

Chapter 8 Continuity revival and invisible locations

Social dance and singing sessions do not attract the same reportage or commentary as the more public Guizing and Furry dance traditions and are therefore much less visible. There are nevertheless significant numbers of people involved. A survey undertaken in collaboration with the Cornish Dance Society showed that members reached an audience of nearly 3000 people for private social dance events during a one-year period.¹ Likewise, there are many informal singing session events across Cornwall, typically but not always in pubs, which are not widely publicised or advertised on a commercial basis.²

Elsewhere specialised terms have been adopted by this thesis in order to reflect or respect conventions of stake holders within the community. For example the term “Guizing” is used as this represents the convention of the Old Cornwall Societies and “Mummers” is used for the Padstow Guizers as this respects their consideration for modern sensitivities. The term singing session is reasonably self explanatory and used here for consistency but is sometimes referred to as a “shout” or a “pub session”.

Use of the term “Troyl”, however, represents the reflective nature and developing agenda of this thesis. “Troyl” is used here to denote dance in a social context rather than that of ritual or folk custom. It has a substantial provenance in Cornwall³ and the gloss used by Borlase of “whirls spirals and reels”⁴ is a good description of the physical activity that takes place during social dance. In current practice amongst Cornish groups it is often used interchangeably, if not necessarily accurately, with terms like “Ceilidh”, “Barn Dance”, “Nos Lowen and “Noswyth Lowen” (see app 3: Glossary of Terms). An interesting outcome of its use interchangeably with the term “ceili” is that this has impacted reflexively to change its meaning in contemporary use to extend beyond dance. The term “ceili” has its origins in the Gaelic word for an informal social gathering rather than any specific connection with dance⁵ and the term troyl is now sometimes used in the same way.⁶ On the one hand this is an example of change within the process of oral tradition, but on the other this is understating a phenomena that has a distinctive origin in Cornwall. In the latter part of the nineteenth century the term troyl was an established term used to describe social dance events in Cornwall whereas the term Ceili was first used in relation to dance at a London Gaelic Society event in Bloomsbury Square in October 1897 but was not used extensively for dance events until the 1930s.⁷ In the term troyl Cornwall may thus have one of the oldest terms for community dancing within the Celtic movement.

This chapter will show that whilst there is a good case for considering these as “first existence” traditions located in their original settings material is influenced by, or drawn from, “second existence” locations. For example a song written or arranged reflectively for a “second existence” staged or concert performance that becomes drawn into the singing session repertoire through the selective process of oral folk tradition. Another example would be a new social dance, composed to reflect the traditions of dance in Cornwall which is entered for the Cornish Dance Society competitions and subsequently becomes popular dance at Troyls. In doing this the process by which folk phenomena become associated with Cornwall and Cornish identity will also be explored.

Troyls: folk dance in a social dance context

At first, dances from oral folk tradition taking place in a purely social context seem more difficult to define clearly in terms of Hoerburger’s model of a first and second existence in folk dance.⁸ It is argued here that it does meet his criteria for first existence folk dance as it takes place unselfconsciously in an original cultural location that has continuity with the past. The cultural location is that of social interaction, i.e. “party time”, and folk dance in this context lies within the community repertoire of activities employed for “party time”. Other activities in that repertoire will depend upon the culture and social location of those involved. Examples in the twenty first century might range from a disco to ballroom dancing, from a cocktail party to a barbeque or from informal community singing to organised entertainment with a programme of popular music favourites.

The very fact that folk dance is used alongside or provides an alternative to activities that are not normally seen as part of oral folk tradition offers the opportunity, and arguably the inevitability, of cross fertilisation. This strengthens the case for social / folk dance as an original location bearing in mind the Ruyter⁹ and Nahachewsky¹⁰ proposal that folk phenomena in the first existence will be open to a wide range of influences. The point here is that choice of activity is governed by what it is felt people would like to do rather than any sense of the “correct” or “authentic”. People might of course choose to do something that celebrates Cornish identity but this is not the primary aim or purpose of the event, if it were, then within this model, it would be a “second existence” folk dance.

An invisible tradition

Folk dances in this setting are essentially private affairs and the information available depends much more on oral testimony and the kind of recording undertaken by the old Cornwall Societies. Recalling a Troyl held in the fish cellars of Newquay in 1885, Edward Veale explained that “there was dancing and general merriment in the long room [of the Unity Fish Cellars] it was very amusing for me a boy of five watching them dancing the lancers and many old dances including the *Lattapouch*.”¹¹ Whilst one would not expect the experiences of a five year old to be recalled with absolute accuracy some sixty years after the event this date is consistent with the “Lancers”, originally danced as part of a Quadrille in country houses, becoming more widely popular.¹² The important point here is that we have the “new Lancers” being danced alongside of the “old dances” and *Lattapouch*, which is known to have been part of oral folk tradition¹³. Similarly, Shapcot’s account of the “May Frolics” in early twentieth century Looe describes dances embedded in oral folk tradition like the *Triumph* and *Cushion Dance* used alongside the contemporary *Quicksteps*.¹⁴

The inclusion of the *Lattapouch*¹⁵ in an evening of social dance is also interesting for although this is essentially a display dance to show off clever footwork, it is being performed here in an informal social context rather than as a stage or competition performance. It is a “party piece”. Scoot dancing is named after the metal plate used on the toe and heel of working shoes to prolong their life.¹⁶ These shoes can be used to provide a percussive accompaniment to a melody line. Bottrell’s description of dancing at a wedding party in the 1820s provides a similar image to that of Edward Veale’s Troyl in the Newquay fish cellars:

Presently the fiddler struck up with a jig."Les have the double shuffle, Uncle Will," said the young people. Up he jumped as lively as a kid, though he was near eighty, and footed it out to the delight of all. Young Jan of Santust (St Just) followed, making the fire fly from the heels of his boots, like flashes of lightning; and all the company were quickly whirling, in reels, without much order.¹⁷

Further references from Old Cornwall Society recorders,¹⁸ together with more recent oral testimony¹⁹, show continuity of this tradition up to the nineteen forties.

A survey of activity undertaken by Cornish dance display groups and associated musicians covering the period September 2007 to August 2008 showed that 32 bookings for social dance events had been accepted during this time period by respondents (appendix 4.11). The survey was comprehensive in terms of dance display groups but did not include bands without associated dancers. It is likely that this figure would be much higher had these bands been included in the survey.²⁰ To place this in context of the folk dance phenomena tied to the calendar, this would average out to three to four social dance events in any month making use of dances from oral folk tradition in Cornwall. These events are typically private functions so they remain largely invisible. Unfortunately, folk dance band activity for private functions is equally invisible for groups who do not specialise in Cornish dance so it is not possible to make comparisons that show the relative popularity of Cornish bands for this type of event. What the Cornish Dance society survey did show, however was that the audience / dancers at these events totalled nearly 3,000 people during the period in question.

Marking Time

Whilst not tied to the calendar in the way that other oral folk dance traditions are, there is sense in which many of the social dance events for which these groups are booked mark time. The reasons for holding Troyls / barn dances vary from celebrating weddings, birthdays, and retirement to fund raising social activities for organisations such as parent teacher associations. The social dances held to celebrate milestones in an individual's life clearly define an event marking the passage of time, weddings being the prime example of this. Weddings are a significant source of private bookings for most of the Cornish folk dance bands,²¹ which is interesting as these are events lying largely out of the domain of either the Folk Revival or the Celto-Cornish Movement and an example of active choice by the organisers.

Weddings are rich in information for the anthropologist and frequently used as medium for exploring wider issues and changes in society.²² It is argued here that they are a location for folk dance in an original existence and, very literally, lie within the repertoire of social activities available to the families organising the event. Feedback from people who book groups suggests is the accessibility and suitability for a wide age range that makes a Troyl attractive for weddings. At the same time, however, "rustic barn dances" do figure from time to time as a suitable activity in wedding magazines²³ and there is also a commercial element in that groups will advertise themselves as available for weddings and make use of wedding fairs for promotion. This discussion

goes beyond the brief of this thesis except to make the point that wedding Troyls are a contemporary location for tradition but it may be that we are witnessing here the transformation of marriage rituals from homemade and community-based customs to a more consumerist model.²⁴ The popularity of Cornish tartan and Kilts for weddings in Cornwall²⁵ also deserves some comment here. This is clearly an articulation of identity and what is perhaps significant is the connection between Cornishness and glamour which may be at odds with stereotypical images of rurality.

Expressing Cornishness

What is interesting is that these groups advertise as Cornish or Cornish and Celtic and there are alternative folk dance bands presenting as English or American or without any particular regional specialism.²⁶ When the Cornish groups are booked then, a Cornish identity for the event is either being deliberately chosen or at least recognised and people are actively selecting aspects of tradition that interest them. They are thus open to being influenced by a more reflective “second existence” of traditional dance in Cornwall where performers and practitioners are actively researching or creating material that is felt to represent Cornish identity and tradition.

The kitsch badges of Cornish identity²⁷ seen in the Guize dancing traditions are replaced here by badges of language or representations of Cornwall’s historical profile. Of the 31 Cornish dance groups and dance bands who performed at the Lowender Peran Festival between 1978 and 2008 Folk dance bands specialising in Cornish dance, 21 used Cornish names for the group and 8 used names associated with Cornish Dialect.²⁸ A snapshot of two social dance events provided by different bands in 2009 provides a list totalling 27 dances (with some duplication) and of these 18 were introduced as specifically Cornish with an explanation of their historical context.²⁹ In both cases the group leaders had discussed the programme with event organisers and established that this was the kind of programme they were looking for.

Locating the singers and songs

Porter’s model for a folk song analysis emphasises the importance of understanding the text of the song in relation to the significance attached to it, by both the performer and the observer. He suggests that to understand the phenomena the focus must be “..... not only on the events recounted in the song, the songs function and meaning or even the singers estimation of it, but also, just as critically, on the observers view of the song its genesis, and his or her epistemological and existential

relationship to it.”³⁰ Here the text is understood and examined not only for its meaning within the narrative or lyrics but also in terms of the style and mood of the music. The way in which this is perceived, and presented by the performer adds a further dimension to the text and music but the entire meaning can only be captured by understanding how each individual in the audience is influenced by their own understanding, experiences and mindset. The importance attached to the performance and audience makes this a good model for examining oral folk song tradition in a “first existence” location.

Another issue for analysis is the convention of separating “traditional” folk songs from “contemporary” folk songs. This arose out of the desire to separate out the product of oral tradition within a community from the product of an individual within a genre of popular music seen as a folk revival. The problem here is the tendency to associate “tradition” with antiquity thus denying change and the new as an essential element of the process of oral folk tradition. Winick shows how the re-release of 1960s albums in CD format by Topic Records re-invigorated the traditional folk song culture by making large amounts of material readily available and inexpensive³¹. He quotes Goldstein to show how wider changes in communication technology have a history of impact upon the process of oral tradition:

Each major technological advance in mass communication media helped to produce a folksong revival: in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, the introduction of moveable type and metal engravings resulted in a revival to which the printing of broadsides, chap- books and songsters contributed greatly. Offset and gravure printing, invented a couple of centuries later, contributed to another folksong revival; the invention of the sound recording machine, and later of the disc phonograph record, each produced major folk song revivals; the widespread use of radios produced still another revival and reinforced and continued the impetus of the phonographically inspired revival. Nor is the end in sight with the introduction of the tape recorder and long-playing records in the 1950s and 1960s.³²

In this model, a “folk Song” is not an historical artefact at risk of being lost in a sea of social change but rather that the impact of this change on songs and singing traditions is part of the very nature of oral tradition. Writing in 1982, Goldstein also

showed considerable prescience with respect to the burgeoning technological advances since that date. Winnick illustrates this model by examining the song *Reynardine* and showing that whilst it is now embedded in the canon of British folk song and widely recorded and understood as having a long historical provenance, it was, in fact, largely the creation of A L (Bert) Lloyd and owes its existence to his recording and publication.³³ It is nevertheless subject to the process of oral tradition, being traditional is not an absolute state of being for the phenomena in question it is about where, how, why and when the song is being sung.

As well as examining the repertoire, the task here, then, is to examine the singers and audience within oral folk tradition historically in Cornwall and to look for modern counterparts. The argument presented here is that, despite the immense social changes and development of communication technologies since the nineteenth century, singing tradition in Cornwall remains located in a “first existence setting”. That is to say it takes place unselfconsciously in its original cultural location, the repertoire is “owned” and identified with by the audience as well as the singer, is unrestricted and open to a wide range of influences including the new communication technologies.

Cultural location and community life

The received wisdom of the early folk revivalists and collectors, not yet entirely dissipated, is that folk songs were the largely exclusive domain of the agricultural worker and latter day peasant. There is, however, little evidence to support this. Baring Gould had a tendency to portray his singers as elderly, illiterate and destitute people of a “lower order” who carried an “heirloom of the past from a class of musicians far higher in station and culture than those who now possess the treasure”³⁴. Graebe, however, demonstrated that many of his singers were no older than Baring-Gould himself and at least a third were farmers and tradesmen, socially well placed people recognised as pillars of the local community.³⁵

A case to point is that of Sam Gilbert and his family of St Mawgan, a farming family who had taken over the Falcon Inn. They hosted at least three of Baring-Gould’s forays in this part of Cornwall between 1889 and 1893 and introduced him to other singers from nearby villages including St Ervan, St Eval and St Breock. This same family entertained Charles Lee when he stayed in St Mawgan in 1903 researching for his novel *Dorinda’s Birthday* and recorded details of Tea Treat dances in his notebook. The family were certainly literate and were arguably song collectors in their own right.

William Gilbert, the son of Baring-Gould's singer, Samuel, sent Cecil Sharp four songs that he had transcribed in 1904. He also provided Jenner with the song *Limadie* for inclusion in the Celtic Song Book of 1928.

As well as showing that people involved in oral folk song tradition were literate and informed these examples also show a cultural location for singers and their songs that focused on the Falcon Inn and its landlord and embraces the wider community. Baring-Gould does not provide an account of singing sessions at the Falcon Inn but his description of an earlier encounter with this culture, in the Oxenham Arms at Zeal, captures the moment:

That day happened to have been pay day at a mine on the edge of the moor, and the miners had come to spend their money at the tavern.

..... At the table and in the high-backed settle sat the men, smoking, talking, drinking. Conspicuous among them was one man with a high forehead, partly bald, who with upturned eyes sang ballads. I learned that he was given free entertainment at the inn on condition that he sang as long as the tavern was open, for the amusement of the guests. He seemed to be inexhaustible in his store of songs and ballads; with the most readiness, whenever called on he sang and skilfully varied the character of his pieces -to grave succeeded gay, to a ballad a lyric.³⁶

The cultural location seen in Baring-Gould's collecting is also evident in the notes provided by Dunstan³⁷ and the recordings of Old Cornwall Society members such as W Arthur Pascoe.³⁸ This is the cultural location for much of Kennedy's collecting between 1950 and 1975 and the advent of inexpensive cassette recorders has resulted in a large number of personal and professional recordings of such events up to the present day.³⁹

The Saturday night singing session at the Ring of Bells, St Issey⁴⁰ is an example of just such an event and provides a case study illustrating this continuity of tradition. These sessions have in fact followed the Landlord, Chris Ivins, over many years through the ownership and tenancy of several local pubs including the Cornish Arms at St Merryn and the Ship Inn at Wadebridge. The format of the evening is entirely

unstructured and depends upon who turns up. Regulars are drawn from St Issey itself and nearby villages of Padstow, St Merryn, St Columb Wadebridge and Withiel, with some people travelling from further afield. Although most people rely on vehicular transport in 2010 and can travel more easily than in 1890, this is a catchment area similar to the Falcon Inn at St Mawgan. Typically food will be served to paying customers up to about 9pm following which there is an informal instrumental session with anything from 2 to 20 musicians. Instrumental music is interspersed with songs throughout but from about 11.30 onwards to 1am or so songs dominate. To an extent this is a natural progression because the pub is quieter by this time and Landlord Chris, who participates in and occasionally leads the singing, has largely finished work. The repertoire varies from night to night but typically includes at least one example of a narrative ballad, a comical song, a song with a strong chorus line and a come all ye song sung in improvised harmony.⁴¹

It was neither practical, nor desirable within the research paradigm of this thesis to undertake a structured survey of the socio – economic status of participants. Participant observation in the form of natural conversation with participants did identify some current and past occupations, however. The following occupations were represented: factory workers; care workers; taxi driver; IT workers; tourist and catering industry; teachers; construction workers; agriculture; and fishing. It is argued that this represents a socio-economic group that is much the equivalent of the farmers, tradesmen, agricultural workers and miners of Baring Gould's collection era.

The physical location of a pub for singing has an obvious resonance between St Mawgan and the Falcon Inn circa 1890 and St Issey and the Ring Of Bells in 2010. The point, however, is that this is a community location where people get together socially which in the current era is most conveniently provided by a public house but historically could as well be the large farm kitchens that catered for agricultural workers on an almost mass catering scale. This emphasis on community rather than licensed victualling aspects is important in that during the early part of the period covered by this thesis extensive temperance and teetotal movements in wider society impacted upon the way in which public houses were viewed and who used them. For example, in 2010 there is not an obvious imbalance in the gender profile of singers at the Ring Of Bells but in 1890 there may well have been.

Continuity, change and selection in repertoire

The data that informs this thesis does not compare like with like, what it does do is record snapshots in different times and geographic locations which are influenced by the interest and social contacts of the collector. The data is qualitative rather than quantitative in that it does not show how popular a song in terms of how many times it was sung in what places but it does demonstrate continuity selection and social context. *Jan Knuckey* provides a case study illustrating this (appendix 2.8). Sandys knew it in 1846 as a dialect narrative of 23 verses but it is not clear that there was a tune associated with it. By 1887, it was known to Cornish migrants to South Africa and had acquired a melody and chorus. Thomas Collette (a mine captain, who had worked in South Africa) communicated a verse and chorus to Dunstan in 1932 who published it in his *Cornish Dialect and Folk Songs*. By 1972, it was part of Brenda Wootton's repertoire and continues to the present as a party piece for dialect singers such as Paul Holmes.⁴² By 1995, the melody for *Jan Knuckey* had a separate existence in its own right and was recorded as part of a set of dance tunes by Asteveryn in 2007.⁴³

Another important dimension for *Jan Knuckey* is that of selection and identity. What Sandys, the Cornish migrant workers, Dunstan and Brenda Wootton all had in common was a desire to capture and represent the Cornish imaginary. A Cornish identity is intrinsic in both the narrative and the language of the title and lyrics. The narrative concerns that of a miner who could wrestle, was part of chapel culture and played the bass viol. The story line is that he makes romantic advances to "Auntie Grace" a shop keeper but gets forcibly ejected from the shop for his efforts. Knuckey is a surname that is particular to Cornwall and Jan is a dialect rendering of John. The lyrics are rich with dialect pronunciation like "wrestle", (wrestle) and "cloaze" (clothes) with expressions like "bal" (a mine), "foоче" (to throw out) and "durns" (door posts). Other songs with a long continuity that express Cornish identity through narrative, lyrics or title in this way are *Trelawny*, *The Egloshayle Ringers* and *The Keenly Lode*.

The process of selection within oral folk tradition is difficult to analyse and predict. What is clear from the database is that material adopted into the repertoire does not particularly reflect songs that have been commercially very successful or artistically well acclaimed. This hints at a complexity model whereby a small number of chance events and drives create a seemingly random outcome. *Little Eyes / Little Lize* provides an example of this. As *Honey Honey* it was the B side to *Deep River* by the Deep River Boys.⁴⁴ The Deep River Boys were an American Gospel act who later

switched to Rhythm and Blues and active from the mid 1940s to 1980 in various forms. Little Lise was adopted into the repertoire of a close harmony group called the Joy Boys from Camborne in the mid fifties and by the late sixties it had become a popular song in singing sessions.⁴⁵ Brenda Wootton recorded it in 1971 and by 1983 it was appearing on song sheets with Cornish translations. By this stage, it was being treated as traditional and there was little awareness of its origins. It was in response to a mention by Stephen Hall on the Radio Cornwall folk programme in 1982 that a listener who had sung with the Joy Boys and recalled the song, telephoned in and explained the connection. What happened here is that the Joy Boys found the song by chance or research, adopted as part of their repertoire and introduced it to a singing session audience.

Informal singing sessions in Cornwall are often lead by people who also rehearse together more formally as a choir or organised singing group so that the singing session repertoire will be predisposed towards songs with a natural, easy harmony.⁴⁶ The combination of simple, nonsense words, repetitive chorus line and opportunities for free style harmony ensured that *Little Eyes* quickly assimilated into this repertoire. The lack of any real narrative and nonsensical words also invites the addition of further witty or bawdy verses. *Maggie May* entered the singing session repertoire through the singing of Charlie Bate and John Bolitho in much the same way and although their histories are less easily traceable, both the *Cadgewith Anthem* and the *White Rose* seem likely to have a similar pedigree.

These songs are all in English: although a number enjoy popularity in Cornish translation this is essentially “second existence” within the Hoerburger model because in this form they are a reflective reconstruction on the part of the Celto-Cornish community. This predominance of the English language, however, challenges the notion of an exclusively European melting pot of tradition. It is clear from the trajectory of songs like *Little Lize* and *Maggie May* that originate from the other side of the Atlantic that if there is a melting pot here, then it is defined by language rather than geography.

The school of ballad study instigated by Child⁴⁷ followed a folkloristic model of analysis, grouping songs together in terms of textual themes such as the *Elfin Knight*, which appeared in Cornwall as *Jenefer Gentle* (appendix 2.9). The text comprises of a list of tasks which must be accomplished in order to “win the heart of the lady / man”. A

textual motif of “Lovers Tasks” along with the other themes identified by Child may well belong to a European folkloric melting pot that has spread across the English speaking Diaspora, but the interesting point is that these ballad songs have not been observed within this singing session “first existence” location. Some ballads are sung within the singing session environment but these tend to belong to the repertoire of the individual not the community, they may be popularly requested as a solo performance piece but not engaged with by all.

It is notable that very few of the ballad songs recorded by the early folk song collectors seem to have enjoyed continuity in a “first existence” location in Cornwall. It is the lyrical songs with strong melody lines, choruses and the opportunity for harmony that have been the subject of both continuity, e.g. *the Sweet Nightingale* and *Cadgewith Anthem* and selectivity e.g. *Little Lize* and *Maggie May* within a “first existence” location in Cornwall. O’Connor suggests that this selection might be seen as part of the distinctive profile of Cornish music. He points out the similarity with the “three men’s songs” recorded as far back as 1603 in Carew’s History of Cornwall.⁴⁸ Certainly the popularity of choirs in Cornwall and the harmony singing encouraged by this culture might be seen as an external influence here within the model of a “first existence” proposed by Ruyter⁴⁹ and Nahachewsky.⁵⁰

The construction of identity

Songs selected by the process of oral tradition because they capture the expression of Cornish identity also show how the “Celto –Cornish imaginary” has evolved. *Lamorna* (appendix 2.10) for example, captures an early 1900s imagination of place in the form of West Cornwall village culture although it is probably a skilful adaption to Cornish dialect by Charles Lee of a music hall song called *Pomorna*.⁵¹ The *Old Grey Duck* as sung now has its melodic origins in the carol *The Seven Good Joys* and a dance tune called *The Forty Thieves* in John Old’s collection.⁵² The lyrics of *the Old Grey Duck* are rich in Cornish dialect and the song seems to have entered the repertoire in the late nineteen twenties. *Camborne Hill*, in contrast, makes its first appearance in the nineteen fifties and has a very clear allusion to Cornwall’s technological prowess and Trevithick’s steam engine. What is interesting is that songs that have entered into the repertoire more recently such as *Cornish Lads*⁵³, *Song For Cornwall*⁵⁴ and *The Cornish Miner*⁵⁵ have a much stronger element of cultural nationalism in the lyrics. *Song For Cornwall* has the line “Cornwall is not a county, but a country in the west”.

Porters model of analysis can be used to understand *Cornish Lads* as a folk phenomena. It was written by Roger Bryant in 1994 and was inspired by the slogan “Now the fish and tin are gone what are us Cornish lads to do?” which alluded to the decline in traditional Cornish industries.⁵⁶ Although it has an identifiable author, it is subject to the process of oral folk tradition, transmitted largely from singer to singer and being absorbed into the repertoire of singing sessions in Cornwall in much the same way as *Little Eyes* and *Maggie May*. It captures the moment and has a depth of meaning for a specific community of singers but its popularity is not driven by commercial or aesthetic forces in the way that other popular or art music might be.

Although the narrative of the song follows the demise of the fishing and mining industries, the tune is melodic and the lyrics provide for a strong chorus line. This, together with a slightly upbeat last verse, prevents the text from being overly nostalgic:

We'll do as we have done before
Go out to roam the wild world o'er
Wherever sea or ship are found
Or there's a hole down underground⁵⁷

This story of enforced economic migration also acts as a metaphor for the experience of many Cornish families and the expectation that younger members will have to leave Cornwall to find work initially but hope to return at some stage. When sung by a largely Cornish audience during a session at the Kings Arms Luxulyan⁵⁸ it was sung as an anthem defiantly proclaiming Cornishness against adversity in much the same vein as *Trelawny*. A few weeks later at a folk club session in Penzance with an audience more strongly associated with British folk revival culture it was sung with much less gusto and presented as a nostalgic lamentation for a lost past.⁵⁹ Here the combination of lyrics and melody provided a text, which enabled to audience to engage, by proxy, with their perception of Cornwall's experience of the loss of traditional industries. It might be argued here that the example of performance in the Kings Arms was located in “First existence” according to Hoerburger's model whereas the Penzance Folk club it was “Second Existence” as there was a considered and reflective approach as to what it was appropriate to sing.

It is interesting to examine *Cornish Lads* against the features associated with the construction of identity by Jones.⁶⁰ As a recent composition, the song does not have continuity but it is arguable that the narrative of the text does invoke two centuries of industrial experience in Cornwall and mark the passage of time through change. It has become part of a repertoire that identifies with Cornishness and for all that the composer is known, he is rarely identified in any precursor to performance which is typically spontaneous. It has been selected as part of a singing session repertoire because it constructs a symbolic past that contemporary singers can own and identify with.

Porter's model suggests another experiential and emotive dimension to folk songs in singing sessions that can be personal in meaning or shared with a given group of people. This is where a song, albeit sung as a lyrical community or chorus song is associated with an individual or for that matter a poignant event. An example of this within oral folk tradition in Cornwall is *Maggie May*. *Maggie May* is attributed to Charles Blamphin an established popular music composer in America in the mid nineteenth century.⁶¹ It was published as sheet music in Chicago in 1870 and according to Captain Collett, one of Dunstan's singers,⁶² found its way to St Mabyn that same year. John Bolitho of Bude, who sang it partly in Cornish, championed this song. Not only did he reinforce the popularity of this song in North Cornwall singing sessions,⁶³ he also introduced it to singing sessions within the Celto-Cornish movement. This also had the effect of making the song very closely associated with him. After he died his memory was invoked by this song and he became part of its meaning for a large number of people who were regular attendees of singing sessions.

Conclusion

As with Guizing and Feast day traditions discussed in the previous chapter the model of "first existence" and "second existence" locations for folk tradition proposed by Hoerburger, Ruyter and Nahachewsky does provide a useful tool in understanding the processes of continuity, selection, reflection and reflexivity in social dance and singing sessions. At the same time, it is clear that this is an analytical model for enquiry rather than an empirical description and there is considerable interplay between the two types of location for both Troyls and singing sessions.

At the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth there is clear evidence that popular new country dances augmented the social dance repertoire

for Troyls. The arrival of the “barn dance” as a genre of social dance in the latter part of the twentieth century resulted in people specifically looking for this as a social dance activity and sometimes specifically selecting Cornish dance for this. Although less in the public eye than Feast Days and Guizing customs, Troyls form an important part of ongoing folk dance tradition in Cornwall.

Likewise with singing sessions which have continued in almost identical locations since the days of folk song collectors such as Baring Gould albeit with a steadily evolving repertoire. The way in which this repertoire evolves is particularly interesting. One of external influences seen to be acting reflexively upon it is that of Cornish identity which has had an increasing impact during the latter half of the twentieth century. In answer to the question “What makes someone Cornish?” Grand Bard, Mick Paynter, voiced what might be seen as the official Gorsedh party line when he suggested that an individual is Cornish by birth, ancestry or *inclination* (emphasised).⁶⁴ It can be seen from the examples given that Cornishness in folk song tradition parallels this. Songs such as *Cornish Lads* are composed (born) as Cornish, songs like *Jan Knuckey* and *Trelawny* have an ancestry in dialect or history that identifies them as Cornish. However, the songs that incline towards Cornish identity such as *Little Lize* and *Maggie May* represent a powerful element in the process of oral folk tradition. These are the songs that have a quality that causes them to be selected, as Goldstein⁶⁵ points out, from the increasingly vast repertoire of vernacular music available through an ever-widening variety of media. These songs are selected through a complex process that starts with the chance interest of an individual or group of individuals, proceeds through a lyrical and musical screening for qualities that lend to community singing with improvised harmony. What is powerful however is the way in which songs are adopted into a repertoire that is seen as Cornish regardless of their origin.

Notes

- ¹ The Cornish Dance Society is a collective of dance display groups and associated musicians who organise events and activities to promote interest in Cornish dance. See appendix 4.11 for details of survey.
- ² The author was involved in a number of these events as “participant observer” between 2005 and 2010 whilst researching or this thesis. See appendix 3.1
- ³ Merv Davey, Alison Davey et al. *Scoot Dances, Troyls, Furrys and Tea Treats: The Cornish Dance Tradition*. (London: Francis Boutle & Co, 2009) p45.
- ⁴ William Borlase, *Antiquities, Historical and Monumental of Cornwall*, (Oxford, W. Jackson, 1758), p. 459: “Traillia to turn, traillia an ber to turn the spit. Treyl id” , “Troill a turning reel; Ar. A term in Hunting”.
- ⁵ John P Cullaine, *Encyclopaedia of Ireland*, (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 2003), p. 176.
- ⁶ For example: *Troyl-The Concert at Mars Hill*, Jim Wearne, Marion Howard et al, (Jim Wearne Records, CD, 2005), this is a recording of a concert at the “13th Gathering of Cornish Cousins in North America”.
- ⁷ John P Cullaine’, *Encyclopaedia of Ireland*.
- ⁸ Felix Hoerbinger, "Once Again: On the Concept of Folk Dance", *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* (1968: 30-1).
- ⁹ Nancy Lee Chalfa Ruyter, “Some musings on folk dance”, *Dance Chronicle*, Vol. 18, No. 2, (1995), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1567880>, accessed 19th September 2008
- ¹⁰ Andriy Nahachewsky, Once Again: On the Concept of "Second Existence Folk Dance", *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, Vol. 33. (2001), pp. 17-28.
- ¹¹ Edward Veale, *The Notebook Of Edward Veale* (Bodmin, The An Daras Folk Arts Project, 2008). The notebook is in the possession of the author. It was published together with supporting newspaper reports and photographs as a short run publication as a project in partnership with An Daras. A copy is lodged with Newquay Old Cornwall Society Museum, Councils Offices, Marcus Hill Newquay.
- ¹² "Lancers." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/329055/lancers>, accessed 08 Jul. 2010
- ¹³ Merv Davey, Alison Davey. Jowdy Davey, *Scoot Dances, Troyls, Furrys and Tea Treats: The Cornish Dance Tradition*. (London: Francis Boutle & Co, 2009), p. 102.
- ¹⁴ E.S. Shapcote, “Some Looe Customs”, *Old Cornwall*, Vol. 1, (1930), no. 11, p. 24. This was a paper presented to the Looe Old Cornwall Society and in the discussion that followed it transpired that the Triumph was still danced at Morval and all the dances mentioned were familiar in the district up until 25 years previously.

¹⁵ Lattapouch is a “scoot dance” i.e. a step dance done with shoes reinforced with metal plates called “scoots” see appendix 1.8.

¹⁶ Fred W. Jago, *The Ancient Language and the Dialect of Cornwall*, (Truro, Netherton and Worth, 1882) calls this a scute.

¹⁷ William Bottrell, *Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall*, Second Series. (Penzance, Deare and Son 1873), p. 238.

¹⁸ Redruth, Cornwall Centre Local Studies Library, North Hill Old Cornwall Society Recorders notes 1930 to 1935

March 2nd 1933

“There be dancing of all zorts gain on. Heard told how one girl who was dancing, had the misfortune to dance on a rotten part of the barn floor and it gived way. One leg went through and she found herself standing on the back of a cow that was standing beneath.”

May 5th 1931

When the supper is over the guests will adjourn to another room and then there is singing of the old songs and then there are games and forfeits. If there is any room available all the better. I must not forget to mention the “dance over the broomstick” this is most interesting, especially if someone is present with a concertina. The dance is, I think, to the tune of “So Early In The Morning”. It is fine when you hear the heavy boots beating a tattoo on the stone floor as the dancers lift one leg over another to pass the broomstick from hand to hand as if they were weaving. What a wonderful time too. As the dance proceeds the musician plays faster and the dancers have to dance faster. It is a marvel how these men, some big, well built, can jump some nimbly as they do for this dance. The party goes on until well after midnight.

¹⁹ Merv Davey et al, *Scoot Dances, Troyls, Furrys and Tea Treats*, pp. 45 – 49.

²⁰ Participant Observation: For example, the author was a member of a dance band without an associated display team called Bagas Porthia who accepted 5 social dance bookings during this period.

²¹ The author performed regularly with two contrasting folk dance bands between 2005 and 2010.

²² Online journals provide a number of examples of weddings as a vehicle for anthropological enquiry, e.g.: Emily Allen, “Culinary Exhibition: Victorian Wedding Cakes and Royal Spectacle.” *Victorian Studies*: Indiana University Press, 2003, pp.

457-84. Vol. 45. The changing rituals associated with wedding cakes are used to explore Victorian social history: and Medora Barnes, "White Weddings and Modern Marriage in a Postmodern Family Context." *Conference Papers -- American Sociological Association* (2008). p. 1. Contemporary wedding rituals are used to show that post-modern society continues to adapt and invent new traditions to accommodate changes in society such as same sex marriages.

²³ Participant observation, within the twelve months prior to writing the authors dance band, "North Cornwall Ceili Band" have been offered two bookings where the families have been attracted to Cornwall as a venue for a registry wedding and wished to have an evening event that was "Cornish".

²⁴ Vicki Howard, *Brides, Inc.: American Weddings and the Business of Tradition*. (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 306. Discusses how weddings in America have moved from being essentially homespun rituals to commercial "must have" consumerism.

²⁵ Cornish Tartan Companies such as Cornovi Creations and Gwethnoc Tartans target their Hire services at Weddings and the demand for this is witnessed by regular photos in the wedding pages of local papers depicting couples making use of dress tartans.

²⁶ *Folk News Kernow*, ed. Christopher Ridley, Trenilocs, St Columb. Quarterly broadsheet includes advertising space for folk dance bands in Cornwall and provides an example of the range of styles available.

²⁷ Jonathon Howlett, "Putting the Kitsch Into Kernow", Philip Payton ed. *Cornish Studies Twelve*, (Exeter, Exeter University Press, 2004), p. 44.

²⁸ Merv Davey, et al *Scot Dances, Troyls, Furrys and Tea Treats*, p. 55.

²⁹ Participant observation: Bagas Porthia at Penzance and North Cornwall Ceili Band at Port Isaac see appendix 4.12

³⁰ James Porter, "Convergence, Divergence, and Dialectic in Folk Song Paradigms: Critical Directions for Transatlantic Scholarship." *The Journal of American Folklore* 106.419 (1993), p. 74.

³¹ Stephen D. Winick, "Reissuing the Revival: British and Irish Music on Topic Records." *The Journal of American Folklore* 110.437 (1997), pp. 324 – 41.

³² Stephen D. Winick "Reissuing the Revival: British and Irish Music on Topic Records", citing: Kenneth Goldstein, "The Impact of Recording Technology on the British Folksong Revival" in *Folk Music and Modern Sound*, ed. William Ferris and Mary L. Hart, pp. 3-14. (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 1982).

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- ³³ Stephen Winick, "A. L. Lloyd and Reynardine: Authenticity and Authorship in the Afterlife of a British Broadside Ballad." *Folklore* 115.3 (2004), pp. 286-308.
- ³⁴ Sabine Baring-Gould, and H. Fleetwood Shepherd. *Songs and Ballads of the West: A Collection Made from the Mouths of the People* (London: Methuen & Co, 1891). p. ix.
- ³⁵ Martin Graebe, "Baring Gould and his Singing men" in *Folk Song: Tradition, Revival, and Re-Creation*. eds. Ian Russel and David Atkinson, (Aberdeen, The Elphinstone Institute, 2004), pp.175 -185.
- ³⁶ Sabine Baring-Gould, "Among the Western Song Men", 1892, *English Illustrated Magazine*. 102 (1892): ProQuest LLC. <Stable URL <http://pao.chadwyck.co.uk/PDF/1275765058213.pdf>.> Accessed 5th June 2010.
- ³⁷ Ralph Dunstan, *The Cornish Song Book, Lyver Canow Kernewek*. (London: Reid Bros Ltd, 1929), Ralph Dunstan, *Cornish Dialect and Folk Songs*, (Truro, Jordan's Bookshop, 1932).
- ³⁸ W. Arthur Pascoe, "Cornish Girls", and "Drinking Song", in *Canow Kernow : Songs and Dances from Cornwall*, ed. Inglis Gundry (St. Ives, Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, 1966), p. 49: also W. Arthur Pascoe, "Warleggan Ploughboy" *Old Cornwall*, Vol. 1, (1928), no. 8, p. 37.
- ³⁹ For example: *The Cobwebs 1980*, various singers, private recording by John Bolitho, (copy held: Truro, Royal Institution of Cornwall Library, Federation of Old Cornwall Society Folk Song Recorders Archive): *Pass Around The Grog*, Tommy Morrissey and Charlie Pitman, Veteran Tapes, 1992, VT122, recorded at the Ship Inn in Wadebridge and the London Inn at Padstow: *Ring o' Bells May 2007*, various singers, private recording, Romfolk 20070502-1-4.
- ⁴⁰ Participant observation 2007 to 2010.
- ⁴¹ *Canow Tavern: Cornish Pub Songs* , Ed Merv Davey, (Bodmin, The An Daras Cornish Folk Arts Project, 2008). Participatory action research project. Regular singers in sessions at the Ring of Bells, St Issey and the Western Inn, Launceston were invited to contribute to a collection of Cornish Pub Songs.
- ⁴² Paul Holmes, conversation with author, 15th October 2007, at Lowender Peran Festival, Perranporth.
- ⁴³ Francis Bennet, et al Editors. *Racca : Cornish Tunes for Cornish Sessions*. (Calstock, Published by RACCA, 1995).
- ⁴⁴ Deep River Boys, "Deep River", HMV POP 263 -78rpm (1950s), Deep River Boys "London Harmony", CD Format (2004), re-mastered from original tracks recorded between 1950 -1955.

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- ⁴⁵ Merv Davey, "Hengan" (Redruth, Dyllansow Truran, 1983), p. 12.
- ⁴⁶ Examples of this are the Cape Cornwall Singers and the Perraners both of whom rehearse as community choirs but regularly take part in informal singing sessions. Observed for the purposes of this study at singing sessions at both the Lowender Peran Festival and at the Kings Arms, Luxulyan.
- ⁴⁷ Francis James Child, *English and Scottish Ballads*. (Boston; Cincinnati: Little, Brown and Co. ; Moore Wilstach, Keys and Co., 1857, 1882 and 1885).
- ⁴⁸ Mike O'Connor, Interview with author, 29th January 2006.
- ⁴⁹ Nancy Lee Chalfa Ruyter, "Some musings on folk dance".
- ⁵⁰ Andriy Nahachewsky , Once Again: On the Concept of "Second Existence Folk Dance".
- ⁵¹ Mike O'Connor, correspondence with author 12/09/08: it is possible that Lamorna was written or adapted by Charles Lee, he was an associate of various members of the Newlyn Art School in the late 19th Century one of whom from Manchester may have communicated the Music Hall Song "Down to Pomorna" Bodleian Library Ballads Catalogue: Harding B 11(65).
- ⁵² Mike O'Connor, "Forty Thieves" , *No Song No Supper: The Music of John Old Dancing Master of Par*. (Wadebridge: Lyngham House, 2002).
- ⁵³ Roger Bryant, "Cornish Lads", Cornwall Songwriters, CD - Cry of Tin", CD (St Ervan, Lyngham House Music, 2000), LYNG212CD.
- ⁵⁴ Harry (Safari) Glasson, "Song For Cornwall" Cape Cornwall Singers, *Our Beautiful Land* CD, (1998).
- ⁵⁵ Mike O'Connor, "Cornish Miner", Cornwall Songwriters, CD-"Cornish Lads" (St Ervan, Lyngham House Music, 2009).
- ⁵⁶ This slogan appeared on a wall near South Crofty mine at Pool, in the period leading up to its closure.
- ⁵⁷ Rober Bryant, "Cornish Lads"
- ⁵⁸ Participant observation Rescorla festival session 12th June 2010, : Kings Arms Luxulyan,
- ⁵⁹ Participant observation: Wednesday Folk Club Session, 23rd June 2010, Admiral Benbow, Penzance.
- ⁶⁰ Michael Owen Jones, "The Meaning of Tradition".
- ⁶¹ Charles Blamphin, *Little Maggie May*, (Chicago: -Root & Cady, 1870) published online by Music Division, Library of Congress, stable URL: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collid=mussm&fileName=sm/sm1870/03300/03380/mussm03380.db&rec>

[Num=4&itemLink=h?ammem/mussm:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(sm1870+03380\)\)&linkText=0](#), accessed 10th November 2010.

⁶² Ralph Dunstan, *Cornish Dialect and Folk Song*, Ralph Dunstan, *Cornish Dialect and Folk Songs*, (Truro, Jordan's Bookshop, 1932), p.43.

⁶³ Royal Institution of Cornwall, Memorial Library, Federation of Old Cornwall Societies folk song archive, John Bolitho Audio Archives.

⁶⁴ Participant Observation: Mick Paynter, response to question from Chair of Cornwall Council during a speech given at reception for members and staff who were bards of the Cornish Gorsedh, 14th April 2010.

⁶⁵ Cited by Stephen D. Winick "Reissuing the Revival".

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