However, the size of the memberships, sometimes numbering only a few hundred, does not point to their being widely supported by the thousands of Cornish across America, and they in no way compare with modern transnational organizations of the type found among Haitians, Dominicans, and Mexicans, for example. Contact with Cornwall by Cornish Associations organizations was at best sporadic, and, in some cases, completely absent. That pointed once more to translocal relations, where the emphasis was in reality clearly on the preservation of Cornish ethnicity and identity without the maintenance of strong transnational bonds.

DIMINISHING MIGRATION AND DECLINING TRANSLOCALISM

Indeed, the following example from Mineral Point, Wisconsin, one of the earliest Cornish settlements, illustrates that by the early twentieth century many Cornish immigrants and their offspring were engaging less and less with their homeland communities, and the links that did exist were sporadic, periodic, and superficial:

[W]hile many of the Cornish immigrants in their lifetime keep up a correspondence with Cornwall, the second generation has almost entirely dropped it, although an occasional Cornish newspaper is received in the region. The Cornish descendants are scattering, and have almost lost their identity as a race. They do not hesitate to marry with other nationalities. . . .³⁹

This area of Wisconsin witnessed some of the earliest migration flows outside Cornwall; by the turn of the century the majority of the Cornish residents in the region had been born there and did not appear to have the same degree of psychological attachment to Cornwall that their parents and grandparents had had. Some family networks began to break down as immigrants and their children reared their own families and played out their lives in host communities far removed from Cornwall. Letters were written

less frequently or not at all to relatives in Cornwall whom they had never met or had not seen for many years. Their connections to Cornwall in no way could be described as transnational but more accurately fit Barkan's model of translocalism.

Although kinship, religious, and parochial or village affiliation with Cornwall was still important, activities were increasingly focused on the United States, with investments made in the infrastructure required to support life in the receiving communities. As noted by Barkan, "preserving homeland ties involve[s] the struggle to determine how far to go in adapting to the new host society, balancing cultural maintenance with cultural retreat as well as prior social connections with new social bonds."⁴⁰ These decisions are unlikely to be accidental, as exemplified by the case of William T. George, who arrived in California in 1885: "I soon dropped my [Cornish] accent when I got to school here [Grass Valley]," he stated, "because everyone made fun of me."⁴¹ Ashamed of their accents, some Cornish immigrants made a concerted attempt to become what Thurner has described as "un-hyphenated Americans," the more so in order to fit into a seemingly monocultural American society that was being assiduously championed, particularly after the First World War.⁴²

But perhaps of greater significance was the decline of mining itself, the industry that had created close knit cohesive communities. As they had done in Cornwall, mines across the United States closed, particularly in the years after 1930. Communities began to fragment, with people moving away in search of alternative employment. Old customs began to die out as the youth jettisoned their parents' values and identities in their quest to achieve the American dream.⁴³ Crucially, the numbers of Cornish immigrants to the United States shrank considerably after the 1920s and the once dense transatlantic migration networks began to disintegrate. Beliefs and behaviors become unfamiliar when they are no longer used regularly, and a lack of exposure to news, ideas, and ways of doing things brought by migrants from Cornwall resulted in a diminishing of the Cornish presence in many overseas communities. One by one, the Cornish associations disbanded until only a handful remained, and those immigrants who stayed in the old mining communities often became retrospective and increasingly nostalgic about their Cornish roots and heritage.

The retrospection associated with the overseas Cornish at this time was an echo of that experienced in Cornwall, where mining was also declining and a way of life that had emerged with industrialization was passing into history. Some saw the need to look back to a period before industrial-

ization and Cornwall's Celtic antecedents were increasingly stressed, well exemplified by the movement to *kyntelleugh an brewyon es gesys na vo kellys travyth* (gather up the fragments before they are lost) by newly formed Old Cornwall Societies beginning in the 1920s. Around the Cornish world, similar reactions occurred as people sought to record, conserve and protect what was left of Cornish heritage: "At Mineral Point the Cornish restoration and the interest in Cornish foods and customs during the 1930s came just in time to preserve an interesting chapter in the history of the lead region."⁴⁴

Vernacular Cornish cottages constructed in the 1840s and 1850s, unique to the lead region of the Upper Midwest, were restored at Mineral Point by Americans Robert Neal and Edgar Hellum in the 1930s and given Cornish names: *Pendarvis*, *Polperro* and *Trelawney*.⁴⁵ At the behest of the National Folklore Society and the Library of Congress, the much-depleted Grass Valley Choir made a tape recording of Cornish carols and hymns in 1950 to record for posterity the musical contribution of Cornish pioneers in America. This was seen as "putting the town on the map," and gave Grass Valley "national and international publicity."⁴⁶ In Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, by the mid-twentieth century the Cornish had become more self-conscious of their vanishing culture. They saw to it that their "national dish"—the pasty—which had been claimed by Finns, Slavs, and Swedes, became a hallmark of "Copper Country" cuisine.

However, in spite of such efforts, it was clear that many Cornish cultural events were increasingly "stage-managed." Such sporadic and periodic episodes of Cornish translocalism may be viewed as a *cri de coeur* for Cornish families to maintain links with the cultural heritage of the former Cornish-American mining communities and, by association, ultimately with Cornwall itself. In 1953 the Grass Valley Methodist Church held a Christmas Festival and Homecoming, and the need for such an event was summed up in an accompanying pamphlet:

Today we inaugurate the first Cornish Festival and Homecoming. We hope this will become an annual event which will take on greater significance with the coming years. Our Cornish families have been a vital part of Grass Valley for over a hundred years. With the passing years it will become inevitable that the rich heritage brought by the families from Cornwall will become lost with the growing American way of life. . . . [I]t becomes increasingly difficult to tell who is a "Cousin Jack" or a "Cousin Jenny" . . .⁴⁷

Fourteen years later, this famous choir disbanded and by the mid-twentieth century those Cornish associations that had managed to survive were mere shadows of their former selves, beset by financial difficulties and comprised of small and aging memberships. In Cornwall, many families lost touch with their cousins overseas, and memories of life in communities beyond Cornwall became retrospective and mired in nostalgia. In the 1960s it seemed that the translocalism that had defined much of nineteenth and early twentieth century life in Cornish mining communities on both sides of the "great divide" was of interest to historians only.

THE REVIVAL OF CORNISH TRANSLOCALISM AND CLAIMS FOR DIASPORA

Rather than creating a homogenous society that blurred or eroded cultural distinctions, local places and cultures in the United States were transformed in the twentieth century, a process that quickened with the arrival of new waves of non-European immigrants in the late 1900s. As predicted by Randolph Bourne in 1916, the idealized, monocultural, static conception of America proved to be impossible:

America is coming to be, not a nationality but a trans-nationality, a weaving back and forth, with the other lands, of many threads of all sizes and colors. Any movement which attempts to thwart this weaving, or to dye the fabric any one color, or disentangle the threads of the strand, is false to this cosmopolitan vision.⁴⁸

Globalization, an explosion of travel, migration, and socio-economic interchange, fuelled by ever more efficient transportation and communication networks, has transformed the form and shape of human communities around the world.⁴⁹ But it has not necessarily led to the cultural annihilation predicted by some observers, where regional, ethnic, or national distinctiveness vanish into a "melting pot." Rather, it has had the opposite effect, as ethnic groups seek to reconcile the local with the global, in the process rediscovering, reconnecting, re-affirming, and celebrating their various cultural heritages.⁵⁰

Just as communities have undergone change in America, forces have been transforming communities in Cornwall, where a multicultural awareness has been gathering momentum since the Celtic Revival of the 1920s. This socio-cultural watershed, initially but no longer the preserve of the middle classes, represented an opportunity for Cornwall and the Cornish to

look back beyond the crumbling mine engine houses of a failing industrial period to a perceived golden Celtic era. Affiliation with a Celtic past thus allowed the Cornish to opt out of the monocultural static conception of industrial Britain and to be included instead within a vibrant northwestern European Celtic arc, claiming a common identity with the Bretons and Galicians in northwest Europe and the Welsh, Scots, Manx, and Irish within the British Isles. But not with the Anglo Saxon English. The Cornish language, which had ceased to be spoken in a vernacular way in the eighteenth century, was revived, along with the use of St. Piran's flag (a white cross against a black background) and the Celtic cross. Other symbols of Celtic Cornwall were invented rather than re-invented, including a Cornish Gorsedd (an annual ceremony in the Cornish language, established in 1928, that includes singing, dancing, and the awarding of Bardic titles,⁵¹ and the revived use of the kilt in the Cornish national tartan, with its predominant colors of black and gold. This new Celtic iconography, which would have meant little to most Cornish people in the 1800s, was blended with established and accepted industrial icons and notions of Cornishness that coalesced around the mining industry: brass bands, rugby, football (soccer), male-voice choirs, allegiance to Methodism, and values emphasizing thrift, independence, sobriety, and hard work.

The fact that an increasing number of people are today willing to identify themselves as Cornish is attributable to many factors. It is partially a result of the increasing tolerance of multiculturalism that has followed in the wake of the European retreat from Empire, the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the demise of apartheid, as well as increased immigration to First World nations. It is also a response to the arrival in Cornwall of many thousands of immigrants from England since the 1960s that has exacerbated the gulf in income and house prices, tipping the demographic scales against the indigenous population in many parts of Cornwall. Contact with people of a different nationality often makes others more conscious of their own nationality, as noted by S. Morse among Canadians.⁵² More recently, the Blair government's decision to allow devolved power to Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland has led to an increased unraveling of Britain into its constituent national parts. This new political environment has allowed the Cornish another opportunity to challenge the dominant discourse of "English county." Instead, many want to see Cornwall accepted as a distinct European region. Moves have been made towards securing ethnic minority status for the indigenous Cornish, there have been calls for a Cornish Assembly, and Cornish recently has been recognized as a minority European language.

Yet, how does this new political climate affect those Cornish living outside Cornwall? Significant numbers of people worldwide are of mixed racial or ethnic origins and, as Wolfgang Welsch notes, the concept of homogenous cultures bound to a specific territory no longer can be assumed. He argues that contemporary cultures are fundamentally characterized by their hybridity and that transcultural practices are now the norm.⁵³ Indeed, Ulrich Beck has commented that “the individual is at the same time a member of different communities.”⁵⁴ Identities are not legacies passively received but representations socially produced and, in this sense, matters of social dispute.⁵⁵ As ethnic identity has undergone redefinition in Cornwall, this redefinition has been echoed overseas, providing new opportunities for translocal connections. “What we appear to be witnessing,” notes anthropologist, Amy Hale, “is a kind of cultural feedback resulting from a heightened awareness of ethnicity within the Celtic regions themselves. . . . [L]earning about the often shared experience of emigration has created new opportunities for dialogue around the Cornish world.”⁵⁶ The end of the twentieth century witnessed extended social relations and the existence of cultural, economic, and political networks of connection across the world. They in turn gave rise to an increasing interconnectedness across international boundaries that allowed for a reinterpretation and refreshing of traditional cultures and ways of life.⁵⁷

In particular, the years since the 1970s have witnessed a renaissance of Cornishness overseas, aided by an explosion among ordinary people interested in genealogy and heritage, a process that has been ongoing and accelerated more recently through access to the Internet. This electronic forum, or “virtual community,” can be viewed as an “electronic public sphere” that reflects “a hunger for community” in our modern era.⁵⁸ For, as Daniel Mato reminds us, constructions of identity inform and legitimize the practices of many organizations and individuals that are important producers and disseminators of public representations as well as producers of certain agendas—social and cultural movements, non-governmental organizations, intellectuals and artists.⁵⁹ The Cornish on both sides of the great divide are increasingly engaged in translocal behavior, refreshing, negotiating, and contesting their common heritage.

This is exemplified by the Cornish American Heritage Society (CAHS), set up in 1982 with the aim of preserving the history and culture of Cornish people and strengthening connections between Cornish communities around the world. This important organization, with an initial membership of several hundred, held its first “Gathering of Cornish Cousins” in Detroit, the first of a series of biennial meetings across North America.

Such gatherings have included merchandise stalls, *Crowdy Crawn* (traditional music and dance), Cornish sports, historical lectures and films, and workshops devoted to the Cornish language, cookery, genealogy, and folklore. There have even been, in recent years, Gorsedd ceremonies conducted in the Cornish language in which bards from both sides of the Atlantic participate.

Through its gatherings and its quarterly newsletter, *Tam Kernewek*,⁶⁰ the CAHS has been one of the main agents facilitating ethnic awareness among the Cornish in America. In 1999 there were thirty-two Cornish societies and organizations in North America, many of which have names derived from the Cornish language, including *Penkernewek* (Pennsylvania) and *Keweenaw Kernewek* (Michigan), and most have active websites and journals. The CAHS has *ipso facto* become the organ *par excellence* in the revived public sphere of modern translocal activity. *Tam Kernewek* helps to co-ordinate the activities of the various Cornish organizations throughout North America and encourages Cornish participation at Celtic festivals in the USA. These popular festivals are often organized by the descendants of immigrants “to educate others, celebrate their heritage, and promote and preserve aspects of traditional culture perceived as somehow being under threat.”⁶¹ Cornish participation at such festivals is a more recent feature than that of the Irish, Welsh, or Scots, but in 1998 the Cornish were awarded the first prize for the best tent at the Potomac Celtic Fest, an important milestone along the route of ethnic visibility for the Cornish in America. “Many were interested, even excited, to know that there is an active Cornish presence in the United States,” noted Cornish-American Nancy Heydt, “The educational and public relations value of such festivals cannot be overstated.”⁶²

In the wake of the tragic death at Columbine High School of a young Cornish-American, Steven R. Curnow, the CAHS has established a Memorial Award. Realizing the need to encourage youth to take an interest in their Cornish culture and ancestry, an essay contest is open to high school seniors resident in North America with a first prize of five hundred dollars for a paper written on a prescribed topic pertaining to Cornish heritage.⁶³ It is hoped that in future this will lead to a student exchange program between North America and Cornwall. The year 1999 saw the inception of the Cornish Foundation for North America (CFNA). The creation of this new society marked an important turning point in the ethnic revival of the Cornish and was set up because its founding members “care about Cornwall and our Cornish identity.”⁶⁴ Recognizing that modern Cornwall has socio-economic problems resulting from the demise of mining and

related industries, this non-political organization aims to provide financial assistance for projects in Cornwall related to community regeneration, continuing education opportunities for residents in Cornwall, and the restoration and preservation of Cornwall's historical sites.⁶⁵

Another key milestone in the resurgence of modern Cornish ethnicity was the revival of the famous Grass Valley Cornish Choir in 1990 under the musical directorship of Eleanor Kenitzer. In 1996 the choir toured Cornwall, as reported by the Grass Valley newspaper the *Union*:

This week, the 34 singers of the Cornish Choir are taking the music of their grandfathers back to Cornwall. Time has passed in Cornwall. The Cornish hymns that once filled the air there now compete with the modern-day cacophony. For the emigrants and their children, however, the Old Country remains frozen in time, a snapshot from the day the emigrant family left home. For those in Nevada County who love the Cornish traditions, our Cornwall is the Cornwall of 1870, not 1996.⁶⁶

Yet, the resurrection of this iconic choir was to be much more than the restoration of a vital part of the heritage of Grass Valley, for it was to transcend the retrospective and nostalgic looking back to yesteryear. The Grass Valley Cornish Choir has become a catalyst for modern Cornish translocalism that, Janus-like, can look simultaneously to the past for roots in an increasingly rootless world but also forward, to include among its ranks people from other ethnic and national backgrounds while forging new and vibrant links with Cornwall and other Celtic parts of Europe. The revival of the choir has resulted in cross-cultural and translocal musical exchanges that include new ideas and techniques as well as music, sung by choirs on both sides of the Atlantic and cemented by tours.

But perhaps it is Kenitzer herself, welcomed to the Cornish Gorsedd, who embodies the new spirit of "Cornishness," for although not of Cornish descent, she nonetheless worked tirelessly to protect the vital musical tradition of Grass Valley and to promote stronger cultural links between Cornwall and Nevada County, California, an effort that resulted in one of the most significant events in the history of the Cornish overseas since the nineteenth century. She conceived the idea of twinning that in 1997 resulted in a visit to Grass Valley of Mayor Hocking of Bodmin. The city limits of the California gold rush town now proudly announces, "Sister City Bodmin, Cornwall." Not to be outdone, neighboring Nevada City has since twinned with Penzance, while Mineral Point Wisconsin, which en-

joys a thriving annual Cornish Festival, has paired with Redruth, resulting in exchanges of high-level delegations from both towns.

Cornwall, too, has played an important role in the blossoming of modern Cornish translocalism. The Cornwall Family History Society (CFHS), set up in the 1970s, has vigorously promoted the study of Cornish genealogy and heritage with its worldwide membership, its many thousands of members seeking to look beyond the branches of their own family tree to nurture an outward looking, dynamic sense of global Cornishness. Indeed, it was members of the CFHS who were responsible for setting up the CAHS, and in 1994 the influential *Cornish World* magazine was launched. This publication, often hard-hitting and unashamedly political, attempts to paint a realistic picture of contemporary Cornwall that transcends the utopian nineteenth-century view of Cornwall resplendent in its industrial zenith, or of more recent “Disneyesque” visions of Cornwall as a playground for tourists and the retired.⁶⁷ *Cornish World* has done much to alert its readers of the inescapable link with past migration history and has fostered a sense of co-ethnicity and solidarity among Cornish people around the world.

For many people, the acme in the Cornish ethnic revival and translocal relations was the first *Dehwelans* (Homecoming) in May 2002, a cultural event similar to those that had been taking place every two years in Australia (*Lowender Kernewek*) and in North America, when many hundreds of Cornish from across the world gathered for a three-day festival at Pendennis Castle, Falmouth. Cornish history, culture, and language events were showcased, and the competitions entered by those from Cornwall and abroad emphasized a common heritage. There was an ecumenical service at Gwennap Pit, which included leaders of all three main churches in Cornwall taking part with delegates from overseas. The service included the pageantry of Gorsedd Kernow, with the Lady of the Flowers participating from Winnipeg, and six new bards from overseas who were initiated by the Grand Bard. There was also a serious economic point to the homecoming. “Made in Cornwall” stalls were selling Cornish goods, and lectures focused on the economic, academic, and social links that could be widened and deepened between Cornish associations and societies overseas and those in Cornwall.

Reporting on the festival, the local press noted that “Dehwelans 2002 emphasised that distinctiveness in culture, language, history and identity which makes us what we are and will be and gives us growing confidence in ourselves.”⁶⁸ With the event an unqualified success, its future was secured by a government grant of Objective One money.⁶⁹ Carleen Kelemen,

director of the Objective One Partnership, explained the importance of *Dehwelans* 2004: "One of the priorities of the Objective One programme is to deliver economic and employment benefits based on the distinctive nature of Cornwall. *Dehwelans* 2004 will contribute directly to these aims. Not only will it help enhance understanding and appreciation of Cornish culture, it will do it in a way that is also economically beneficial." She added: "There is a niche tourist market for this kind of event, both in terms of the actual additional visitors it will bring to Cornwall and in terms of the boost that the publicity generated will give Cornwall's economy and its national and international profile."⁷⁰

Dehwelans has illustrated that the Cornish translocalism has reached a new and exciting level. But why is there such an interest in or need for a heightened sense of Cornishness? Adherence to the "old country," which has claims on the loyalty and emotion of the Cornish worldwide, has, according to academic Robin Cohen, "implications for the international state system. . . . [The] number of groups [like the Cornish] evincing a 'peoplehood' through the retention or expression of separate languages, customs, folkways and religions looks set to grow."⁷¹ Cohen notes that concepts of diaspora have great variety and mutability, a negative factor if the proliferation of meanings of the word has the danger of multiplying confusion by suggesting meanings that are not pertinent to the particular group concerned.⁷² In the Cornish case, mass movement of people has sometimes been interpreted as a crisis migration in the wake of mining failure: people were forced into "exile" overseas.⁷³ However, Stephen Vertovec's interpretation of diaspora as part of a postmodern project of resisting the nation-state—which is perceived as hegemonic, discriminatory, and culturally homogenizing—offers an intriguing new departure that recognizes and advocates the hybridity, multiple identities, and affiliations with people, causes, and traditions outside the nation-state of residence.⁷⁴

Here, Peggy Levitt's contention that, implicit in Vertovec's interpretation about whether life across borders involves resistance to the nation-state and allows previously marginalized groups to challenge the social hierarchy, is of relevance to the Cornish case.⁷⁵ Attempts to make the Cornish ethnically visible worldwide have important implications. Although Cornish-American associations are not meant to be political organizations, by encouraging their members to acknowledge their ancestry as Cornish and not English they nonetheless are strengthening the case for the Cornish to be recognized as a national minority within the United Kingdom.

With up to two million people of Cornish descent believed to reside in the United States alone and with Cornwall's population of just over half

a million (with the indigenous Cornish making up less than 50 percent of this total), the value of a Cornish population worldwide becomes apparent. This is exemplified by a twelve-point appendix to the Cornish National Minority Report of 2000 that stressed the historical importance of Cornish migration in the creation of a modern and vibrant sense of Cornishness.⁷⁶ Indeed, some overseas Cornish associations have become mildly political in recent years, *Penkernevek*, for example, providing its members with information of how to lend support to the campaign for a Cornish Assembly.

The most overtly political event, however, was *Keskerdh Kernow*, a re-enactment of the Cornish Rebellion of 1497, “Cornwall’s Colloden,” when thousands of aggrieved Cornishmen marched on London to be defeated by the English at Blackheath. The marches of solidarity planned in the United States to complement those in Britain clearly unsettled some, for in the collective memory of many Cornish Americans, Cornwall and its people were not seen as victims of English oppression and tyranny but as skilled migrants from a successful industrial region that had contributed greatly to the economic powerhouse that was the United States. Cornish-American historian and Bard Gage McKinney of California noted that he felt uncomfortable lending support to any activity that might be construed as a gratuitous intrusion into the internal politics of another sovereign state, the United Kingdom.⁷⁷ But not all Americans are as reticent in this respect. The 2004 Christmas edition of the American television show, *The Simpsons*, featured cult icon Lisa Simpson waving St. Piran’s flag and shouting, “*Rydhsys rag Kernow lemmyn* (freedom for Cornwall now),” and, “*Kernow bys vykken* (Cornwall forever).”⁷⁸ This potentially huge international boost to the Cornish language and national movement came about after one of the show’s production team had been to see a show by a stand-up comedian in the United States who remarked that he was Cornish, not English.

CONCLUSION

This essay has demonstrated that transnationalism should not be viewed as a single phenomenon. Although there were some isolated incidences of transnationalism among the nineteenth-century Cornish immigrants, most did not maintain intense, multi-level, on-going connections with their communities of origin of the type observed in some modern communities. Instead, their connections were sporadic, limited, intermittent, monetarily irregular, and, by the twentieth century, diminishing; they better fit Barkan’s model of translocalism. But this is not to underestimate the

importance and significance of translocalism. For Cornish Americans today, translocal connections with their ancestors' homeland have provided them with a sense of heritage and roots in an increasingly mobile and changing world. Moreover, Cornish-Americans have ensured that the Cornish—hard-working Celts and archetypal nation builders—have their place among the many threads that constitute the rich ethnic tapestry of the United States. They also have been hugely instrumental in promoting a worldwide renaissance in Cornish ethnicity. As reservoirs of Cornishness, the Cornish overseas manifest an awareness of their heritage and identity and a will to keep this alive.

Such determination and activism could provide elements of a renaissance of transnationalism if they were sustained. They could be even more impressive—and significant—if shared by a greater number of those of Cornish descent who viewed such events as more than symbolic and occasional gestures of ethnicity. Moreover, the act of rendering the Cornish ethnically visible in countries such as the United States and the translocal events and organizations that cohere around this have important political implications in Britain. The resurgence in Cornish ethnicity is acting as a vehicle to accelerate the emergence of a vibrant Cornish diaspora. This has great relevance for Cornwall as its people attempt to be recognized as an ethnic minority within the British Isles. Such a campaign has wide ramifications for the concept of the homogenous British nation-state as groups, such as the Cornish, seek to legitimize their ethnic and national aspirations.

NOTES

1. See Nina Glick-Schiller, Linda Basch and Christina Blanc-Szanton, eds., *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered* (New York, 1992); and Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller, and Christina Blanc-Szanton, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized States* (Langhorne, PA, 1994), 7.

2. See Daniel Mato, "On Global and Local Agents and the Social Making of Transnational Identities and Related Agendas in 'Latin' America," *Identities* 4, no. 2 (1997): 167–212; and Thomas Faist, "Transnationalization in International Migration: Implications for the Study of Citizenship and Culture," Working Paper WPTC-99-08 (Transnational Communities Programme, Oxford University, 1999).

3. See Faist, "Transnationalization in International Migration"; and Paul Spoonley, "Reinventing Polynesia: The Cultural Politics of Transnational Pacific Communities," Working Paper WPTC-2K-14 (Transnational Communities Programme Series, Oxford University, 2000).

4. Ewa Morawska, "Immigrants, Transnationalism and Ethnicization: A Comparison of this Great Wave and the Last," in *E Pluribus Unum?: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*, ed. Gary Gerstle and John Mollenkopf (New York, 2001), 172–212.

5. Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London, 1997), x.
6. Stephen Vertovec, "Religion and Diaspora: New Landscapes of Religion in the West," paper presented at the conference on "New Landscapes of Religion in the West," University of Oxford, 27–29 September 2000.
7. Peggy Levitt, "Between God, Ethnicity, and Country: An Approach to the Study of Transnational Religion," paper presented at the workshop on "Transnational Migration, Comparative Perspectives," Princeton University, 30 June–1 July, 2001.
8. Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers* (Berkeley, CA, 2001).
9. See Nina Glick-Schiller, "The Situation of Transnational Studies," *Identities* 4 no. 2 (1997): 155–66.
10. See Thomas Faist, *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces* (Oxford, 2000); and Peggy Levitt and Rafael de la Dehesa, "Transnational Migration and the Redefinition of the State: Variations and explanations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26, no. 4 (2003): 587–611.
11. Nancy Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration* (New Haven, CT, 2000), 169–70.
12. Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America," *Atlantic Monthly* 111, no. 1 (1916): 86–87.
13. See Ewa Morawska and Willfried Spohn, "Moving Europeans in a Globalizing World: Contemporary Migrations in a Historical-Comparative Perspective (1955–1994 v. 1870–1914)," in *Global History and Migrations*, ed. Wang Gungwu (Boulder, CO, 1997), 23–61.
14. Elliott R. Barkan, "America in the Hand, Homeland in the Heart: Transnational and Translocal Immigrant Experiences in the American West," *Western Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 331–54.
15. For more on Cornwall's "great migration" see Philip Payton, *The Making of Modern Cornwall* (Redruth, Cornwall, England, 1992), chapter 5.
16. Bernard Deacon, "Proto-industrialisation and Potatoes: A Revised Narrative for Nineteenth Century Cornwall," in *Cornish Studies* 5, ed. Philip Payton (Exeter, 1997): 66.
17. Sharron P. Schwartz, "Exporting the Industrial Revolution: The Migration of Cornish Mining Technology to Latin America in the Early Nineteenth Century," in *New Perspectives in Transatlantic Studies*, eds. Will Kaufman and Heidi Macpherson (New York, 2002), 143–58.
18. For a theoretical overview of Cornish migration and particularly for a discussion of risk diversification strategies, see Sharron P. Schwartz, "Cornish Migration Studies: An Epistemological and Paradigmatic Critique," in *Cornish Studies* 10, ed. Philip Payton (Exeter, 2002): 136–65.
19. Dudley Baines, *Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861–1900* (Cambridge, 1985), 159.
20. L. A. Copeland, "The Cornish in Southwest Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Historical Collection* 14 (1898).
21. See F. D. Calhoun, *Coolies, Kanakas and Cousin Jacks: And Eleven Other Ethnic Groups Who Populated the West During the Gold Rush Years* (Sacramento, CA, 1995); Shirley Ewart, *Cornish Mining Families of Grass Valley, CA* (New York, 1989); and *Highly Respectable Families: The Cornish of Grass Valley California 1854–1954* (Grass Valley, CA, 1998).
22. Alan Granruth, *Mining Gold to Mining Wallets: Central City, Colorado 1859–1999* (Central City, CO, 1999), 42–43.
23. See A. L. Rowse, *The Cornish in America* (Redruth, Cornwall, England, 1967); John Rowe, *The Hard-Rock Men: Cornish Immigrants and the North American Mining Frontier* (Liverpool, 1974); A. C. Todd, *The Cornish Miner in America* (Spokane, WA, 1995); and Philip Payton, *The Cornish Overseas*, (Fowey, Cornwall, England, 1998).

24. Jim Jewell, *Cornish in America: Linden, Wisconsin* (Mineral Point, WI, 1990), 63–64.
25. Gage McKinney, *A High and Holy Place: A Mining Camp Church at New Almaden* (Sunnyvale, CA, 1997), 14.
26. Edmund Kinyon, "Cornish Migration to Grass Valley," *Nevada County Historical Society Bulletin* 3, no. 6 (1950).
27. A. L. Rowse, *The Cornish In America* (Redruth, Cornwall, England, 1967); and *West Briton*, 13 September 1894.
28. A. L. Rowse, *Cornish in America*, 166; and *Cornish Post and Mining News*, 28 December 1905.
29. *Cornish Post and Mining News*, 28 January 1909.
30. *Cornubian*, 15 August 1913.
31. Peggy Levitt, "Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-level Forms of Cultural Diffusion," *International Migration Review* 32, no. 4 (1998): 926–84.
32. *West Briton*, 13 September 1894.
33. See Todd, *The Cornish Miner in America*, 241–44.
34. Roger P. Lescohier, *Gold Giants of Grass Valley: History of the Empire and North Star Mines 1850–1956* (Grass Valley, CA, 1995), 43.
35. G. Burke, "The Cornish Miner and the Cornish Mining Industry 1870–1921" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1981), 108.
36. For more on friendly societies, see Sharron P. Schwartz, "Cornish Migration to Latin America: A Global and Transnational Perspective" (Ph.D. diss., University of Exeter, 2003), ch. 9.
37. L. L. Price, "West Barbary; or Notes on the System of Work and Wages in the Cornish Mines," in *Cornish Mining: Essays on the Organisation of Cornish Mines and the Cornish Mining Economy*, ed. Roger Burt (Newton Abbot, Devon, England, 1969), 130.
38. *West Briton*, 21 January 1935. "One and All" is the Cornish motto, appearing on the Cornish Coat of Arms.
39. Copeland, "The Cornish in Southwest Wisconsin," 330.
40. Barkan, "America in the Hand, Homeland in the Heart."
41. Ewart, *Highly Respectable Families*, 45.
42. Thurner, *Strangers and Sojourners*, 311.
43. See Mary C. Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley, CA, 1990), for more on this subject.
44. George Fiedler, *Mineral Point: A History* (Mineral Point, WI, 1986), 169.
45. Fielder, *Mineral Point*, 167–68. The Pendarvis restoration is the only officially designated Cornish heritage site in the United States.
46. Ewart, *Highly Respectable Families*, 61.
47. Gage McKinney, *When Miners Sang: The Grass Valley Carol Choir* (Grass Valley, CA, 2001): 236–37. Cousin Jack is the term for a Cornish male migrant; Jenny is the female equivalent.
48. Bourne, "Trans-National America," 86–87.
49. David Held, ed., *A Globalizing World? Culture, Economic, Politics* (London, 2000), 1–2.
50. See, for example, Geoff Mulgan, *Connexity: Responsibility, Freedom, Business and Power in the New Century* (London, 1998); Allan Cochrane and Kathy Pain, "A Globalizing Society?," in *A Globalizing World?*, ed. David Held (London, 2000), 5–45; and Hugh Mckay, "The Globalization of Culture?," *ibid.*, 47–84.
51. The *Gorseth Bryth Kernow* (Gorsedd of Cornish Bards) meets annually. Although independent, it is allied to those of Wales and Brittany. It exists to maintain the national Celtic spirit of Cornwall and entry to the Gorsedd as a bard is by invitation to those who have encouraged and promoted this, or by examination in the Cornish language.

52. S. Morse, "Being a Canadian," *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science* 9, no. 3 (1977): 265–73.
53. Wolfgang Welsche, "Transkulturalität: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London, 1999), 194–213.
54. Quoted in Robert Pütz, "Culture and Entrepreneurship—Remarks on Transculturality as Practice," *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 94, no. 5 (2003): 554–63.
55. Mato, "On Global and Local Agents," 598.
56. Amy Hale and Philip Payton, "The Celtic Diaspora," in *New Directions in Celtic Studies*, eds. Amy Hale and Philip Payton (Exeter, 2000), 95.
57. See Mulgan, *Connexity*; Cochrane and Pain, "A Globalizing Society?"; and McKay, "The Globalization of Culture?"
58. Howard Rheingold, *The Virtual Community* (London, 1995), 6.
59. Mato, "On Global and Local Agents," 611.
60. Translated from the Cornish language, *Tam Kernewek* means "a bit of Cornish."
61. Amy Hale and Shannon Thornton, "Pagans, Pipers and Politicos: Constructing 'Celtic' in a Festival Context," in *New Directions in Celtic Studies*, ed. Hale and Payton, 97–107.
62. Nancy O. Heydt, "Oatlands Celtic Fest," *Tam Kernewek* 14 (1996): 15.
63. Two students went on a shooting spree in this Littleton, Colorado, high school on April 20, 1999, causing a massacre of several of their teachers and fellow students. See Jean Jolliffe, "President's Message," *Tam Kernewek* 18 (2000): 3; Jean Jolliffe, Cornish American Heritage Society, "Steven R. Curnow, a victim of the April 1999 tragedy at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, was a Cornish-American lad. . . . The Cornish American Heritage Society (CAHS) proudly recognised Steven as the youngest member of the organization." <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/CORNISH/2000-04/0956957058>, accessed 3 March 2006.
64. Cornish Foundation For North America Leaflet (1999).
65. Jean Jolliffe, "The price of success?" *Tam Kernewek* 17 (1999): 2–3.
66. *Union*, 5 September 1996.
67. Philip Hosken, "Cornwall—not what it seems," *Cornish World* 11 (1996).
68. See <http://archive.thisisthewestcountry.co.uk/2002/5/24/38280.html>.
69. Objective One is a European funding program that is given to areas in need of regeneration. Cornwall received Objective One status in 1999, which meant that there was over £300 million to spend in the county on projects to improve its prosperity. Cornwall can expect another seven years of European development funding when the current round of Objective One money ends in 2006.
70. See Bernard Deacon and Sharron P. Schwartz, *The Cornish Family*, 198. The second *Dehwelans* took place at Newquay in May 2004.
71. Cohen, *Global Diasporas*, ix–x.
72. Robin Cohen, "Diasporas, the Nation-State, and Globalisation," in *Global History and Migrations*, ed. Wang Gungwu, 118.
73. For a critique of this hypothesis, see Sharron P. Schwartz, "Cornish Migration to Latin America," chs. 1, 2.
74. See Vertovec, "Religion and Diaspora."
75. See Levitt, "Between God, Ethnicity, and Country."
76. Bernard Deacon, *The Cornish and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (Redruth, Cornwall, England, 2000).
77. Gage McKinney, quoted in Philip Payton, *The Cornish Overseas* (Fowey, Cornwall, England, 1999), 399.
78. *The West Briton*, 8 July 2004.