

クリス・プライス氏のカムリ紹介（2）



カーディフ中心部にお勤めのクリス・プライス様に今回も記事をお送り頂きました。昨年9月にスコットランドの独立の是非を問う国民投票が行われたばかりということもあり、また六カ国対抗ラグビー（今年3月）が終わって間もないこともあり、「カムリの独立」と「六カ国対抗ラグビー」と題してプライス氏のお考えをご披露頂きます。

Welsh Independence

In my last article I set out various themes which, for me, characterise Wales. One of these aspects was politics. It is quite an eventful time in British politics at the moment. There is a general election in May which, depending on the result, may trigger a referendum on whether the UK should remain a part of the European Union. Last September, there was a referendum in Scotland to decide whether it should stay part of the UK or instead become an independent country. This latter event in particular raised some questions for me relating to Wales' politics, and its relationship with the rest of the UK.

As you are probably aware, Scotland voted to remain part of the United Kingdom. However, the margin was quite close; approximately 55% voted to stay part of the UK, with 45% voting for independence. If a referendum were held on Welsh



The Senedd/カムリ（ウェールズ）議会議事堂



Debating Chamber of the Senedd/カムリ議会議場

independence, it is very unlikely that the result would be so close. Polls suggest that support for Welsh independence is less than 10% (though support for greater powers for the Welsh assembly is much higher).



View of the Senedd debating chamber from the lobby area / ロビーから見た議場

Why is support for independence so low in Wales? On the face of it, considering factors such as the relative strength of the Welsh language, you might expect the independence movement to be stronger in Wales than in Scotland.

There are various practical reasons which are often cited to explain this. Scotland became politically joined to the UK only in

the 18th century, whereas Wales was annexed by England in the 16th century; Scotland had time to develop its own legal system and other institutions, which is not the case for Wales.

Another consideration is that Scotland seems better equipped to stand alone economically; for example, Scotland has oil

resources which it could exploit, which is not true for Wales.

While I do think these practical considerations do have an effect, I wonder if there are other reasons. I think the Welsh language does to an extent create a division within Wales, meaning that there is perhaps less of sense of a single “nation” in Wales than there might otherwise be. Welsh speakers tend to be concentrated outside the main population centres of the South coast, which is where economic and political power is concentrated. It may therefore be the case that the Welsh speaking community, which may be expected to include the strongest supporters of independence, may feel there is not much to be gained by transferring powers from London to Cardiff. Also, nationalism in Wales tends to focus more on cultural aspects, such as the language, more than political issues.



View of the front of the Senedd



View of the Senedd／カムリ議会を眺める

This is all speculation of course, and ultimately the reasons are highly complex. For myself, I am very happy that Wales stays a part of the UK. I think we can be happy expressing our Welsh identity through cultural and sporting activities without political independence.

Six Nations Rugby Tournament

It would be impossible for me not to mention the Six Nations rugby tournament which has just finished. This is an annual rugby tournament first played in 1883 between Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland, now expanded to additionally include France and Italy.

All the teams play each other once during February and March; the competition has existed since 1883. This year was one of the most exciting competitions there has been. Going into the last day of the tournament,



View of Millennium Stadium from Cardiff Bay

Barrage／カーディフ湾岸よりミレニアム・スタジアムを望む



Millennium Stadium with the river Taff in the foreground／ミレニアム・スタジアムをタフ河から望む

Wales, England and France all had a chance of winning, but to have any chance of doing so Wales had to beat Italy, in Rome, by more than 30 points. Amazingly, they managed to do that, winning 61-20, the highest victory over Italy in Wales' history.

Unfortunately, results in the other games meant that Wales did not ultimately win the tournament (Ireland were the winners), but the great performance from the Welsh team makes us look forward to the rugby world cup later this year; one of first games is against England!