

The Revival of Manx Traditional Music:

From the 1970s to the Present Day

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PhD

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2003

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that I am the composer of this thesis
and that the work is entirely my own.

.....
September 30th 2003

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the revival and subsequent development of traditional music in the Isle of Man from the 1970s until the present day. Together with dance and the Gaelic language, the revival of Manx traditional music has contributed to the reevaluation of a Manx identity based upon traditional values and symbolism. Drawing on individual interviews, a comprehensive survey and primary source material, this thesis investigates the motivations, influences and ideology behind the revival. Issues of nationalism, individual and communal identities, Celticism, authenticity and the formation of cultural boundaries are all addressed in an analysis of the revivalist ideology, which has consequently dictated the standard repertoire and musical style of today.

The structure of the study is based upon a theoretical model of musical revivalism designed by Tamara E. Livingston (1999:69):

1. an individual or small group of “core revivalists”
2. revival informants and/or original sources (e.g. historical sound recordings)
3. a revivalist ideology and discourse
4. a group of followers which form the basis of a revivalist community
5. revivalist activities (organizations, festivals, competitions)
6. non-profit and/or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market.

Livingston’s model has been employed to ascertain whether the Manx music movement corresponds with the modern conception of the term ‘revival’ and therefore with the typical characteristics as documented in other cases. This thesis aims to render new concepts that can be added to contemporary theory on musical revivalism.

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Acknowledgements

Due to the recent nature of the subject matter, this thesis has been almost entirely dependant upon individual interviews which were conducted during my research. In order to create an objective view of the developments in Manx traditional music over the past thirty years personal accounts were gathered from individuals who represented a cross-section of all those involved.

I would like to thank all of the informants who have provided me with information that has proved essential in reconstructing the history of Manx traditional music since the 1970s: Adam Rhodes, Anne Kissack, Barry Pitts, Bernard Moffat, Bob Carswell, Brian Stowell, Charles Guard, Clare Kilgallon, Colin Jerry, Dave Richardson, David Fisher, David Speers, Emma Christian, Fenella Bazin, Fiona McArdle, Freddie Cowle, George Broderick, Greg Joughin, Hazel Hannan, John Kaneen, Kate Pitts, Katie Lawrence, Kirsty Lawrence, Mike Boulton, Norman Clague, Peter Cubberley, Rachel Pressley, Sheila Corkill, Stuart Bennett and Sue Ling Jaques. Appreciation also goes to Bobba Greggor, who sadly passed away during my research, Peter and Fiona Shimmin, Peter Hayhurst, Sue Lewis, Catreeney Craine, Margaid Bird, Judith Wellings (also for the loan of her video camera), Ruth Blindell, Simon Collister and Pam Mather, and all of the anonymous informants who contributed towards the survey during Yn Chruinnaght 2002.

Thanks to the Manx traditional music festivals, individuals, groups and events which have allowed me to record live music: Yn Chruinnaght, Shennaghys Jiu and Mollag Ghennal, Maughold Social Club, Bock Yuan Fannee, Ny Fennee, Paitchyn Vannin, Cliogaree Twoaie, Staa, Moot, Kirsty and Katie, Paitchyn Vannin and Perree Bane.

Academic help: Dr. Mark Trewin, Dr. Neill Martin, Miss Morag MacLeod, Dr. Katherine Campbell, Stephen Miller, Dr. George Broderick, Dr. Fenella Bazin, Dr. Breasha Maddrell, Bob Carswell, Dr. Vic Gammon and Dr. Gary West. Thanks also to the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies (in particular the Sound Laboratory) and the

Music Department at the University of Edinburgh, the Centre for Manx Studies (University of Liverpool), to Roger Sim and Sandra Caley at the Manx National Heritage Library, Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh, Sleih Gyn Thie for funding and organizing an important conference on Manx traditional music, the TMSA, and to Clare Gilliam at the National Sound Archive of the British Library and Malcolm Taylor at the Library of the English Folk Song and Dance Society for their advice and help.

Thanks also to Dave Richardson and Cathal McConnell of Boys of the Lough for taking an interest and providing me with relevant material, Anna Wendy Stevenson for the use of her MA thesis, Stephanie Wellings and Breesha Maddrell for the use of their BA dissertations, Sheila Corkill for the use of her personal photographs and collected newspaper articles, Fiona McArdle for the use of collected newspaper cuttings, Bob Carswell for his MA dissertation and for being a wonderful help in general, Freddie Cowle for the loan of his copies of *Manninagh*, Stephen Miller for sending me so many articles and for his invaluable advice, Dr. George Broderick for his comments on my written work and other help, Dr. Brian Stowell for acting as my referee when proposing this PhD subject, Ian MacArthur, Louise Martin, Alistair and Julie Justice for their technical assistance and to Dr. Rachel Pressley and Dr. Jane George for their support. I am also grateful to Morag MacLeod, Kirsty Lawrence, John Kaneen and Kirsteen and Raibeart McCallum for supplying me with recorded material from their own collections. Special thanks to Ronnie Caine, who passed away during my research, for providing me with so many copies of his own recordings, and ‘slaynt vie’ to the Jimmy and Jill at the Trafalgar Hotel in Ramsey for providing such an accommodating meeting place for the many valuable discussions on Manx traditional music.

Particular thanks to the Isle of Man Government for their financial assistance.

Special thanks to my parents Suzanne and Frank Woolley for their encouragement and for their enormous assistance throughout my PhD, and to my partner Malcolm Stitt and sister Maeve Woolley for their support.

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Abbreviations

EFDSS - English Folk Dance and Song Society

JFSS - Journal of the Folk-Song Society

MFDS - Manx Folk Dance Society

MHK - Member of the House of Keys (Manx Parliament)

NRP - New Resident Policy

INTRODUCTION

In 1975, a small group of folk music enthusiasts living in the Isle of Man came across a collection of traditional music in the archives of the Manx Museum. It was a collection of over 300 melody notations (including variants) gathered in the 1890s from various sources in the Island by Dr John Clague, a general practitioner from Castletown in the south. In common with folklorists in other areas of the British Isles at that time, he and brothers W.H. and J.F. Gill had taken it upon themselves to ‘save’ the Manx traditional music heritage before it was swept away in the tide of social change.

Although the *Clague Collection*, as it became known, was not completely forgotten and had been consulted by some academics during the 20th century, it represented a wealth of lost treasure for the new wave of enthusiasts. In 1977¹, an official setting was established for its revival, with the exclusively Manx music session, ‘Bwoie Doal’ in Peel. Significantly, its rediscovery coincided with a period of social unrest occasioned by the rapid influx of wealthy new residents, many retirees from the British Colonies, drawn to the Island by its new status as a ‘tax haven’. Against this background of rumbling discontent, the collection was eagerly pounced on by those eager to preserve what was unique to the Island.

Situated in the Irish Sea, at the geographical ‘hub’ of the British Isles, the Isle of Man’s status is that of a Crown dependency with its own parliament (Tynwald) established under Viking rule [Appendix 1]. When the Viking empire dissolved in the 13th century the Island was fought over by the Scots and the English. England finally gained possession, but the Island retained home rule and never became part of the United Kingdom. Today, the Queen is Lord of Mann and her representative in the Island is the Lieutenant Governor. In the early 1970s, the population was around 60,000.

1 Dates cited are confirmed by Broderick (1999a).

It is important to note that the general interest in Manx Gaelic, the native tongue of the Island, had reached a nadir by the 1960s and '70s, with only a handful of scholars interested in its preservation. The late Doug Fargher (author of the Manx-English dictionary) likened the health of the language to a flickering flame that could be extinguished with one blow (verbal source). Thirty years on, the tide has turned and the language has been rescued from the brink of extinction: There are almost 2000 Manx Gaelic speakers, the language is taught in primary and secondary schools as an optional subject, an all-Manx nursery and primary school have been established, Government departments are named in Manx and English, and many roads have bi-lingual signs. With regard to traditional music, there are school groups, festivals, competitions, recordings and publications that communicate the message to an ever-growing following.

As a Manx person myself who has participated in elements of traditional culture, I found the whole concept of this intentional reconstruction intriguing. A small group of musicians in the mid 1970s had gone directly to one of the only extant sources of traditional music and had begun to play the melodies in a style they deemed appropriate. Other than Victorian 'parlour' arrangements published by W.H. Gill as *Manx National Songs* in 1896 which were still being performed, and a limited range of tunes and dances perpetuated since the 1930s by folklorist and collector Mona Douglas and a few of her followers, there was very limited activity or interest in the native music prior to the 1970s. Consequently, recent revivalists considered themselves to be reviving a repertoire that had been virtually forgotten. These individuals are still the leaders of the traditional culture scene in the Isle of Man, and the majority of contemporary dance teams, music groups and festivals are directly attributable to them, as is the perception of a new alternative Manx identity.

Soon after proposing the title 'The Revival of Manx Traditional Music' for a doctoral thesis, contradictory ideas arose. This thesis could not merely serve to document the development of Manx traditional music in its present form, but had to test the hypothesis that the movement in the 1970s was actually a revival. The common

perception of the term ‘revival’ when applied to culture is that a tradition must become completely extinct before it is brought back to life again, and therefore I encountered opposition in venturing to name this movement a revival. Critics asked how could this movement in the 1970s be a ‘revival’ when other, albeit different forms of Manx traditional music were being performed throughout the 20th century? It had not died out, so therefore it could not be revived, they said.

It cannot be denied that prior to the 1970s movement, various forms of Manx music were being performed and this is where problems occurred over the validity of the term ‘revival’. In what ways was this movement in the 1970s different? There were traces of traditional melodies in hymns still being sung, songs from *Manx National Songs* (1896) were still being performed in schools and at the annual Manx Music Festival (Guild) by soloists and choirs, and songs on Manx themes derived from the heyday of the Island’s tourist industry in the early decades of the 20th century were still in public memory.²

Songs on local themes had been composed by folk club performers in the 1960s including “The T.T. Hall of Fame” by David Callister and “Give Me The Bus Fare to Laxey” by Stuart Slack (Guard 1980). In the same era, folk group, The Mannin Folk, were performing modified versions of songs from the *Manx National Songs*, and songs collected by Mona Douglas and arranged by Arnold Foster in the early to mid 20th century. Furthermore, calendar customs such as Hop-tu-Naa at Hallowe’en and Hunt the Wren on Boxing Day were continuous traditions still being performed with regional variations.

Some people firmly held that the 1970s movement was merely a continuation of a revival that had been initiated by Mona Douglas. Certainly, there were connections to Douglas, through personal relationships and the use of her collection of source material, but nevertheless, the 1970s movement clearly represented a new perspective

² For example, “The Dear Old Isle of Man”, “Flanagan” and “Has Anybody Here Seen Kelly?” (Guard 1980), were Manx-themed songs which had achieved popularity in music halls around Britain.

on the subject. Their ideology was manifestly different, and stylistically their interpretation of Manx music paralleled folk music revivals going on elsewhere at the time. With reference to contemporary theory, this thesis will examine the new context of Manx music-making as a distinct revival in its own right.

1. Music Revivalism

Music revivalism has been discussed extensively within musicology for much of the twentieth century, and is primarily due to the prolific number of examples (Rosenberg 1993:17). Revivalism has occurred in all manner of musical disciplines including folk music, art music, early music and the revival of musical instruments, as well as other cultural forms such as dance and language. The phenomenon has been attributed to the perceived effects of modernization and globalization, where regional and national identities have been threatened by the prospect of homogenization, or a 'cultural grey-out' as forewarned by Wiora (1965) and Lomax (1968).

Up until the 1980s, most research on the phenomenon of music revivalism was concerned with the critique of individual movements, rather than a discussion on the concept of revivalism: The early music and worldwide folk revival of the 1960s, in particular, inspired much conversation and debate about issues of authenticity in the interpretation of material. These critiques and reviews were generally written by authors who had some kind of involvement in a particular revival. Anecdotal reports, biased reviews and guides on performance practices were published for the revivalist audience, through revivalist journals, fanzines and magazines.

The world of academia has only shown an interest in recent times, essentially because the concept of music revivalism has been addressed with uncertainty. Only in the last couple of decades have "ethnomusicologists... accepted music revivals as ethnographical realities and not imitations of the real thing" (Livingston 1999:68). Due to the substantial amount of published accounts of music revivals around the world, academics have been able gather knowledge, and therefore comment on the

characteristics and patterns that appear to constitute a typical revival. Most theoretical viewpoints have agreed that the revivalism of any cultural form is provoked by a dissatisfaction with contemporary culture, and political and social reaction are often reflected through the revival of historical symbols. A music tradition is rarely revived just for the sake of the music, but is consciously, or unconsciously revived for social or political reasons:

Music revivals can be defined as social movements which strive to 'restore' a musical system believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past for the benefit of contemporary society (*ibid*:66).

Academic literature agrees that there are two conflicting approaches to revivalism in music. The motivations of the revivalist group and the condition of the source material (i.e. whether there are tradition bearers and recordings, or written records) are the main areas of influence over which approach the revival will take. According to Baumann (1996:80-1), there is the "historicizing" or "purist" perspective, where past traditions are revived through authentic forms, and the "modern" or "syncretist" outlook, where old and new traditions are fused together. Ronström (1996:11) labels these contrasting approaches "orthodox", where Puritan members preach authenticity, and "heretical", where members support development and change in the revival of traditions. In the mid twentieth century, Klusen (1957:29) also detected the same two types of approach behind revivalism. He labels Baumann's historicizing factor, "emotional", and the modern element, "practical". The "emotional" angle is comparable with the conservative devices of a museum, where historic recollections often contain inaccuracies, and the "practical" approach where attempts are made to combine old customs with contemporary life.

1.1 Terminology - Defining the Nature of Revivalism

Although the term is liberally employed to describe any movement that returns to traditions of the past, 'revival' is an ambiguous term. It implies the "existence of a bounded cultural entity that was once alive, then dead and gone, then brought back to life again" (Ronström 1996:6), but as found in the many documented cases of

twentieth century revivals, this is rarely the case; a tradition is quite often still in existence, but achieves a prominent and sometimes more successful status after a new surge of interest. Consequently, if the term is to be strictly adhered to, then the 'revival' of folk song in the mid to late twentieth century, as it is universally known, cannot be the precise description. Folk song had not completely died out; there were still tradition-bearers to refer to, but the renewed interest during this time earned the movement the label, revival.

Because of the ambiguity of the terminology when applied to this type of culture change, alternative labels such as revitalization, renaissance, resuscitation, resurgence, recreation (or re-creation), reorientation, resurrection, reconstruction and re-enaction have all been reticently applied over the years. However, the choice of vocabulary can alter the clarification of a particular movement, as certain labels are loaded with implications that may misrepresent a particular movement. For instance; "Re-enaction implies a suspension of the present, allowing the past to be entered into, but in a bounded sense" (MacKinnon 1993:63). This term may be applicable to modern-day versions of famous battles, which are reconstructed from historical sources and performed by actors who eat the authentic food, wear the attire of that period, carry the correct weaponry and act out battle-scenes according to the correct time of day, but it does not apply to music; music cannot be brought back to life, and performed exactly as it was at a particular time in history. Fujie (1996:4) offers 'recreation' as a term to solve the issue, but continues to explain that "the problem remains of defining what is being "created" once more and how much semblance its "new" form should bear with the "old"". The term 'transformation' (see Rosenberg et al. 1993) has also been used, but tends to describe the result of a culture change rather than the premeditated process.

Perhaps the term 'revitalization' could be a resolution to the problem, meaning to "give new life and vitality" (OED), because it does not specify whether the chosen tradition has to be extinct or still in existence. The word, though, is generally associated with politico-religious movements (see Reich 1971 and Wallace 1956),³ but the implications

3 Wallace (1957) cites nativistic, Messianic, millenarian and cargo cult as types of religious revitalization movements.

of this religious concept could also be applied to cultural versions. Wallace (1956:265), when discussing the revivalism of religious activities, stated that; “A revitalization movement is defined as a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture”. Wallace considers religious revitalizations as a phenomenon that is quite different to ‘natural’ processes of change, and this also relates to cultural revivalism. Natural change, which can account for some religious or cultural occurrences, can be due to evolution, diffusion, historical change and acculturation, whereas revivalism or revitalization can only occur through the premeditated attempts of members of society.

None of these terms completely describe the kind of movement where something is brought back into existence or use, so the word ‘revival’, inaccurate or not, still stands as being the most commonly associated term for this type of cultural change. Just as the revival of instrumental music in Edinburgh in the 1970s (Symon 1997:203-216) for instance, derived from a continuous tradition, it is commonly perceived to have been a revival because of the resurgence of interest and its new context and function. Therefore, following this standpoint, I will be referring to the renewed interest in Manx traditional music in the 1970s as a revival throughout the thesis, with the aim of analyzing and gaining a deeper insight into the nature of the phenomenon.

1.2 Theoretical Models of Music Revivalism

Several theoretical models have been developed to describe the processes behind a ‘typical’ cultural revival, all with the aim of providing a framework suitable for a multi-disciplinary exchange of ideas on the topic. Based on individual research, and often with reference to comparable movements, these models are supposed to represent the general form of any revival, and are descriptive rather than prescriptive. There are also instances of studies where the authors have identified the main characteristics of one particular culture, and these can provide a formula for identifying similarities in other revivalist movements. For instance, Feintuch (1993:184-5) organized his studies of the

Northumbrian piping revival and the American old-time music revival around their most prominent aspects. Although Feintuch has not inferred his pattern to all cases of revivalism, his points are useful for studying similar movements. He identified the following process:

... developing an idea of *the tradition*, codifying a repertoire, sanctioning style, and using models, along with the significant involvement of scholars and other conservers in shaping the revival.

Based upon his study of the American blues revival, Narváez (1993:244) laid out the “ideal prerequisites” of a revival in four stages:

1. A perceived need for cultural alternatives.
2. Availability and authentication of a defined body of culture in the past, which is judged to be more aesthetically pleasing and beneficial than a comparative portion of contemporary culture.
3. A means whereby to revivify and reify such elements of past culture.
4. And finally, if a given folk revival is more than an exercise in nostalgia, that is, a bittersweet experience of reliving a remembered past, then folk revival requires a faith that in the future, new and equally vibrant forms will emerge from the selected past forms that have been rekindled in the present.

Ronström (1996:18), in an article about the phenomenon of music revivals, suggests that there are four different approaches taken by revivalist movements. The following summary highlights the four levels of meaning in his discussion:

‘Doing’: The community aspect of a group is formed.

‘History’: The creation of images of the past.

‘Present and future’: The formation of individual and collective identities.

‘Modernization’: Past traditions are seen as the potential essence for future development.

David Evans (1979:108-9), devised a four-step model that reflected the developments of the folk music revival in America from the nineteenth century up till the late 1970s. While it does not describe the processes that take place in an individual revival, it displays the different revivalist approaches that have been taken in American folk music; “New waves” that reflect the development of folk music all over the world:

Late 19th century: The transformation of pure folk music into art music.
 1940s - 1950s: Identification of folk music with working classes. International focus of revival.
 1960s: Use of tradition-bearers. Rerelease of recordings - striving for authenticity.
 1970s: Increased competence of individual performers, leading to specialization and regional styles.

It is interesting to note that Evans describes these four stages or “new waves” (*ibid.*) as the development of just one revival, whereas others may have described them as separate revivals, thus proving that the concept of a revival can differ within academia. However, this article was written over twenty years ago, and although there is still ambiguity over the terminology and the meaning of ‘revival’, a great deal of research and exchange of ideas have been made in recent times, forming a more concrete understanding of the phenomenon.

Slobin offers two models (1983:39 and 42-3) which identify the individuals involved in revivalist movements. His first set of activists were based upon his research in regard to the Klezmer revival of the 1970s and the American folk revival of the 1940s to the 1960s, and the second set focused upon participants of the old-time music revival in West Virginia. Rosenberg (1993:195-6) later combined Slobin’s two models with his own terminology to describe the individual roles present in music revivals:

<u>Activists</u> (Slobin 1983:39)	<equivalent to>	<u>Participants</u> (Slobin 1983:42-3 and Rosenberg 1993:195-6)
Elder Statesmen/Repositories	-	“Old Masters”
Historians/Researchers	-	“Immigrants”, “Revivalists” or “Mediators”
Performance Acolytes/Band Creators	-	“Immigrants”, “Revivalists” or “Mediators”
N/A	-	“Tourists”, “Musicians in Transition”, “Specialists” or “Apprentices”.

While providing useful terms to describe the behaviour and status of each individual

participant, Slobin's models assert that the "old masters" are an essential ingredient in music revivals, and without these individuals, "revivals don't happen" (Rosenberg 1993:195). However, neither Slobin nor Rosenberg acknowledge that a revival can come into being without these source bearers, yet, as witnessed through the many instances of music revivals which have taken place in complete isolation of the culture (such as the Early Music revival) and have relied on musical and literary manuscripts, activists do not necessarily require living source bearers to create a successful new tradition.

The authors of these models have all tended to divide revival movements into distinct categories, and although limiting in many ways, they can provide central ideas and a systematic arrangement for potential new studies on revivalism. Revival as an oppositional reaction to post-modernism and globalization, for instance, has been identified by most theorists, and this attribute provides a template for comparative works on the subject. However, some of these models are clearly based on circumstantial evidence, where the authors have founded key elements on individual cases of revivalism. This is displayed by the authors in Rosenberg et al. (1993), where all of the researchers are former revivalists, and consequently, this type of approach is often reflexive and individualistic. Feintuch's observations, for instance, could be a little misleading if accepted as representative of all forms of revival. Based upon his own particular studies, he states that scholars and intellectuals "shape the revival" (Feintuch 1993:184-5), indicating that they only 'step in' to organize the movement after it has been established; a scenario that is unlikely to be consistent with the processes of other revival movements. In contrast, Narváez's model is not comprehensive enough. He appears to ignore the social aspects of a revivalist movement; the individuals and community, and his fourth comment is too specific to his area of study; the blues revival in America.⁴ Although he does not depict the order of events which may constitute a 'typical' revival, Ronström (1996) presents a more diversified approach to his research. In his theoretical article, "Revival Reconsidered",

4 Both Feintuch and Narváez's theories were featured in Rosenberg's *Transforming Tradition: Music Revivals Examined* (1993), a publication that focused entirely on large-scale music revivals in North America (with the exception of an article on Japanese music). See Cohen 1998 for a review of the book.

he displayed a familiarity with the variants of musical revivalism that have occurred in different cultures and eras, and identified four levels of meaning which may pertain to any revival (*ibid*:18).

The most versatile study however, would appear to be a descriptive model designed by the ethnomusicologist Tamara E. Livingston in “Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory”; a “recipe” (1999:69) that encompasses the social, practical and ideological elements of a revival:

1. an individual or small group of “core revivalists”
2. revival informants and/or original sources (e.g. historical sound recordings)
3. a revivalist ideology and discourse
4. a group of followers which form the basis of a revivalist community
5. revivalist activities (organizations, festivals, competitions)
6. non-profit and/or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market.

Here, she proposes that while the “ingredients” may not be representative of all revivals, her “recipe” (Livingston’s terminology) of the typical components could “be used as a framework for understanding a particular class of musical phenomenon... it is intended to open a new pathway for dialogue in cross-cultural studies” (*ibid*:69-70).

Although her theories are illustrated with her own research into the ‘choro’ music revival in Brazil in the 1970s, Livingston attempts to be unprejudiced towards any particular revival and has gathered ideas from other examples of revivalism. While she does make some generalizations, such as “revivals *always* have a *strong* pedagogical component” (*ibid*:73. My italics), her model appears to be non-specific enough to accommodate all of the stages that any successful revival would take, regardless of scale, focus or motive. Therefore, while referring to the theories of other academics, this thesis will accept Livingston’s invitation to apply her model. Her “basic recipe” will be employed as a structural device for the presentation of the chapters, and the revival of Manx traditional music will be explored in relation to each “ingredient” (*ibid*:69). By applying Livingston’s comprehensive model, this thesis will enter a contemporary area of interdisciplinary research, where the use of a standardized research tool has the potential to bring revival theorists closer to understanding the

phenomenon. As an sample of this new approach, this detailed study of the revival of Manx traditional music will perhaps reveal new issues which can be added to the theories behind cultural revivalism.

2. Chapter Review

A review of the chapters will now follow, which closely observe the model of Livingston. However, for the purpose of this thesis, her second point, “revival informants and/or original sources” (*ibid*:69) will be addressed first. One of the purposes behind this thesis is to find out whether the movement in the 1970s was actually a revival, or an extension of an ongoing revival, so it is important to take a chronological view of traditional music in the Isle of Man, before focusing on the main subject. The 1970s revivalists chose source material from a collection by Dr. John Clague and the Gill brothers dating from the 1890s, and also from later sources collected by Mona Douglas around the 1920s. Due to the diversity between these two periods of collecting, as regards methodology, motivation and utilization of material, they will be covered separately in the first two chapters. Each period will be discussed as a phase of collection and as a revival in its own right.

Chapter One - Manx Traditional Music - Source Material - Part I

The Victorian Collectors

This chapter will look at the first phase of collection of traditional Manx music up until the late nineteenth century. As well as investigating the interest in Manx folk music shown by Dr. John Clague, the Gill Brothers and A.W. Moore, their collecting methods and publications will be summarized in the context of source material for the 1970s revivalists. Obviously these individuals had their own agendas for collecting traditional material, reflective in many ways of contemporary fashion, so an analysis of their methodology and selectivity will form an idea of the type of source material that was available to the later revivalists.

Chapter Two - Manx Traditional Music - Source Material - Part II

Mona Douglas - Collector and Revivalist

The second chapter is a summary of the work of the Manx folklorist Mona Douglas, who acted as a link between the Victorian collectors and the modern-day revivalists. Her work within Manx traditional culture will be arranged under two headings, which function more or less chronologically. The first phase will describe her contact with the 'Gaelic Revival' or 'Celtic Twilight' in the early twentieth century, followed by the influence of the English Folk Dance and Song Society and its emphasis on education; two elements that display both her motivations and her subsequent portrayal of Manx culture. These factors, in turn, will represent the type of source material that was available for the 1970s revivalists. Most of Douglas' own published essays have been assembled and reprinted by Miller (1994), and Fenella Bazin's montage of mostly unpublished writing and letters in *Mona Douglas- A Tribute* (1998) have been very useful in building a picture of Douglas' life and work.

In this chapter I will also try to ascertain how much input Mona Douglas had in what I am considering to be the recent and ongoing revival of Manx music. By referring to the interviews conducted with the modern-day revivalists and to her own writing, I will attempt to identify the extent of her influence and contact with the musicians of the 1970s. Disparities between her ideology and interpretation of source material, and that of the new generation will be discussed, in an attempt to prove that although there were obvious links, the two revivals were separate in many ways.

Chapter Three - The Core Revivalists

The intention of this chapter is to set the scene for the renewed interest in Manx traditional music in the 1970s, and to identify its instigators and their motivations. This chapter follows Livingston's suggested first stage; "Initial interest from either an individual or a small group of revivalists", (Livingston 1999:69) and in addition to locating the prime movers of the Manx revival, I have tried to work out why it took

place by looking at individual motivations and backgrounds, the fashions and social conditions of that time, and the local and more widespread political situations. There is very little in the way of 'revivalist' or academic literature referring to this era in the Isle of Man, either written at that time, or retrospectively. On the whole, I have depended on interviews with those involved in the revival, with reference to accounts of comparative movements in England, America and the Celtic countries at this time.

As a precursor to the folk scene in the Isle of Man during the 1960s and '70s, local band, 'Mannin Folk' are presented as a case study to illustrate the common perception of Manx traditional music before the revivalists introduced a new angle. The Celtic folk movement of this period had poured new light on existing Manx material through its interpretation, as instrumental music became the focus particularly among young folk enthusiasts. This also reinforces my perception of the Manx traditional movement of the '70s being a revival, because even as an offshoot of the general folk revival, the instrumental resurgence throughout Britain and Ireland is commonly perceived as a revival in itself (see Woods 1979:71).

The next element of this chapter is a discussion of the political situation during this period. By looking at the nationalist sentiment in the Island guided by political groups, Mec Vannin and Fo Halloo, the relationship between political action and the Manx culture will be discussed; was the music a consequence of nationalist feeling, or simply a coexistent movement that reinforced political beliefs? Interviews have proved to be essential in this aspect, because depending on the position of each informant, different viewpoints have emerged. Nationalist publications and local newspaper articles dating from this time have also been useful in understanding the social background of the music revival and determining the relationship between nationalist politics and culture in the Island.

The final part of this chapter is a discussion on the characteristics of the Manx folk music revivalist. Without stereotyping individuals, common attributes found within the key players of the Manx movement will be highlighted by referring to other written

accounts of revivalism. Throughout history, the impetus to collect, preserve and revive folk traditions has come primarily from outsiders to the chosen culture; city men and intellectuals hoping to introduce disappearing and unfamiliar traditions into their own contemporary culture. Livingston (1999) states that revivalists are usually middle class scholars, who are often professional or amateur musicians. They usually bear overt cultural and political objectives, and possess a general dissatisfaction in regard to aspects of contemporary popular culture.

Chapter Four - Ideology in the Revival of Manx Traditional Music

Chapter Four, based on Livingston's third ingredient, "The establishment of a revivalist ideology and discourse", will discuss the formation of creative boundaries, which are essential to achieve a specific revival of music. To create the type of traditional music that was thought appropriate in contemporary conditions, the Manx revivalists had to select particular characteristics, and by looking again at the pressures and influences of this period of history, I have tried to identify what those requirements were.

Primarily, the differences between the ideology of Mona Douglas and the new enthusiasts will be discussed. Where Douglas hoped to create a national art form, the revivalists of the 1970s desired a 'grass roots' tradition, recreating the source material in a 'natural' context. This was reflected in their choice of source material, where they selected melodies with the purest and most unique characteristics. Also, in contrast to Douglas, their aim was not to create public performances promoting Manx culture at home and abroad, but to create a lifestyle with a distinctive Manx identity.

Corresponding to the ideology of Douglas, though, they wanted to create something unique, but of equal status to the neighbouring countries, and the 'Manxness' of the music had to be highlighted to gain recognition. By striving to counter the equivalent traditions across the water and highlight their own, a nonpareil style and repertoire had to be created.

Owing to the immense popularity of folk music in the neighbouring countries at this

time, a sense of urgency existed in relation to the revival of the Manx music, so a core of distinctive tunes had to be hastily selected and established within the revivalist group. As with other examples of revivalism, the sense that their tradition was disappearing (or had disappeared) also conformed with the necessity for quick action in order to save it. So, from an accumulation of personal preferences, outside influences, nationalist sentiments and the inevitable links between the concurrent dance and language movements, a new tradition was formed from the selection and rejection of source material on offer, and the construction of unwritten rules.

This chapter will also address the interpretation of the selected source material by the 1970s revivalists; which instruments were to be used, the deciphering and interpretation of source material, issues of authenticity, the use of ornamentation and the organization of a session environment.

Chapter Five - The Revivalist Community

Chapter Five complies with Livingston's Step Four; "the assembling of a group of followers to form the core of a revivalist community", and this section intends to represent participants and supporters of all disciplines of Manx folk culture from the 1970s up until the present day. Because of the close links to the Manx Gaelic language and dance scene, the Manx folk music community is perhaps a more diverse gathering than the average music revival following, and cannot be easily separated.

Firstly, the Manx folk movement will be considered as a 'community'; how does it qualify for this status when playing music is often seen as a pastime? The characteristics of individual members will be located through the interviews and survey and discussed within this chapter. By pinpointing patterns of nationality, age and occupation, I have aimed to provide a general idea of the identity of the Manx folk enthusiast, which will then be compared to other accounts of music revivalism. This chapter also addresses one aspect of Livingston's fifth stage; "revivalist activities". Here, social events will be discussed in the context of the Manx folk community, where

the revivalists meet “face-to-face”, reinforcing the sense of belonging and group identity.

Chapter Six - The Establishment of Manx Traditional Music-Organization and Development

Chapter Six refers in part to both of Livingston’s Fifth and Sixth Steps: “Revivalist activities, such as organizations, festivals and competitions”, and “The development of non-profit making, and/or commercial enterprises which cater for the revivalist following”. Livingston identified revivalist activities as a method of building a sense of community, but these elements of a revival also act as methods of organization, transmission and development of ideology. The production, control and distribution of knowledge are organized through academic research, publications, activities and a revivalist industry, and these elements of the Manx traditional music scene will be examined.

Finally, I must stress that the main objective of this thesis is the study of one particular movement extracted from a larger cultural background, and therefore I will not be attempting to write a comprehensive history of Manx traditional music. Before now, there has been very little written about the music of this period, and existing material tends to rather reflexive or subjective (for example, Broderick 1999b and Speers 1996-7) or is of a more general, introductory nature (Bazin 1997). Subsequently, much of the information in this thesis is gleaned from my interviews with various people associated with the movement. There is more literature on the Manx language movement of this period than the music, but because of the close parallels with the disciplines, literature concerning the language by Stowell (1996), Broderick (various) and others has been important. Again, there is insufficient literature with regard to the political situation of the 1970s in the Isle of Man, but the work of Nixon (1983), Kinvig (1975), Prentice (1990) and local newspaper articles have been useful for facts and figures. The work of the folk music collectors has recently been researched by Carswell (2001b), Broderick (various), Maddrell (various) and Bazin (1998), but the musical analysis of these sources remains largely unexplored.

3. Methodology

Today, it is standard practice within anthropological studies for the researcher to immerse himself/herself into the everyday life and practices of the culture under study. Gradually departing from the role of outsider, the 'participant observer' will spend an extensive period of their fieldwork living around their informants, with the aim of achieving a wider understanding of the dynamics of that culture; its community, internal relationships and conflicts, structure, and context:

... an important task of musicology is to find out how people make sense of "music" in a variety of social situations and in different cultural contexts, and to distinguish between the innate human capabilities that individuals use in the process of making sense of "music" and the cultural conventions that guide their actions (Blacking 1995:223).

Mantle Hood took this concept further by suggesting that the ethnomusicologist should also take on the role of a student within the chosen culture and learn to perform the music under study; a research tool that he named 'bi-musicality' (1960:58). However, the theories of contemporary ethnomusicologist, Alan Merriam (1964:25) did not completely correspond with this concept. He argued that it was important for a researcher to follow an anthropological stance and retain the role of outsider to a certain degree:

The ethnomusicologist is not the creator of the music he studies, nor is his basic aim to participate aesthetically in that music (though he may seek to do so through re-creation). Rather his position is always that of the outsider who seeks to understand what he hears through analysis of structure and behavior, and to reduce this understanding to terms which will allow him to compare and generalize his results for music as a universal phenomenon of man's existence. The ethnomusicologist is sciencing about music.

As an issue-laden concept, current theory encourages the ethnomusicologist to enjoy the advantages of working in a flexible academic field that gains strength from a diversity and plurality of approaches (Barz and Cooley 1997:1). Most theoretical writing on the subject of fieldwork prepares the 'outsider' to make the most of their research, but there is little advice for the researcher who is familiar with the tradition

they are studying. Kubik (1991) provides some cautionary anecdotes about the relationships between the backgrounds of individual fieldworkers and their informants, but generally, an 'insider' role appears to be a very different position in which to conduct research.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to being in this position. In theory, an insider can gain acceptance and trust within their own community; they know who to approach, and can avoid tactless questions by adapting their interviews to each individual. On the down-side, an insider can be too familiar with the research topic and their informants, and through an overly subjective viewpoint, may miss vital points. An insider needs to "distance themselves sufficiently from the group in order to provide an academic study of it" (Coleman and Watson 1990:42). It is also important to remain objective as a musician, because the understanding of musical experience is a "reflexive process that begins with the self's encounter with musical symbols in the world" (Rice 1994:4).

Consequently, when I began research in my own home town, with people that I already knew and focusing upon a tradition that I had been brought up with, my approach to fieldwork had to be a case of 'trial and error'. Selecting suitable people to interview was both a case of previous knowledge of 'who's who', and also through the more natural 'snowballing' process (see Macdonald 1997:17). Therefore, I initially approached the most prominent members of the music side of the folk scene, who would then suggest other people to interview.⁵ Because of my own experience and preconceptions of the community I was concerned that I should gather an objective background of the revival of the 1970s, so a diverse range of informants were interviewed. During my research I recorded thirty interviews with a cross-section of people connected with the Manx folk movement (approximately one hour each). Informants ranged from those who performed folk music in the Island before the

5 However, some of the interviews were merely circumstantial and unplanned. One informant introduced me to his uncle at a party because he thought would be useful to talk to. He agreed to be interviewed, and proved to be a valuable contribution. On another occasion, I met a traditional musician in a local chip shop, and after catching up, it occurred to me that she would be an important person to interview, and we met up the next day.

movement under observation, the musicians who instigated or were involved in the revival and those who have joined the 'scene' since, political activists of the 1970s and contemporary members of the Manx nationalist party, 'Mec Vannin', those involved in the wider British folk revival, those interested academically, festival organizers in the Island, Manx dancers and Manx Gaelic speakers.⁶

Initially I began with a comprehensive and very long set of questions which I stuck to rigidly. I soon found that such strict boundaries and time limitations did not allow my informants to fully express their opinions. Furthermore, some informants had nervously prepared notes in advance of their interview, so on some occasions, it seemed impolite to deviate from their rendition of the story. After experiencing a few interviews, I composed an outline of topics that would act as a loose guide, favouring an informal and conversational atmosphere, which ultimately proved to be much more revealing.

Academic literature warns the researcher about receiving sensitive or even libelous information from their informant. This situation occurred on a few occasions during my interviews, so where necessary some quotes are not attributed to the informant in this thesis. Also, some informants took it for granted that I knew certain pieces of information and therefore overlooked some details on the recording. One informant though, was very helpful, and every time he mentioned something which he knew I was familiar with, stooped towards the microphone, and elaborated for future listeners.

Although I did not regard the participant-observer requirement of living everyday life around my 'subjects' during the course of study, I timed most of my visits to coincide with major musical events in the folk scene. As well as providing an informal situation to approach potential informants, these events gave me the opportunity to record the musical content of concerts and competitions (which are stored in the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh). I also composed a questionnaire that was circulated at the 2002 Yn Chruinnaght Inter-Celtic Festival, held in Ramsey. The survey was aimed at Isle of Man residents who currently supported the Manx folk

6 Some informants were or are involved in more than one of these categories.

scene, either as participants or audience members, with the purpose of gaining an overview of the community under study. Out of 100 questionnaires, 64 were returned, and the majority of people were very forthcoming with their answers. The survey will be analyzed in Chapter Five, 'The Revivalist Community'.

My role as fieldworker within this particular culture has not been easy to define. Throughout the study I was very conscious that I had to maintain a balance between the 'emic' and the 'etic' of the situation. As someone that was brought up within this revival of Manx traditional music, I needed to 'stay in character' to retain that familiarity with the informants and therefore attain the maximum resources, but I was also very aware that I had to psychologically distance myself in order to report on the movement from an objective stance, an approach that the community may yet perceive as disloyal.

Chapter One

Manx Traditional Music - Source Material - Part I

The Victorian Collectors

Introduction

In 1975, a small group of amateur musicians located a corpus of source material in the Manx Museum that served as the basis of their revival of the Island's traditional music. The source material consisted of four manuscript books of melodies collected by Dr. John Clague (1842-1908) in the 1890s and contained around 270 melodies including their variants (Broderick 1982:2).⁷ The revivalists referred to several sources during their research, both from this period and later, but the *Clague Collection* was seen to be the most significant. Discovered in their original condition as handwritten workbooks, seemingly forgotten in the archives of the museum, and with no obvious alterations or creative augmentation to the melodies, this collection appeared to be the most pure source available.⁸

Livingston (1999:69) describes the location of revivalist source material as the second stage of a typical revival. However, Manx source material is given primary significance and will be discussed at the beginning of this thesis, because it serves to set the scene and provide a chronological introduction to the main area of study. The work of the Victorian collectors not only provided source material for a revival eighty years later, but also initiated a continued fascination with the Island's traditional culture, which has materialized in varying forms ever since. The prime objective of

7 The Manx Museum also possesses 24 of Clague's notebooks (MNHL MS 450A), which contain customs, Manx Gaelic grammar, proverbs and collected stories. They also include complete song texts and fragments in Manx Gaelic, which have been paired with Clague's music manuscripts in recent times. See Broderick 1982:1-41.

8 Clague's musical notebooks (MNHL MS 448A and MS 449B) were donated to the Manx Museum by Archdeacon Kewley and J.E. Quayle in 1935, and consisted of 315 tunes which were classified into three main groups: Part I, dances and singing games; Part II, songs and ballads; and Part III, carols and hymns. A fourth book contains selected melodies copied from the other notebooks and harmonized arrangements by Clague. Kewley possessed another notebook compiled by Clague which Gilchrist had apparently consulted (1924), but it has since disappeared. See Bazin 1997:106.

this thesis being to examine the Manx traditional music movement of the 1970s as a new ‘revival’, it is essential to discuss previous resurgences of interest in order to display the distinctions. Two major movements of collecting and reviving Manx traditional music had taken place before the main period under study; the first being in the 1890s and directed by collectors Dr. J. Clague, W.H. and J.F. Gill and A.W. Moore (covered in this chapter), and the second, a movement led by Mona Douglas during the first part of the twentieth century (Chapter Two - Source Material Part II). An understanding of the fieldwork undertaken during these two periods is important for a later discussion in this thesis about the type of source material which was available for the 1970s revivalists. Chapter Four, entitled ‘Revivalist Ideology’ will return to consider the music provided by these collectors.

The social and political situation in the Island in the 1890s, the trends and practices within contemporary folklore, and the backgrounds and motivations of the collectors themselves are all elements which have effected the methodology and subsequent interpretation of this source material. After a brief overview of the history behind this period of collecting, this chapter will look for clues within the original fieldnotes of the Victorian collectors and the subsequent publications of *Manx National Songs* (1896), *Manx National Music* (1898) and *Manx Ballads and Music* (1896) to determine whether this body of traditional music is actually representative of music-making during the 1890s.

1. Source Material

While the original *Clague Collection* was seized upon by the eager revivalists in the 1970s as a complete entity, the manuscripts had originally functioned as preparatory material for a published book of arrangements that was still in wide circulation in the Island, eighty years after its first edition. *Manx National Songs* (1896)⁹ was the result

9 Although it has enjoyed several reprints throughout the twentieth century, *Manx National Songs* was renamed *The Manx National Song Book* when it was reprinted in 1979. This was in order to comply with a newly compiled book called *The Manx National Song Book Vol. II*, edited by Charles Guard, which included music-hall songs associated with the Isle of Man, modern folk songs and traditional songs arranged by Douglas and Foster.

of fieldwork undertaken by Clague and the brothers, J.F. and W.F. Gill. The project began as an independent hobby of Dr. Clague, a medic who noted down songs, melodies, folklore and customs in the south of the Island whilst visiting his patients.¹⁰ Inspired by Clague's efforts, old school-friend, Deemster J.F. Gill (1842-1899) joined the doctor in a small-scale quest to record local folk tunes in the early 1890s. Soon afterwards, the Deemster introduced his older brother, Willie, (W.H. Gill, 1839-1923) to the venture, although he was based in Angmering, Sussex at the time. From 1894 onwards, the three amateur musicians embarked on a systematic search for old Manx melodies and songs from all over the Island. According to W.H. Gill (1898:iv), it was during their collecting (rather than before), that the three mutually decided to refocus their search with a view to publishing the material in the form of a 'national' songbook. How far this new incentive accelerated the process of collecting, and whether it ultimately modified their approach to methodology and the type of material needed for the publication has yet to be determined.¹¹ In 1896, fifty-one traditional songs were selected and arranged by W.H. Gill and published in *Manx National Songs* by Boosey and Co., as a volume of the Royal Edition of National Songs. A second volume called *Manx National Music* was published in 1898 and consisted of arrangements by W.H. Gill of Manx melodies for piano solo.¹² Twenty years later, Anne Gilchrist returned to the original source material and wrote an extensive review of Clague's fieldnotes for the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* (1924-6).

However, Clague and the Gill brothers were not alone in their pursuit of traditional music in the Island during the 1890s. Local antiquarian and Member of the House of

10 Although the *Clague Collection* was 'officially' compiled from 1893 onwards, in 1895 J.F. Gill referred to a melody that Clague had collected "more than forty years ago" when he was just a teenager (*The Gill Collection*: MNHL MS 9702:110).

11 Bob Carswell (2001b) wrote his MA dissertation about the Victorian collectors, focusing upon the historical and ideological perspectives of their work. However, apart from Gilchrist's comparative review of the Clague manuscripts (1924-6), no musical analysis has been made of Clague and Gill's work.

12 A collection of 141 melodies arranged by W.H. Gill. Part I: Songs and Ballads [93], Part II: Carols and Hymns [30], and Part III: Dance Tunes [18]. The arrangements and concept of this book bore a strong resemblance to earlier piano solo publications such as J.T. *Surenne's Songs of Scotland Without Words* [1856]. According to W.H. Gill, the layout of "Manx songs without words" (Gill 1898:x) had been the collectors' original preference for the melodies, but Boosey had initially insisted that the book would not be commercially viable without lyrics and persuaded them to produce *Manx National Songs* (See Carswell 2001b:55).

Keys, A.W. Moore (1853-1909),¹³ also collected song and music material, and around the time of the release of *Manx National Songs*, he published *Manx Ballads and Music* (1896), a collection of mainly Gaelic song texts and English translations, with some musical arrangements.¹⁴

Only one book containing ‘traditional’ Manx song existed before these publications.¹⁵ In 1820, John H. Barrow (1796-1858) published a collection of 13 Manx melodies (11 airs and 2 dances) arranged for voice and piano, called *The Mona Melodies* (MNHL J48). According to a short biography (Graham 2000), Barrow had only lived in the Island for a few years. Born in London, his family moved to the Island in 1810, and by 1819, Barrow had returned to England as a reporter for *The Times* and later *The Morning Herald* and *The Sun*. Little is known about the background of *The Mona Melodies*; the piano accompaniment was composed by “an amateur” who has remained anonymous, and Barrow wrote the new words to the songs which bore “no relation to the originals” (Wood 1916).¹⁶ It is also unknown whether Barrow or the anonymous arranger collected the original melodies and lyrics from local musicians in the Island (although Gill 1896:ix suggests they did), or whether they were taken from extant published material (see Speers 1997:225). However, Barrow does mention that

13 Moore was a member of the House of Keys from 1881, and became Speaker in 1898 till his death in 1909.

14 Until recently, copies of *Manx Ballads and Music* have been scarce. A facsimile reprint of the original is now available, published by Llanerch Publishers in 1998. This book predominantly consisted of song texts in Manx with English translations, but also included forty melodies and songs arranged for piano by Miss M.L. Wood. The ballad section was divided under the following headings: (1) Mythical, Semi-Historical and Historical ballads; (2) Children’s Songs; (3) Ballads connected with customs and superstitions; (4) Love-songs; (5) Patriotic ballads; (6) Nautical ballads; and (7) Miscellaneous ballads. A.W. Moore also contributed traditional melodies to *The Manx Society’s journal, Manx Note Book 1885-7*. Chiefly Vols. xvi, xx and xxi, according to the author.

15 “The first known serious music collection was made around 1810 by a Cumbrian man called Shepherd who came to Man ca. 1806 to teach music. He collected some 90 tunes, almost exclusively psalm tunes” (Broderick [undated]).

16 Bazin (1998:104) states that the ‘amateur’ was J.H. Barrow, but another possible candidate was his father. There is no mention of John H. Barrow having been a musician in historical records, and apart from *The Mona Melodies*, he did not produce any other musical publications. His father, Charles Barrow, however, was a partner in a musical instrument-making company in England, and when he moved to the Isle of Man he became the organist at St. George’s Church in Douglas. Charles Barrow was, in effect, hiding in the Island because of fraud charges in England, so it is therefore more likely that he was the arranger that wished to remain anonymous in a book that was to be published in London.

the words were replaced in his publication, an acceptable procedure during this period:

... the words are entirely new, as the subjects of the Manks [*sic.*] Ballads were not esteemed to be of sufficient general interest to warrant their translation (Barrow 1820, quoted in Wood 1916).

The impact of *The Mona Melodies* in the Isle of Man during the 1820s is difficult to ascertain, because by the 1890s it was “practically unknown” (Gill 1896:ix), with only three copies of the book known to exist in the Manx and British Museums at that time.¹⁷ W.H. Gill (*ibid*:iii) claims that “more than half” of Barrow’s songs were unknown by his informants seventy years later, which infers a general unfamiliarity with some of traditional songs and with the book itself, suggesting that “between 1820 and the 1890s many tunes had fallen out of the tradition” (Broderick [undated: *Introduction to Celtic Studies*]). Perhaps its impact can be demonstrated by the list of Manx subscribers mentioned in the publication, which consisted of “well-known Manx people” (Wood 1916), which suggests that the book was only circulated amongst the upper-classes in the Island.

Barrow’s book is fairly typical of the collections published during the late 18th and early 19th century; it was produced for a small audience, the methodology is not revealed, and the lyrics to the melodies are evidently rewritten. It would appear that because of the fashion for songbooks of traditional material representing the rest of Britain, by the likes of Moore, Percy, Ritson and Herd (Skinner Sawyers 2000:135-6 and Karpeles 1973:72-3), Barrow saw the financial benefits to be gained from his brief spell in the Isle of Man.¹⁸

The later publications of 1896 represented differing approaches in contemporary

17 Although *The Mona Melodies* was published in London, its impact in the rest of Britain is unknown.

18 Barrow also published a book of poems called *Manks Legends* in 1818, of which there is no known surviving copy. Whether the poems were traditional or composed by Barrow is uncertain. In the main, it would seem that Barrow concentrated on journalistic, rather than creative writing, although he did write a historical novel called *Emir Malek, The Prince of Assassins* (published anonymously in 3 volumes in 1826). Apparently he was very successful in his career as a journalist, and his famous nephew, Charles Dickens, described him as an “excellent scholar”. See Graham 2000: *Friends of the West Norwood Cemetary* [*sic.*] *Online Newsletter*.

folkloristics, which ultimately effected the methodology and subsequent treatment of material in contrasting ways. Although it was initially an antiquarian project, *Manx National Songs* followed a populist approach in its interpretation of Manx traditional music, whereas *Manx Ballads and Music* represented an antiquarian viewpoint in its depiction of source material, although it surreptitiously incorporated the author's Celticist leanings.¹⁹ Essentially though, both projects were inspired by the evident decline of traditional music in the Island, and the primary motive was therefore to collect indigenous material before its imminent extinction.²⁰

2. The Decline of Manx Gaelic Culture

Like his fellow collectors in the rest of Britain who felt that they had to justify the importance of their 'rescue missions' through exaggerated statements (see Boyes 1993:1-2), W.H. Gill (1896:ix) claims that he was at first disheartened when setting out to gather source material in the Isle of Man:

Alas, I was doomed to disappointment. Everybody said it was too late. The old generation... these rustic musicians had passed away (so they told me), and the old tunes were being replaced by the tunes of the London music halls.

Moore agreed that there was a sense of urgency behind his collecting. In his introduction to *Manx Ballads and Music* (1896:xiv) he indicated that there was a distinct 'rescuing' element to his research:

The object of this publication... is to collect in one volume a curious literature, the greater part of which was threatened with almost certain loss... old or elderly people who alone remember them must soon pass away.

Several explanations have been offered for the perceived decline of the oral tradition in the Isle of Man; the main reasons being Methodism, immigration and emigration,

19 The populist procedure was to arrange original material into a contemporary context for promotion among present fashion, whilst the role of the antiquarian was to collect and classify material in its original form. See Levine 1986:70.

20 It is worth noting that all of the collectors were middle-aged by the 1890s, and would have had first-hand experience of this decline within their life-times.

and tourism. Though generally attributed to the deterioration of the Manx Gaelic language (Stowell and Ó Bréasláin 1996), these factors also pertain to its accompanying culture.²¹

The first Manx translation of the Bible in 1772 and the introduction of Methodism to the Island by John Wesley in the late 18th century, are considered to be strong factors in the deterioration of traditional and secular music and dance. Encouraged by Wesley, the sacred tradition of performing and composing ‘carvals’ (carols) around biblical themes thrived, whilst secular music practices, dancing and traditional festivals were discouraged (*ibid*:10. See also Graves 1928). As a result of the great enthusiasm towards Methodism, “the Manx people hastened to forget the ballads about such heathenish creatures as Fin and his congeners” (Moore 1896:xv), and consequently, the subject matter of these carvals became increasingly sober:

... by the end of the nineteenth century, they had virtually lost the gaiety of the eighteenth century Manx, who sung quite naturally of ‘Fiddling, dancing, singing, playing at cards and praising the Lord’ as one carval puts it (Stowell and Ó Bréasláin 1996:9).

However, Wesley did encourage the Manx congregation to use familiar melodies to accompany the Methodist hymn and carval texts, so while the original lyrics of some songs were forgotten, the lifespan of the melodies were kept alive (Bazin 1997:28).

Before embarking on the collection of traditional music for his book published in 1896, Moore had compiled an extensive collection of carvals for his publication of *Carvalyn Gailckagh* (1891).²² The last carval was said to have been written in 1825, but most of these song texts had been documented as they were composed and were still remembered later in the century: “Many of these songs have been handed down,

21 The traditional culture and language of Wales and Cornwall suffered similar fates. See Berresford Ellis 1985 and the *Publication of the Government Office for the South West 2000* for details.

22 80 carval texts were published in Moore’s book, though around 150 carvals were actually recorded. See Stowell and Ó Bréasláin 1996:9. Moore collaborated with J.C. Fargher and Captain R.E. Christian on this collection. The Rev. J.T. Clarke had also collected carvals during the mid 19th century. See Broderick 1980-1:9.

by writing, to the present time” (Moore 1891: introduction). Unfortunately though, virtually no traditional songs or music had been documented, apart from the thirteen songs of *Mona Melodies* published by Barrow in 1820. Therefore, by the 1890s, Moore and his colleagues found that religious music was very much at the forefront of the oral tradition:

Mr. Moore, who found that the carvals or carols which sprung up after the translation of the Bible into Manx were much more on the lips of the Manx peasantry than the secular folk song, though sung to similar or the same tunes and in more modern forms. Indeed you would find six carvals sung to every single folk song, a strong proof of the extent to which the religious spirit had dominated Mansland during the last couple of centuries (Graves 1913:91).

Although the Isle of Man had never been completely isolated from the surrounding British Isles, Moore (1896:xv) suggests that the popularity of smuggling in the late 17th century and the subsequent interaction with outsiders led Manx men to abandon their own culture and “neglect and despise their forefathers”. The prosperous nature of smuggling had also attracted many English merchants to the Island, most of whom settled in Douglas, which inevitably weakened the native culture and Gaelic language. Even after smuggling was outlawed by the British Government in 1765, “strangers began to come to the Island, either seeking refuge as insolvent debtors, or being attracted by the comparative cheapness of living” (Moore 1891: introduction).²³

While these are explanations of how outside elements were gradually introduced to the Island’s native culture, the emigration of Manx people during this period meant that much of its musical traditions actually left the Island. The most significant ‘mass exodus’ was due to an economic recession brought about by the decline of the Island’s main industries at the beginning of the 19th century: farming, fishing and mining. During the Napoleonic wars of 1799-1815, trade between the Continent and Britain ceased, and as a result, Manx farming flourished. However, “with the peace of 1815

23 J.H. Barrow, author of *The Mona Melodies*, arrived in the Island under these circumstances. His father, Charles Barrow sought permanent refuge from the English law in 1810 for embezzling £5500 from the Navy Pay Office. See Graham 2000 for short biography. This is perhaps an early example of incomers taking an interest in their new host culture, where the significance is often more apparent to outsiders: A feature of most cultural revivals.

there was much distress, and the Manx people emigrated in large numbers to America, to settlements in which agriculture rather than trade was the main occupation” (Quine 1911:85). This also applied to the failure of the herring shoals in the Irish Sea, which forced many fishermen to find new occupations, often away from the Island.²⁴

The late 19th century saw a period of economic prosperity as the Isle of Man’s main industry became tourism. An influx of visitors arrived every summer on the regular steamer services between Douglas and Liverpool. The demand for tourist facilities and entertainments increased as the Island rapidly became a popular destination for the working classes of Northern England (from Lancashire and Yorkshire in particular). In just five years, the number of visitors per year had grown from 182,669 in 1884 to 418,142 in 1899 (Moore 1900: Book 5). The lure of employment in the tourist industry also encouraged locals to relocate from the country to the towns:

The most remarkable thing about the population is the way in which it has moved from the country into the towns, or rather into Douglas [the capital of the Isle of Man]. Thus, in 1871, the population of the country was 30,303, and of the towns, 23,739; whereas, in 1891, that of the former was 25,408, and that of the latter 30,200 (*ibid.*).

The most significant effect that tourism had on local culture was on the language. The adoption of English was required for most types of employment, and the Manx became embarrassed of their local language which was “constantly ridiculed by English visitors” (Stowell and Ó Bréasláin 1996:14). By 1875, only 190 of the 50,000 (approximate) population were monoglot in Manx Gaelic (*ibid.*)²⁵ To a significant degree, the decline of Manx Gaelic accelerated the decline in traditional music. Where the Gaelic language was abandoned in favour of English, songs which were learnt

24 Due to a gradual failing of the herring shoals during the 19th century, the number of fishing boats decreased from 600 in 1810 to only 60 by 1896 (Quine 1911). The mining industry also suffered during the 19th century. When many of the Island’s mines closed down, its workers were forced to emigrate to South Africa, Australia and America to find work. Stowell and Ó Bréasláin (1996:15) note that the residents of an area of Pennsylvania, U.S.A. spoke Manx Gaelic until the beginning of the 20th century, but there are no accounts of musical traditions having survived. There are references to singing in the Thomas Kelly Journal, but the authenticity of the document is now regarded with suspicion (see Coakley 2001).

25 According to the Isle of Man Census reports, the population figures for 1871 were 54,042 and in 1881 were 53,608.

originally in the native tongue also disappeared, as the bearers of these songs were unlikely to translate them into English. As the English language was readily accepted by the Manx, so was the English culture.

In contrast to the general attitudes of the ‘ordinary’ Manx people, a minority group of scholars in the Isle of Man attempted to save the discarded language and culture from extinction. Inspired in part by the Celtic nationalism of Scotland, Wales and Ireland of the 19th century, and by the ‘national consciousness’ throughout Europe, antiquarians, scholars and collectors took a renewed interest in their local culture (cf. Myers 1992:4-6, Davies 1999:76, Karpeles 1973:69 and Abraham 1938:137). Accordingly, from the mid 19th century, Manx ‘folk’ societies were formed with the aim of preserving all aspects of Manx life: “... overlapping with the end of this Golden era [of tourism] was the awakening of the Gaelic revival” (Guard 1980: preface).²⁶

With the assertion of British patriotism in the late nineteenth century evoked by imperialist rivalry and “strengthened by the euphoria of Empire” (Davies 1999:683), an aversive awareness of ethnic and national status stirred in all of the Celtic countries. As a crown dependent country though, the Isle of Man found itself having to achieve a balance between Britishness and Celticism (Belchem 2000:217). The Island, being careful not to endanger its home rule status within the British Empire (established in 1866), took steps towards the reconstruction of a Manx identity:

The local establishment, disdainful of working class holiday makers or “cotton balls” from Lancashire, rediscovered a Celtic ethnicity, defined against the latest commercial popular culture offered in local pleasure palaces and dances halls, the biggest in Britain... gentlemanly antiquarians constructed (and/or invented) the necessary traditions to safeguard Manx distinctiveness and its devolved political status. Through the assertion of Celticism, a project that tended to downgrade Norse contributions to the island’s past, the little Manx nation girded itself against cultural anglicization, yet remained unquestionably loyal to the British

26 Societies included; the Isle of Man Field Naturalists and Antiquarian Society (1868), Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society (1879), Manx Geographical Society (1880), Isle of Man Fine Arts and Industrial Guild (1888), which later became the “Guild” (the Manx Music Festival), and the Manx Language Society (1899) - renamed “Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh” and dedicated to “the preservation of everything that is distinctly Manx, and above all, to the cultivation of a national spirit” (quoted in Belchem 2000:219).

empire (*ibid*:228).

One of the indigenous cultural traits employed in the creation of this independent Manx identity was music. As a reaction to the overwhelming popularity of English culture in the Island, efforts were made to retrieve the ‘peasant’ music of their predecessors. The Isle of Man though, was lagging behind its contemporaries in regard to folklore studies. Where extensive collections of traditional music had been compiled in Scotland, Ireland and Wales since the 17th century (see Craig 1961, Elliot and Rimmer 1973 and Johnson 1972), the Isle of Man had no such authoritative records. So, from the early 1890s, two groups began to collect and preserve Manx traditional music independently of each other. A “neck-to-neck race” (Gill 1916:385) began between Clague and the Gill brothers, and Moore and his aides.

3. The Clague and Gill Collections

Although their aim was to preserve, and later promote the Island’s culture through its ‘native’ songs, Clague and the Gill brothers did not express any overt political motivations. They were certainly aware that Manx traditional culture was in decline, but their interest in the customs and music initially reflected the antiquarian fascination with collecting, categorizing and archiving.²⁷ It was during the project that their collecting took on another purpose: “the revival of Manx music in 1896” (Gill 1915:355).²⁸ W.H. Gill, a post office employee who lived in Sussex, made trips to the Isle of Man to conduct fieldwork with his brother and Clague, and he claimed that the idea of a national songbook only arose “after the search for melodies had proceeded to some extent” (Gill 1898:iv).²⁹ Although the actual date of this decision has not been

27 J.F. Gill was president of the ‘Natural History and Antiquarian Society’ and Clague was also involved in some of the Manx societies. Clague had been collecting music and customs for much of his life as a doctor in the Island. W.H. Gill and Clague were both members of the original committee of the Folk-Song Society, founded in 1898.

28 Gill only uses the term ‘revival’ once in his writing. In this case, he used it in hindsight in regard to the project in the 1890s.

29 It has been assumed by modern-day revivalists that the publication of the national songbook was entirely W.H. Gill’s idea, and that Clague had conducted all of the collecting. This notion was based entirely on the fact that Clague’s notebooks were the only evidence of the fieldwork available, and therefore it appeared that Gill had not taken part.

recorded, if Gill's statement is to be trusted, then it can be assumed that their collecting (from 1893/4) originally transpired from a purely antiquarian interest, and that much of the source material was collected within this context.

Their initial motivation was “to collect and preserve [Manx music] from the oblivion” (Gill 1896:iii), but after deciding to produce *Manx National Songs*, W.H. Gill declared that their primary object was to recreate and popularize Manx music among the general public, rather than to produce an antiquarian collection for a scholarly audience (*ibid*). Possibly this was a defensive tactic to avoid criticism from antiquarian purists, although the creative “improvement” of folk songs deemed too simple or primitive was not unusual during this era (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). In fact, because of the often ‘unsuitable’ lyrics, and the difficulties of harmonizing unusual modes, it was commonly believed that in order to publish arrangements of folk song for a popular market, “boulderization was the only answer” (Gammon 1980:71). Clague and the Gill brothers were not particularly explicit about their motivations for reviving Manx traditional music, but it can be assumed that, on the whole, their intentions were nationalist in a non-political sense. As spokesperson and editor of the national songbook, W.H. Gill has been described as an “energetic promotor of the Isle of Man” (Bazin 2003a). However, Gill did display a slight bias towards the Celtic connections through his selection of melodies in his publication: “[Gill] emphasised Gaelic connections, particularly with Ireland... When not ignored, the strong influence of the north of England was misinterpreted” (Belchem 2000:226-7).

Although it had been suggested by mutual friend, T.E. Brown,³⁰ that this group joined forces with Moore in his collection (Gill 1916:385), it was clear by then that their motivations were contradictory to each other.

Though we have been working in the same field, our aims are different; not antagonistic, however, but complementary. His preferences would seem to be

30 Reverend T.E. Brown (1830-1897) was a celebrated local poet who wrote in the Anglo-Manx dialect. He had taught the Gill Brothers and Clague when they were pupils at King William's College, Isle of Man.

historical and antiquarian while mine are innately artistic... I'm trying to do for the music of Manxland what Tom Moore and Sir John Stevenson did for the Irish melodies and what, in our own day, Mr. Baring Gould and his coadjutors have been doing for the songs of Western England (Gill 1896:x).

Throughout the project W.H. Gill acted as spokesperson for the three, so it is difficult to determine the personal motivations of his brother and Clague. Although of Manx descent, the Gill brothers spent part of their upbringing in Sicily, before being sent to the Isle of Man for their schooling at King William's College (where they met Clague). All three were competent amateur musicians, but W.H. Gill used his classical training in music to produce arrangements of Manx songs in a style suitable for a formal concert performance (Douglas 1978:30 and 33).³¹ It is likely that as a resident in England, he would have mixed with others of the same inclination; middle to upper-class musicians collecting and arranging folk music for the drawing-room clientele. Particularly because he lived in Sussex, Gill must have witnessed the great surge of activity in his locality where leading folk song collectors such as Lucy Broadwood, Anne Gilchrist, George Butterworth, and later, Cecil Sharp and Vaughan Williams were gathering folk songs (see Gammon 1980:61-89). This may have inspired Gill to consider the virtually unexplored musical history of his ancestors in the Isle of Man. His residence in England may also explain his patriotic enthusiasm towards Manx music that his brother and Clague, as Manx residents, did not appear to share to such a degree. As an 'expat', W.H. Gill perhaps had more reason to express his identity than his colleagues:

... although visitors to his study would be proudly shown on the wall a lengthy genealogical table 'pure Manx on both sides', William Henry Gill was not born in Mann... and only lived on our Island during his schooldays (Heritage 1986).

3.1 *Fieldwork - Clague and the Gill Brothers*

It has been generally assumed by academics and current Manx traditional musicians that Clague had made all of the field-notes in the 1890s, and that the Gill brothers had

31 Gill had already composed and published musical material before this period. Since the 1870s, he had published arrangements for the one-manual church organ, choral works, songs and hymns (Manx Quarterly 1916).

merely exploited his collection for the purpose of publishing a collection of ‘national’ songs (see Carswell 2001b:85-6). Academics have also been very sceptical about Clague’s involvement in the outcome of *Manx National Songs*. In the introduction to the reprint of Gilchrist’s review of the *Clague Collection* (1924), Miller (2001:i) wrote:

While his [Clague’s] name appears on the Preface [of *Manx National Songs*] sandwiched between Deemster Frederick Gill and his brother, W.H. Gill, his only contribution to this book was in giving W.H. Gill access to his collection. The impression gained from reading the preface, and the reprint of W.H. Gill’s paper to the Musical Association in 1895, is that the effort was all down to Gill himself, with a brief nod to his Deemster brother. While the title page mentions that the material comes ‘From the MS collection of the Deemster Gill, Dr. J. Clague and W.H. Gill,’ the scope of Clague’s collection or personal contribution, is nowhere mentioned at all, not even in passing.

Until very recently, Clague’s own notebooks, housed at the Manx National Heritage Library (Manx Museum, Douglas), were the only collection of this era available, so presumptions have been made as a result of the limited evidence. Over Christmas 2000 though, the manuscript book of Deemster J.F. Gill was released by the museum, a collection never witnessed before by modern-day devotees of Manx traditional music.³² The book was bound by J.F. Gill’s wife in 1912 and evidently is a neatened version of the collective notes of both Clague and W.H. Gill. A large map at the beginning of the book displays the areas visited by the collectors in red ink, indicating “where the singers lived. (Of Manx Music) [*sic.*]”, and it is apparent that most of the Island was extensively covered.³³ Although it contains duplications of melodies to be found in the *Clague Collection*, many of the melodies are actually attributed to W.H.

32 *The Original Collection of Manx Folk Music Made by His Honour the Deemster Gill, Mr. W.H. Gill and Dr. Clague. Completed in 1895 and 1896* [although examples inside state that some melodies were collected in 1898] (MNHL MS 9702). The emergence of this collection has arrived at a opportune time for this thesis. As proof that W.H. Gill had actually collected many of the melodies that are now played, it raises some interesting questions about the ideology of the revivalists in the 1970s. Thankfully I happened to be in the Manx National Heritage Library a couple of days after it was rediscovered, and Dr. George Broderick and Stephen Miller brought it to my attention. The J.F. Gill Collection has evidently been in the hands of the Museum for some time, as notes referring to the Clague Collection have been added to the manuscript, probably by librarian William Cubbon at the beginning of the 20th century. The reason behind the deferred public release of the manuscript is unknown.

33 *ibid*:1. All parishes except Marown were included in their search. See Carswell 2001b.

Gill, disclosing that, contrary to previous belief, he did much of the collecting himself. The melodies assigned to W.H. Gill were collected between the years of 1895 and late 1898, suggesting that even after the publication of both *Manx National Songs* (1896) and *Manx National Music* (1898), Gill felt their survey unfinished. Comparative notes are made between similar tunes collected by W.H. Gill and Clague, and those found in other collections,³⁴ and in some respects, the method of documentation is more precise than Clague's. J.F. Gill rigorously names the informants of his brother and Clague, with place and date of meeting, and often adds notes about the informant - age, occupation, instrument - sometimes with an accompanying story behind the song, and even metronome tempos. In fact, now that the two versions of the combined collection can be compared, previous misconceptions about its authors can be reviewed and W.H. Gill's claims of having personally conducted fieldwork can eventually be believed. For instance, "Bock Kilkany" or "Inneen Kilkany" [*sic.* Kilkenny] has always been attributed to Clague, because it appeared in his collection. However, when compared to the *J.F. Gill Collection*, the following details suggest that it was actually W.H. Gill who collected the melody, and Clague simply forgot to acknowledge the fact in his copy [Appendix 2]:

Taken down by W.H. Gill from Mrs Lawson, Kerroo Croye, or Ballachurry, Jurby East - 11 Oct 1898... [melody] ... Mrs Lawson says this 'song is' [*sic.*] about going to Douglas with buttermilk. On the way the cart is capsized and the milk spilt (*J.F. Gill Collection*:49).

Mrs Lawson, Ballachurry, Jurby... [no date]... [exactly the same melody as above]... Cart going to Douglas with buttermilk and spilt (*Clague Collection* Book C/III:42).

It would appear that Clague was not in the habit of recording his information in such an antiquarian manner as his companions. He often neglects to specify the date, the informant's name, occupation and place of recording. And it is noticeable that when J.F. Gill copied Clague's work into his own manuscript book, he often added approximate information that did not feature in Clague's version. For example, "The

34 Barrow's *Mona Melodies* and Moore's *Carvalyn Gailckagh* and *Manx Ballads and Music* in particular.

Old Country Farmer. Taken down by Dr. Clague. Sep - Dec 1895” (*J.F. Gill Collection*:11 and *Clague Collection A/I:41*).³⁵

New evidence from the *J.F. Gill Collection* also confirms that Clague conducted most of his fieldwork in his own locality; the south, the south-east, and south-west of the Island. W.H. Gill made sporadic trips to the Island for his fieldwork between 1895 and 1898, and without the commitment of work while he was visiting, he managed to collect in areas that had previously been neglected. For a fortnight in April 1895 he visited informants in all corners of the Island, and on his next trip in August of the same year, he concentrated on collecting in the north.

In the latter part of the *J.F. Gill Collection*, the preparatory work for *Manx National Songs* is evident, where W.H. Gill experiments with different harmonies for his piano arrangements, and it includes a melody written by Clague and harmonized by W.H. Gill. Although Deemster J.F. Gill has obviously made a concerted effort in neatly documenting the field-notes of his brother and Dr. Clague, his part in the venture is rather unclear, as his name does not appear next to any of the collected tunes, and his only apparent role in the resulting book is his composed lyrics for “The King of the Sea”.³⁶ In regard to Clague’s involvement in the final book, there are few clues to why he did not compose any lyrics or write any of the musical arrangements. Possibly he was not interested in contributing in a creative manner, as reflected in a statement that Clague made about his interest in the Gaelic language: “I am merely a collector and preserver”.³⁷ In the fourth notebook of his collection, though, there are examples of Clague’s creative side: musical sketches and medleys based on traditional tunes for varied instrumentation, including four voices, solo violin and solo piano. Carswell (2001b:55-6) however, suggests that Clague was not particularly happy about the

35 According to the *J.F. Gill Collection*, W.H. Gill collected 107 of the melodies, whereas Clague collected 93. However, 83 melodies were not attributed to either collector. 55 were from other printed sources, including *The Mona Melodies* and Methodist hymnals. Total of melodies in the *J.F. Gill Collection* (including variants and arrangements): 338.

36 *Manx National Songs* 1896:47-9. Melody based on collected tune, “Yn Colbagh Breck er Sthrap” (The Speckled Heifer Tethered), and lyrics completely invented.

37 Letter from Clague to Mr G.W. Wood, 10 May 1899. MNHL MS 1399 A (Undivided). In Miller (2001:i).

character of the ensuing book and cites an argument that occurred between the three collectors shortly before its publication. Clague and J.F. Gill were under the impression that the original melodies would also be printed in *Manx National Songs*, an agreement that W.H. Gill consequently ‘called off’, fearing that if the bare melodies were revealed to the public alongside his arrangements, they would “damn [his] musical reputation” (letter by W.H. Gill 1896 in *ibid.*). The original melodies were not publicly disclosed until the 1920s, when Anne Gilchrist published the majority of the *Clague Collection* in the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*.

W.H. Gill stated that he had originally thought that traditional melodies would be difficult to find, but after gleaning “out-of-the-way spots on the mountains and among the solitary glens” (Gill 1896:ix), they apparently came across hundreds. W.H. Gill (*ibid*:x) had explained that they wanted to collect ancient melodies, no younger than the late 18th century: “The tunes of the nineteenth century may safely be left to take care of themselves.” So, to achieve this, the collectors focused their attentions upon informants over the age of sixty, and requested “material as heard from at least their parents’, but preferably from their grandparents’ generation” (Carswell 2001b:18). The Gill brothers and Clague followed the popular view of this era; that folk song should be ‘national’ song, and that the tradition itself must be rural, ancient and “synonymous with peasant song” (Lloyd 1967:12).

Further research would be required to find out more about the informants employed by Clague and the Gill brothers, but certain individuals do feature more prominently than others: Thomas Kermode, (known as ‘Boy Doal’ or ‘Bwoie Doal’ - Blind Boy), contributed around 10% of the collected songs, and the collections feature regular contributions from Philip Cain (‘Phillie the Desert’), Tom Moore (‘The Lag’), and Dr. Clague’s own coachman, Charles Clague. The collectors focused mainly upon the rural areas where people were perceived to have been unaffected by modernity, and consequently, elderly, native Manx people from the country became the ‘folk’.³⁸ This

38 It is presumed that all of the collecting sessions were conducted in the informants’ homes. There are no instances of Clague or the Gill brothers specifically visiting the local inns to collect material, but this may be explained by geographical circumstances: “... the Manx settlement scheme was not that of the English village centred around the church and pub but consisted of

assumption was standard at this stage in the development of folklore studies: “Until pre-literate, traditional society had been ‘devastated’ by industrialisation, education and mass culture, it was accepted that every member of the folk had been a tradition bearer” (Boyes 1986:11). Apart from the premise that the ‘folk’ had to be elderly, the Manx collectors were not discriminatory about class or background - their informants ranged from a retired policeman, shepherd, Parish clerk, shoemaker, gardener, fisherman to a harbour master. Although there were a few female informants included in their survey, Gill stated that “the contributors were chiefly men” (1896:ii), and this was probably reflective of the social environment of this period. Carswell (2001b:18) suggested that;

... the fact that the lower status of women was an accepted part of late nineteenth-century society may well have made potential sources reticent to make themselves, or be made, known to influential gentlemen such as Clague and the Gills.

Clague would have been in a more advantageous position to collect melodies from the locals than his colleagues. He was recognized all over the Island as a family doctor, and was known for gathering local folklore for many years. In contrast, J.F and W.H. Gill may have needed a more persuasive approach with their informants, being a Deemster (Judge) and a stranger, and were known to have brought gifts to potential informants in exchange for their melodies:³⁹

The Manx people are proverbially shy, but by dint of coaxing, the intervention of boon companions, and in some cases the judicious application of suitable stimuli in the shape of presents of tea for the wives, and tobacco for the husbands, Mr. Gill got over their shyness and the ancient minstrels were

isolated (though relatively dense) houses usually a significant distance from their parish church” (Coakley 2001). There is one account however, that tells of the collectors having difficulties in persuading one informant, “old Q”, to sing. At first, he “positively refused”, yet eventually conceded that he would sing if they took him to the King Orry Arms. The Gill brothers and Clague “hauled the old man up into the car” and took him to the inn, and after “the judicious administration of suitable stimulants, he became inspired, filled and overflowing with song, splendidly vocal!” (Manx Quarterly 1916).

39 Gammon 1980:66 cites an incident when Kate Lee was collecting in Sussex during this period, which illustrates the perceived class divisions between collector and informant. Having been asked to come to her residence to sing, her nervous male informants arrived in their “Sunday best”. Their anxieties were “soon dispelled by generous helpings from a full bottle of whisky”.

warbling as in the old times and ready and eager to give him all the tunes “that was at them” (Graves 1913, adapted from Gill 1896:x).

Unlike their contemporaries in the rest of Britain who largely rejected melodies of recent times, or those that could be assigned authorship (Boyes 1986:11 and 1993:14), the Victorian collectors in the Isle of Man quickly realized they could not afford to be fastidious or discriminatory about style and content. Gill’s fears of a rapidly diminishing tradition were confirmed when he admitted that “except in the case of the carols [carvals] which are more generally known, and of a few other melodies, the various tunes were known only by the individuals from whom they were obtained” (Gill 1896:iii). Furthermore, most of the songs collected in the Island during this period probably did not fit the general perception of ‘traditional’, because in the Clague and Gill Collections, there are examples of what would appear to be recently imported broadside ballads, non-Manx songs, published hymns and a considerable number of carvals.⁴⁰

Many of the collected tunes were actually hymns or carvals, noted down with or without titles and words. Even where songs are untitled, the use of double bar lines between phrases such as those employed in hymn music, perhaps suggest that the collectors were aware of their origin.⁴¹ Given the prominence of religious material, Carswell (2001b:20) suggests that some informants may have felt intimidated by the upper-class collectors, and substituted their ‘normal’ repertoire for more “respectable” religious material. Although the collectors had originally specified that they wished to collect ‘ancient’ Manx melodies from the oral tradition, they found that in many cases, the melodies “have evidently been imported” (Gill 1896:iv), and that some had been learnt recently from printed music. One example of this is in the J.F. Gill manuscripts.

40 Gilchrist (1924-6) categorized the majority of the *Clague Collection*, grouping any variants and fragments with their descendants. She also included a few songs contributed by Mona Douglas and Sophia Morrison: Gods, Sprites and Fairies [5 in total - Clague-1, Douglas-3, Morrison-1], Cante-fables [Clague-2], Songs of Island Life [11], Love Songs [18], Sea Songs [4], Songs of Popular Heroes [3], Narrative Ballads [8], Miscellaneous Songs [3], Songs of Occupation [6], Humorous Songs [3], Dance Tunes [5], Songs connected with Customs [6], Goodnight and Parting Songs [1-2], Carvals [16], Un-named Carval-tunes [5], English Carols [6], Old Primitive Methodist Tunes [4], Last Gleanings [mixture - 19].

41 Double bar lines have been omitted in Colin Jerry’s hand-copied reprint of the Clague Collection. Revised edition, 1991.

W.F. Gill had collected “Carol - Jacob’s Ladder” from John Lacey of St. Jude’s (05/10/1898), and noted that; “Lacey admits he may have got this tune from Moody and Sankey or Salvation Army” (*J.F. Gill Collection:47*).

One obvious omission by the collectors has inevitably led to some confusion in the interpretation of the music by modern-day revivalists, especially when the *Clague Collection* has been viewed in isolation to comparative evidence (see Speers 1996-7). While the collectors state that the majority of examples are songs, and were taken from singers,⁴² the words are rarely included in either of the collective manuscripts, or are mere fragments of the lyrics in Manx Gaelic or English:

What sounds one of the most recent tunes in the present collection [*Manx National Songs*] (No. 12) must be at least one hundred years old and may be much older. It was whistled to me by a man of seventy, who had kept it in reverent memory all his lifetime as having been sung to him by his mother when he was a baby. He had never known any words to it. This is the only “song without words” that has come to my net. All the rest, even most of the dance tunes, have words, and in many instances the same tune is sung to different words (Gill 1896:x).

This directs us to ask why the lyrics were not recorded along with their melodies. In reference to the songs selected for *Manx National Songs*, Gill states that “for the most part the original songs were sung to Manx words” (*ibid:iii*), but he adds that for the purposes of a national songbook aimed at an English-speaking audience, the Gaelic words were not required: “The language being practically dead, songs with Manx words would not be generally sung” (*ibid.*). Furthermore, with the absence of lyrics it is difficult to decipher from Gill and Clague’s field-notes which of the collected melodies were sung in Gaelic and which were in English. The titles may offer clues in some cases, but there are many instances of the collector noting both an English and a Manx title to a song, with no reference as to which title is the translation. However, modern-day researchers have concluded that “Material collected from the last native

42 Evidently, the majority of the melodies were sung by the informants, although there are references to some tunes being played on a fiddle: Charles Clague (Dr. Clague’s coachman), Thomas Kinrade (a 73 year old informant from Ramsey) and Phillip Caine (a blind fiddler who contributed 11 melodies). See Bazin 1997:103.

speakers shows a very fragmentary knowledge of folksong” (Miller 1993), and Clague’s main informant had previously claimed that there was a noticeable absence of Manx Gaelic songs: “In 1883, Thomas Kermode [Bwoie Doal] stated that he had not heard a song sung ‘for the last forty years’” (Stowell and Ó Bréasláin 1996:14).⁴³ The absence of recorded words may have denoted the collectors’ unfamiliarity with the Manx Gaelic language,⁴⁴ but it seems more likely that they were simply not interested in recording the lyrics. Throughout his writings, Gill invariably refers to the “melodies” and “tunes”, rather than ‘songs’, and the objective of the group is perhaps epitomized in Gill’s following statement:

... as regards the raw material, the object was to obtain an absolutely *true record* of the melody, the whole melody, and nothing but the melody (Gill 1898:ix. His italics).

It seems that the addition of lyrics only came to the fore of the project because Boosey and Co. insisted on that format, as they claimed that it was the words of the songs that assured the commercial success of the national songbook series. W.H. Gill had hoped to publish piano solo versions of the collected melodies, whereas J.F. Gill and Clague were under the impression that the melodies would also be published in their original state alongside the arrangements (Carswell 2001b:55-6). Once it was decided that a national songbook should be published, the collectors probably imagined that new words would be added, as was the norm, so again, there would be little point in

43 The authors are referring to Professor J. Strachan and Father Henebry of Ireland who visited the Isle of Man in 1883 and 1886. Strachan collected the song “Ec ny Fiddleryn” (At the Fiddlers) from Thomas Kermode (1875-1901) and published it in *Feitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 1897:54-8. Although they only collected one song, Strachan’s phonetic transcription of Kermode’s Manx Gaelic lyrics has been of interest to language revivalists as an example of pronunciation at this time. See Broderick 1983:310 and Moore 1896:xxii for further details.

Owing to the various examples of English songs recorded with Manx titles, it could be suggested that fisherman Tom Kermode may have translated many English-language songs into Gaelic himself. For instance, the title of the melody for “Bannaght Lhiat, Kirree Veg, my Griah” (Farewell, Little Kitty, My Love) suggests that the English song “Adieu, my lovely Nancy, ten thousand times adieu” was translated into Gaelic (Gilchrist 1924-6:309, *J.F. Gill Collection*:32 and *Clague Collection*:C4). “Ec Kiare Bleeaney Jeig dy Eash” (“At Fourteen Years of Age”) is another example of a well-known English ballad that seems to have been translated into Manx Gaelic (Gilchrist 1924-6:141, Gill:29 and Clague:A36).

44 Because of a familiarity with the language, Clague’s spelling of Gaelic titles is more accurate than those of the Gill brothers. W.H. or J.F. Gill have tended to spell the words inaccurately (sometimes phonetically) when they were unsure, yet Clague’s copies of some of these melodies often have corrected spelling.

collecting unusable lyrics. However, if “melodies” were all that were required by the collectors, the question arises over why they were exclusively collected from singers and not from instrumentalists. There are a few examples of dance tunes, some of which were played on the fiddle, yet the rest were sung by their informants, sometimes with nonsense words (Gill 1898:viii).⁴⁵ The fiddle has been repeatedly cited in earlier historical records in connection with West Gallery and dance music in the Isle of Man, but probably because of the disapproval of the Methodist church, its use seems to have lapsed by the 1890s (see Bazin 1997). This is also implied by Gill’s observation that “the dearth of musical instruments in Man may have had a beneficial effect by making the singers rely entirely upon their unaided voices” (1898:viii). Therefore, the Victorian collectors either purposefully overlooked dance material and asked the majority of informants to sing old songs, or there was a virtual absence of instrumentalists amongst the ‘folk’ by the 1890s.

From another angle, it is possible that the collection of lyrics at this time was not deemed necessary due to Clague’s other collection of manuscripts which contained song-lyrics. This group of collectors were also aware that Moore was conducting a similar survey, but with an emphasis on ballad and song lyrics, and perhaps thought that Moore would naturally collect the same songs. Even though it seems that there was little communication and an element of rivalry between the two groups, it was stated in *Manx National Songs*, that “Those interested in the Manx words will find a larger collection of them in Mr. A.W. Moore’s Book, now in the press...” (Gill 1896:iv).

The answer may even dwell in the content of some of the songs. Where the songs were not religious (and therefore already recorded in hymnals and the carval collections), the lyrics tended to be rather ‘uncouth’. Irrespective to this project, Clague had previously collected Gaelic song-lyrics, noted in his general folklore manuscripts. Many of these song texts shared the same titles as those in the music manuscripts, so

45 Gill’s descriptions are reminiscent of the Scottish ‘puirt-a-beul’, or Irish ‘diddling’ or ‘lilting’; mouth music used to accompany dances (see Skinner-Sawyers 2000:104). But with little evidence regarding the context of Manx music in this era, it is impossible to substantiate this theory.

in the 1980s Dr. George Broderick reconstructed the songs, pairing some of the lyrics with the music. The results of which suggest that the Victorian collectors perhaps did not want to acknowledge the “bawdy” content of many of the songs (Broderick 1982:1-41).

3.2 *Manx National Songs and Manx National Music*

The subsequent publication of *Manx National Songs* denoted a change of direction and thought for Clague and the Gill brothers:

The object of the collectors was two-fold - first, to record and hand down the melodies as they are now known, with the variations and imperfections due to oral transmission, and secondly to put some of these melodies into a form adapted for modern performance, vocal and instrumental (Gill 1896:iii).

With an extensive collection of traditional music recorded in a competent antiquarian manner, W.H. Gill now directed his efforts towards becoming the Island’s first national composer. All of the fifty-one songs in *Manx National Songs* were arranged for voice and piano by W.H. Gill, and English words were used in order to make the songs accessible to a wider audience.⁴⁶ The majority of the songs in this book were from the Clague/Gill collection, and W.H. Gill chose the most ‘authentic’ sounding melodies:

Where several versions of the same tune offered themselves for selection, I have chosen the one that appeared to me the most original- *i.e.*, the most Manx- as well as the most interesting from an artistic point of view (Gill 1896:xii. His

46 Several of his colleagues, including A.P. Graves, Emil Ingram and Hugh Stowell, were employed to compose the new lyrics. Gill had asked his friend and former school-teacher, T.E. Brown to contribute some poetry for *Manx National Songs*. However, Brown “deliberately though regretfully declined” (Gill 1917) because he was already involved in writing the preface to Moore’s book (1896). Brown died in 1897, but had made plans with Gill to compose modern ‘national’ songs, “poetically and musically in the Manx spirit” (Gill 1917). In a few instances, published poems by Bryon, Hood and Hogg were set to Manx melodies by W.H. Gill. Only the song, “Hunt the Wren” (1896:62-6) retained its original words. The replacing of new English words was common practice within this genre, although in contrast, Boulton and Somervell included the original words at the end of their arrangements in *Songs of the Four Nations* [1892]. For instance, they employed one Manx song called “Mylecharaine”, a well-known song recorded in *The Mona Melodies* and other sources. New words were composed, but the original Gaelic lyrics were also supplied (1892:188-92).

italics).

The words were completely reinvented, although for some of the songs, the authors tried to adhere to the original context. In other cases, the subject matter was totally transformed, often because the authors felt they needed to conceal the original lyrics: “In many cases the original words possess no literary merit, or historic interest, and in many others they are unfit for publication” (*ibid*:iv). In instances where the collectors were likely to have heard crass lyrics from their informants, such as “Hie Mee Stiagh Ayns Thie Ben-Treoghe” or “I went into the Widow’s House”, they were replaced by a genteel reinterpretation in *Manx National Songs* (1896:136-7). In this particular case, the song was renamed “Cutting the Turf”, which completely ignored the sexual exploits of the widow from the original song (Broderick 1982:20-21).

As displayed in the Gill and Clague manuscripts, the original words, for whatever reasons, were rarely collected, so there was little reference for the lyricists, apart from song texts previously printed in *Manx Society Publications*. Instead, typical ‘Manx national features’ became the thematic content, and references to place-names, Manx surnames, customs and heroes common to the Isle of Man were used throughout. Therefore, the context of a traditional song was often transformed to enhance the ‘national’ element of the songbook. For instance, the lyrics for “King of the Sea”⁴⁷, a song about herring, one of the main industries in the Isle of Man during the 18th century, were set to two variant melodies (major and minor versions) which were originally about a speckled heifer.⁴⁸ Curiously, both of the tunes are again employed with virtually the same accompaniment for “The Maid of Port-e-Shee” (Gill 1896:98-97), which does actually refer to a calf in its lyrics. Also, fitting with the fashion of the era, “Disaster songs given the *gran scena* treatment remained fitfully popular into the 1890s” (Scott 1989:134), and this was reflected in several of Gill’s selected songs;

47 Gill 1896:47-49. It seems that this is the only example of J.F. Gill’s creative input to the book, as he composed the lyrics.

48 According to the Gill manuscripts, in October 1895 W.H. Gill suggested the amalgamation of two similar titled melodies called “Yn Colbagh Breck er Sthrap” and “Colvack Breck” [sic.]. The first variant was collected from Phillie Caine of Baldwin (*J.F. Gill Collection*:107) in April 1895, and the second from Mrs Lawson in August of the same year (*J.F. Gill Collection*:117, duplicated as “Colvagh Vleac” in *Clague Collection A*:19).

“The Sheep Under the Snow” and “The Wreck of the Herring Fleet” [see Appendix 3] being prime examples.

W.H. Gill employed A.P. Graves to compose the lyrics for twelve of the songs. Graves (1846-1931) was regarded as an authority on Irish folk music, and was also in demand for his skill as a poet. He had previously collaborated with Irish composer, C. Villiers Stanford to produce a similar book of arrangements called *Irish Songs and Ballads* in 1893 and had composed the English words for the “universal favourite of favourites” (Davies 1999:683), “Rhyfelgrych Gwyr Harlech” (Men of Harlech) and “Her Wlad fy Nhadau” (Land of my Fathers).⁴⁹ With such notoriety Graves therefore introduced a professional and perhaps, legitimizing element to *Manx National Songs*. Although he was based in Manchester at this time, Graves was school inspector to the Isle of Man and due to his own interest in folk music, became acquainted with Clague and the Gill brothers. Furthermore, Graves initiated W.H. Gill’s publishing contract with Boosey and Co. (Graves 1913 and Carswell 2001:55). Grave’s intervention “was to dictate the shape of the project” (Carswell 2001:55), which offers an explanation as to the sudden departure from the collectors’ original objective of rescuing and preserving Manx folk music, to producing a creative work in a similar vein to the other publications in the Boosey series.

Grave’s lyrics for the nautical ballad “The Wreck of the Herring Fleet” (Gill 1896:10-17) remain very close to the translation (from Manx to English) in *Mona Miscellany*, a song which was also published by Moore.⁵⁰ The theme and specific details of the song are adhered to in a condensed form: references to the date of the disaster, (Saint Matthew’s Eve, 21st September 1787), the number of lives lost (twenty one), and the location of Douglas Harbour as in the original. The original melody used by W.H. Gill was collected by himself (and also by Clague) from Phillip Caine (‘Phillie the Desert’)

49 Graves also contributed to *Songs of Killarney* (1873), *Irish Songs and Ballads* (1880), *Songs of Old Ireland* (1883), *Songs of Irish Wit and Humour* (1884), *Songs of Erin* (1892) and *The Irish Song Book* (1894).

50 Gill 1896:150-157. “Coayl jeh ny Baatyn-skeddan”. Lyrics taken from *Mona Miscellany* (Harrison 1869:78-94). See Moore 1896:xxxiii. Moore used the Manx version from this publication, but translated it himself for *Manx Ballads and Music*. It is assumed that Graves consulted the same source.

from West Baldwin, on the 18th of April 1895.⁵¹ Gill's piano arrangement illustrates the lyrical content in a dramatic fashion, imitating the storm with vigorous tremolando in the bass clef [Appendix 3]. This theatrical treatment was typical of songs of the day, and this example shows a close resemblance to John Hatton's "The Wreck of the Hesperus" written in 1853 (Scott 1989:135-6).⁵²

"The Cruise of the Tiger" (Gill 1896: 4-7) was based on the song "Marrinys yn Tiger", a ballad said to have been written by Manxman and sailor, John Moore. A.P. Graves was again employed to adapt the words, whilst W.H. Gill contributed the piano accompaniment [Appendix 4]. This example stays close to the original theme of the lyrics:

Translation of Manx lyrics by A.W. Moore in *Manx Ballads and Music* (words - 1896:158-65 and music 1896:244).⁵³ [Verse one and two]:

The Gentlemen of Mona,
In Grandeur, state and pride,
Their pennies threw together,
And purchased an old ship.

Ren deiney-seyrey Vannin,
Ayns yrjid, stayd as moyrn,
Nyn bingyn cheau dy-cheilley,
As chionnee ad shenn lhong.

They had the place in Douglas,
And stations up country,
Where they threw pence together,
To buy a privateer.

Va ynnyd oc ayns Doolish,
As boaylyn er y cheer,
Raad cheau ad pingyn cooidjagh,
Dy chionnagh privateer.

A.P. Grave's version (verse one) in *Manx National Songs* [Appendix 4]:

The Patriot sons of Mona,
Great Buonaparte to whip,
Subscrib'd to buy the "Tiger",

51 There are also many other versions of the melody, including those collected after the publication of *Manx National Songs*.

52 Song setting of poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. John Liptrot Hatton (1808-1892) was also the chief arranger for several of the Boosey national Songbooks.

53 See Appendix 6 for music. Moore took the Manx Gaelic lyrics from a Manx Society Publication: *Mona Micellany XXI* (Harrison 1873), but used his own English translation. Graves adapted the original. Verses one and two: "ONCE as the gents of Mona, Resolv'd our foes to whip, They threw their pence together, And bought a crazy ship. They had a spot at Douglas, And stations here and there, Where money was collected, To buy a privateer" (ibid :115-21).

An ancient battle ship.
Big Harry Qualtrough voted
The captain of her crew,
And fiercely from her top-mast
Our three legg'd ensign flew.

Graves had obviously consulted the same source as Moore for this song (*Mona Miscellany*, edited by Harrison 1873), but because the original ballad consisted of thirty-two verses, he composed a condensed version of seven verses which largely adhered to the original story-line. However, the melodies of Gill and Moore differ greatly; the tunes are melodically dissimilar, and Moore's version of the tune is half the length of Gill's. It should be noted that Moore's version of the melody (1896:244) was collected from Thomas Crellin in Peel on the west coast, whilst Gill's variant was taken from William Corlett from Laxey on the east coast of the Island (*J.F. Gill Collection*: 109). Melody-wise, Gill refers very closely to his own source material, but because his variant notes are ambiguous in the original manuscripts, it is indeterminate whether they are 'improvements' on the melody, or if he was simply uncertain of the correct notes when recording the melody. Gill's arrangement of the melody echoes the other publications in the Boosey series;⁵⁴ light accompanying chords with dramatic interludes between verses. In this case, Gill incorporated the melody of "Rule Britannia"! [Appendices 4-6].

"The Sheep Under the Snow" ("Kirree Fo Niaghtey"), was a well known and popular song in the Isle of Man in Gill's era and remains so today. It had appeared in *Mona Melodies* in 1820 and *Mona Miscellany XVI* (Harrison 1869), and Clague and the Gill brothers collected many variants of the melody themselves, although they did not transcribe the words from their informants. The resulting melody line in *Manx National Songs* (Gill 1896:1-3) was an amalgamation of several sources, although the basic attributes of the melody are similar to the version printed by Moore in the same

54 Boosey's Royal Edition of National Songs included *Songs of England* I, II & III (1873, 1892 & 1900), edited by J.L. Hatton and Eaton Fanning; *Songs of Scotland* I, II & III (1873, 1877 & 1890), ed. Colin Brown, J. Pittman, Myles B. Foster and Dr. Charles Mackay; *Songs of Ireland* (1875?), ed. J.L. Hatton and J.L. Molloy; and *Songs of Wales* (1873), ed. Brinley Richards. Songs of other European nations were also included in the series.

year.⁵⁵ Gill incorporated the dorian mode versions, as found in the *Mona Melodies*, and those collected by Clague and himself.

4. A.W. Moore's *Manx Ballads and Music*

A.W. Moore (1853-1910), a Manx man educated at Rugby and Trinity College, Cambridge, was a contemporary amateur folklorist of the Gill brothers and Dr. Clague, and in the same year as *Manx National Songs*, produced a book of similar themed material. His motivation was principally the same as Gill and Clague: to rescue the traditional songs and music,⁵⁶ although the context of his book *Manx Ballads and Music* was more antiquarian and academic than that of his peers'. In the preface to the book, T.E. Brown described Moore's intentions:

Great care has been taken to get at the original Melodies. No preconceptions have been suffered to stand in the way of a faithful reproduction of the notes as proceeding from the lips of those who were most likely to have retained the genuine tradition (Brown, in Moore 1896:xii).

Although he was polymathic and meticulously academic in his presentation, Moore's studies of all aspects of local culture and language were essentially driven by the desire to distinguish the Isle of Man as a Celtic country with its own unique identity:

Moore was an avid (almost obsessive) student of anything and everything Manx, the Celtic culture of Ellan Vannin [Isle of Man] under threat from 'summer flood of Saxon trippers'... Moore's antiquarianism was driven by an essential Celtic racialism (Belchem 2000:220 and 221).

Moore also illustrated this in an article for the *Celtic Review* (1909-10):

Though Man now looks eastwards, rather than westwards, it has a remaining

55 Moore 1896: 257. Melody taken from *Mona Miscellany* (Harrison 1869:123-30).

56 Carswell (2001b:44) reveals that Moore actually approached Clague in 1891, with the hope of gaining access to his collection, but was refused. He also states that Moore's original approach to the publication of Manx musical material had been populist; arrangements with modern lyrics. W.H. Gill though, had the same idea, and when he announced his intentions, Carswell suggests that Moore "may... have had to accept Gill's analysis that his views were 'historical and antiquarian' and shape his book accordingly..." (ibid.)

bond that still links it closely to Ireland, a bond that can never be broken - the bond of race.

He found Manx history uninspiring and along with his associates, set about forming a secure identity for the Island. Moore and other antiquarians in the Island collected and classified folklore, mainly focusing on Celtic links, with an infrequent acknowledgment of the Island's Norse mythology. This happened under the watchful eyes of the Pan-Celtic Congress (based in Dublin) who encouraged their Manx delegate, Moore, to promote his native language amongst its people. However, Moore believed that the revival of the language and traditional culture was impossible and too late, and therefore this attitude influenced his fieldwork methodology for *Manx Ballads and Music*. Moore and his associates had decided that the extinction of the Gaelic was inevitable, and therefore concentrated on documenting any surviving traces of the language as historical records.⁵⁷

Most of the material in his book, *Manx Ballads and Music*, was retrieved from archaic printed sources or manuscripts in the Manx Museum. Some song-texts and melodies were taken from local informants during the 1890s, but it is uncertain whether Moore actually collected any oral examples himself, as the venture was conducted by a team of enthusiasts under his guidance. In his "Introduction" (Moore 1896:xxx) he refers the published lyrics to their sources: "Printed Sources 31, MSS. 16, Oral 26-- Total 73. Of this total 51 have been collected by the writer."⁵⁸ Regarding the melodies in the latter section of the book, he states that twenty-nine tunes were collected by several of his aides,⁵⁹ leaving ambiguity over whether he 'visited the field' himself. Reliance was

57 Instead, attention was drawn towards the Manx dialect, a unique symbol of the 'Manx identity'. Reverend T.E. Brown, a colleague of Moore and W.H. Gill, focused on the Manx dialect, and after studying local rural people, learnt to imitate the accent, and "constructed a Manx identity, a national ideal articulated in Anglo-Manx poetry" (Belchem 2000:230). Although Brown's motives were completely laudable and he held the Manx 'folk' in great affection, class distinctions were obviously apparent, and it is not surprising that "there was always some undercurrent of suspicion by the native Manx that he was 'mocking' them in some way" (Norris 1947). See <<http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook>>. This is perhaps indicative of the relationship between the collector and informant of this period, although Clague's occupation as the rural doctor may have placed him in the ideal position to gather material.

58 Carswell (2001) infers that at least four melodies were collected from oral sources by Moore himself.

59 It is not stated who collected which melody, but Moore's aides were Mr. H. Bridson, Mr. J.E. Kelly, Mrs. Ferrier, Mr. James Nicholson, Miss. A. Gell, and Miss Graves.

placed on existing manuscript collections, and many of the tunes were from the journal *Mona Miscellany*, and from other printed sources which were already scarce and virtually inaccessible to those interested.⁶⁰

Moore's fieldwork methodology, assigned to his helpers, was to note down the tunes in their original and accurate form, "as heard from the lips of their singers" (Moore 1896:xxxiv), with no preconceptions over their origin or interference in their reproduction. "The chief custodians... of Manx ballads have been the illiterate and unlearned... have probably lost most of what was worth keeping" (*ibid*:xvi). Moore thought very little of those who meddled with source material and in his introduction to *Manx Ballads and Music*, he commented on Barrow's *The Mona Melodies* of 1820:

It will suffice to say that that this book abounds in errors against musical canons, but the worst fault committed by its authors is the distortion of the melodies in the fruitless effort to make them fit the feeble verses which Barrow composed to accompany them (Moore 1896:xxxii).⁶¹

He also comments on the treatment of song lyrics recorded in *Mona Miscellany* (Manx Society Publications XVI and XXI):

... it may be remarked that many of the translations are so absurd, some being the merest paraphrases and other grotesque perversions of the originals, that they are better consigned to oblivion... [Despite] the poetical merit of these compositions... it is, for the most part of a very low order (*ibid*:xiv).

Hence, for *Manx Ballads and Music*, Moore employed the Gaelic lyrics from these publications, but translated them into English himself. Although he was not a native speaker, Moore mastered the language in adulthood and displayed the Manx ballad

60 Moore refers to the source material for each song printed in *Manx Ballads and Music*: Printed sources: Harrison W. ed., Manx Society Publications: *Mona Miscellany* XVI (1869) and XXI (1873). *Train's History of the Isle of Man*, *Folklore of the Isle of Man*, Manx Society Publications, *Manx Note Book*, *Kelly's Dictionary*, *Cregeen's Dictionary*, *Mona's Herald*. Manuscript sources: Mr. Robert Gawne, Mr. C. Roeder. Oral sources: Mr. William Cashen, Mr. Thomas Crellin, Professor Rhys, Miss Graves, Mr. John Cain, Mr. Wynter, Mr. Thomas Kermodé and others.

61 By this time, only three of the thirteen songs published in *The Mona Melodies* were still known on the Island (Moore 1896:xxxv).

lyrics in their “unadulterated form” (Belchem 2000:226) alongside their direct English translations without succumbing to the temptation of improvement. He states that; “‘a prettified Englished presentation’ has been avoided, and that all effort has been made to preserve them with all their ‘strange, outlandish, and unconventional qualities’” (Moore 1896:xxxv). However, he did apply some selectivity over what should and should not be published:

I have now to refer to some ballads which have not been included in this collection: They consist of (1) *Erotic Ballads* and (2) *Modern Ballads*. Those in the first class have been excluded because they are too gross and indecent for publication; and those in the second, partly because they are of the most inferior type of doggerel and partly because most of them have been written within the last fifty years (*ibid*:xxix).

It is also worth noting that although Moore seemed to disapprove of tampering with source material, he saw nothing wrong with piecing various fragments together. He freely admits in his introduction to compiling six of the Manx songs from the fragments of assorted informants (*ibid*:xxx).

5. The Contemporary Reception to *Manx National Songs* and *Manx Ballads and Music*

When *Manx National Songs* and *Manx Ballads and Music* were published within weeks of each other in 1896, they were received with varying responses:

Predictably, Gill’s work was a huge public success compared with Moore’s. Drawing room arrangements with dashes of sentimentality in the English words were much to be preferred compared with songs of the people in a language most Manx were desperate to pretend did not exist (Stowell and Ó Bréasláin 1996:18).

Manx National Songs was promoted both in England and in the Island. Gill’s songs received “frankly undisguised appreciation” (Gill 1898:x) when performed by well-known singers such as Plunket Greene, at the Boosey and Co. London Ballads Concerts, and Gill would often give an introductory lecture about the native music of

the Island to fascinated upper-class audiences.⁶² When presented in the Isle of Man, the concerts “attracted the largest patriotic audiences ever brought together in the Island” (Gill 1898:x, quoting from a review in the *Isle of Man Examiner*, April 10th 1897), but the reaction from members of the Manx audience told quite a different story. After a concert in Douglas (January 1897) ‘Tommy the Wren’ from Baldwin, wrote to the *Mona’s Herald* newspaper declaring that the concert did not portray his perception of Manx traditional music:

... the white boys came out. What this has to do with Manx songs I don’t know. We’ve got no white bhoys in the counthry at all... [Miss Jull] sang “Ny Kirree Fo Niaghtey”, in the English of coorse. I should have liked to have heard poor ould Phillie the Desert sing that song in Manx... Well the song was rite enough, only she wasn’t Manx enough herself over it. She was too Englishified [*sic.* throughout] (Quoted in Speers 1996-7:274).

In the same month, an anonymous review of Gill’s *Manx National Songs* and Moore’s *Manx Ballads and Music* appeared in the *Manx Sun* newspaper.⁶³ It was highly critical and hostile towards Gill’s work, but full of praise for Moore:

We have never previously met with a more painful instance of the art of the ‘improver’... they have utterly and ignominiously failed to attend to the elementary rules which should be observed by collectors and this failure compels us, with pain to condemn the book as a thoroughly unsatisfactory, meretricious publication and an unnecessary interference with a subject we wish the authors had not touched, or touched not with sacrilegious hands... Thus we have no less than nine or ten of the ‘songs’ in this book of ‘Manx National Songs’ written by Mr. Gill, and they all, without injustice, be safely classed as of the most mediocre, wishy-washy description.

After much condemnation towards the *Manx National Songs*, the reviewer goes on to commend Moore’s book:

62 A lecture paper written by W.H. Gill is printed as the introduction to *Manx National Songs* (1896). See Graves 1913.

63 Untitled review in the *Manx Sun*, 16th January 1897. MNHL J48/60/1xf. There has been much speculation over who the anonymous author might be. Charles Roeder or Sophia Morrison, folklorists and contemporaries of W.H. Gill and A.W. Moore, have both been suggested (verbal sources). See Maddrell 2002b for information about Roeder (1848-1911) and Morrison (1859-1917).

The fruit of Mr. Moore's labour is worthy of all praise. This is a real Manx book - Manx in subject and in treatment, in illustration and in printing... Every person who is at all interested in the island or in music should hasten to secure a copy of this valuable work.

The Gill brothers and Dr. Clague were obviously not disheartened by the article, as dates in the recently discovered Gill manuscripts imply that their collecting carried on until 1899, no doubt in part as preparation for the publication of *Manx National Music* (1898), a book that never became as popular in the Isle of Man as *Manx National Songs* and was soon out-of-print (date of last issue unknown). However, W.H. Gill protected himself from further criticism in this second publication:

...that in endeavouring to combine antiquarian fidelity with artistic beauty I am conscious of having essayed a difficult if not impossible task... As regards the harmonies, my object, be it right or wrong, has been to add just enough harmonic colour to make the tunes interesting to an average audience... How far I have succeeded must be left for the critics and the people to decide (Gill 1898:ix).

Despite nineteen enthusiastic reviews of his previous publication (reprinted in the closing pages, *ibid.*), Gill took the opportunity of replying to his anonymous critic of 1897 in the introduction to *Manx National Music*:

I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to state exactly the extent of my "tampering", as some would call it... so trifling, as to be scarcely worth mentioning. If only, however, to pacify the anti-restorationist the following list of actual restorations is given (Gill 1898:ix).

In *Manx National Music*, Gill documented all of the changes he had made to the melodic content, and perhaps because of the criticism of his first book, alterations were actually very few in number. His acknowledgment of all modifications was actually rather commendable in comparison to Gill's contemporaries. Editorial notes to accompany the music were not required by the publishers, Boosey and Co., and the other national songbooks in the series did not contain any explanatory notes at all. Gill also stated that; "The actual melodies as we found them shall have been published in a separate volume. The Royal Edition" (*ibid.*). Although Gill lived for another twenty

years, this publication never materialized. However, he wrote and published a substantial number of individual hymns and carols, a selection of poems in *A Manx Wedding and Other Songs* (1901, Abingdon-on-Thames) and a series of books called *Songs of my Fatherland* (1908), which contained his own ‘imitations’ of traditional songs, with lyrics based around Manx themes (Gill 1917). Gill also produced a book of 27 arranged folk songs called *Songs of the British Folk* (1917). Apparently, he had collected songs from the Sussex area, as “sung by the natives”, although the book also contained some Manx material.⁶⁴

W.H. Gill was to later receive long-standing appreciation for his efforts as a ‘national composer’. In the ‘Manx Music Festival’ (the Guild) programme of 1907, he proposed that his arrangement of “Mylecharaine’s March” for four voices could be the Isle of Man’s first national anthem, “... worthy to stand side by side, although at a respectable distance from, “God Save the King”” (Gill 1907). Since its launch at the Guild, the song has been adopted as the National Anthem of the Isle of Man.⁶⁵ Another example was his hymn “The Harvest of the Sea”, better known as “Manx Fisherman’s Evening Hymn” (Gill 1896:144-5) which is still very popular today.⁶⁶

After the publication of *Manx National Songs* and *Manx National Music*, Dr. John Clague ceased to continue gathering Manx melodies, and focused upon the Gaelic language, although he did write a hymn of enduring popularity called “Crofton”. Moore also concentrated on Manx Gaelic language thereafter, and in 1899 founded the Manx Language Society (to later become Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh). He published more academic books relating to the Island, including the definitive series, *The*

64 Quote from *Mannin* 9, 1917:569-70 in an advertisement of the book *Songs of the British Folk*. London: Curwen and Sons (1917).

65 Quoted in biography of W.H. Gill by Coakley <<http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/people/antiqarn/whgill.htm>>. Also see Bazin 1997:90-1. Gill’s Manx National Anthem was embraced by the Manx nation, but his audacity in even proposing a national anthem angered some. Dr J. Lyons, a “well-known student of folk-song” who had himself tried his hand at arranging Manx traditional songs, described it as “the worst national anthem in the world, sloppy, banal... a disgrace to the composer... a dished-up affair that was nobody’s” (Caine 1927:284-7).

66 Also known as “Peel Castle”. Although the song was included in *Manx National Songs*, it reached a wider audience when it was included in the *Methodist Hymn Book* of 1904 (no. 947). The melody was adapted from the song, “Eaisht oo as Chlashtyn as mee Singal oo Arrane” collected by Clague and Gill. See Bazin 1997:110.

Conclusions

As described in this chapter, the Victorian collectors provided the most substantial source of Manx traditional music available for modern-day musicians. After it was rediscovered in the Manx Museum archives in the 1970s, the *Clague Collection* symbolized the music of a bygone era. In contrast, W.H. Gill's *Manx National Songs* typified every element of Victorian culture that the recent revivalists wished to avoid, and even in the present folk scene it is "fashionable to regard Gill's work with some contempt" (Bazin 2003a). The book was also still in print eighty years after its first edition, and has continued to be employed in the Manx schools and musical competitions. It became very well-known among the local population, with "a copy of it in every musical household in the Isle of Man" (Bazin 2003b), and therefore recent revivalists have assumed that there was nothing new to be discovered within its pages. Moore's *Manx Ballads and Music* has been regarded with great respect as an 'untainted' record of the past, but even though some of his Gaelic texts have been employed to reconstruct songs, his book has not had a major influence on the 1970s revivalists. This may have been due to the fact that his book was out-of-print until 1998, but is probably because the few melodies that were featured had been 'meddled' with by their arranger, Miss M.L. Wood. To further this point, the revivalists of the 1970s initially wished to perform instrumental music and not songs. Consequently, the *Clague Collection*, in its unpublished and untouched condition, with its abundance of handwritten (wordless) melodies appeared to embody the music of the original Manx 'folk'.

But was the *Clague Collection* really representative of a rural, untainted culture as the revivalists hoped? On first appearances the *Clague Collection* could be misleading to a newcomer to Manx music. As a collection of melodies with no accompanying words (apart from a few fragments), the content of the four notebooks seems to have been a collection of instrumental tunes. It is only due to W.H. Gill's introduction to *Manx*

National Songs and other contemporary sources, that we know that the majority of the collected melodies were actually songs. Clague did not add any details of tempo to his notes, so eighty years later, it was a matter of guesswork when attempting to revive the material. Therefore, when viewing the *Clague Collection* in isolation to other sources, the nature of the melodies, and their titles in particular (where they have been added), have provided the only clues to their reconstruction.

The fact that most of the collected melodies were originally songs taken from singers, and that there were very few examples of informants who played dance tunes on instruments posed another issue for the recent revivalists. But does this mean that there was not a particularly strong tradition of instrumental playing in the Island during the 1890s, or are these examples scarce because the Victorian collectors had chosen to concentrate exclusively on singers and the melodies of their songs? Possibly the collector's change of direction during the project can offer an explanation. W.H. Gill stated that the idea of producing a national songbook only materialized after the collecting had commenced to a certain extent, but the type of material that was collected before and after this decision was made is not dissimilar. It would be understandable that when the collectors changed their objective, they would begin to concentrate on collecting only songs from singers, but the type of music that they gathered did not change with the new incentive. The only difference that can be determined from the field-notes is that the collecting accelerated slightly in 1895 and 1896, as W.H. Gill made specific visits to the Island to collect material for his songbook. That the new objective did not alter the type of material that was collected, along with the fact that the words were rarely noted with their melody and that there are some dance tunes included in *Manx National Music*, implies that the collectors were not searching exclusively for songs. Furthermore, this indicates that there was not a prevalent tradition of instrumental music or folk dancing in the Isle of Man in the 1890s.

Gill and Clague were obviously aware that their project was essentially a "rescue" mission, and that their results would represent the remnants of a past tradition: "...

unless preserved by writing, this knowledge must inevitably die within a *few years*” (Gill 1896:iii. My italics). Although Gill never fully admits to the condition of Manx traditional music in the 1890s, in a similar situation to Bruce and Stokoe who attempted to collect melodies from oral sources for *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* in the 1880s, he and Clague must have found that they were “half a century late” (Karpeles 1973:81). W.H. Gill, however, has attempted to conceal the real story because of the pressure of producing a book of ‘national’ songs. Apparently the collecting mission was “a success far exceeding our most sanguine expectations” (Gill 1896:x), but by collecting only a few hundred different melodies belonging to various genres, it would seem that the need to demonstrate a national music tradition led Gill to “exaggeration and wishful thinking” (Davies 1999:79).⁶⁷ It should also be observed that in an age of enthusiastic collecting and preserving, with a society formed to represent almost every element of Manx life, there were only two groups of individuals collecting traditional music in the Isle of Man. It is clear that Moore believed that the opportunity to collect Manx music and songs had been missed. Although he sent some of his assistants to collect oral examples from the ‘old folk’, his *Manx Ballads and Music* book relied predominantly on printed source material. While Gill may have dreamt of continuing their collecting and actually did return to the field for another year, he soon focused his attentions elsewhere. Clague (unfortunately without any explanation) abandoned the project immediately after *Manx National Music* in 1898. Consequently, it would appear that the ‘romantics’ of this period had also admitted that they had exhausted all sources of traditional music in the Isle of Man.

Therefore the contents of the *Clague Collection* are essentially a mixture of ‘leftover’ melodies found in the oral tradition in the late 19th century; melodies which derive from various sources, including (predominantly) carvals, printed church music, old and modern balladry and a few dance accompaniments. In fact, it has been said that when Archdeacon Kewley and J.E. Quayle donated the *Clague Collection* to the Manx Museum in 1935, the library curator, William Cubbon, initially refused to take the notebooks, claiming that they were of no interest to the museum because the melodies

67 Davies discusses the tendency amongst the Celtic Revivalists of the 18th and 19th centuries to romanticize traditions.

were not Manx!⁶⁸

But whether these individual melodies were representative of the Island's 'national' music is essentially dictated by how well-known they were amongst the older Manx generation. Therefore, Gill's *Manx National Songs* cannot be trusted as a truthful representation of popular traditional music during the 1890s, as he admits in his introduction to selecting the most Manx-sounding melodies and to ignoring songs that were known elsewhere. However, the fieldnotes of Gill and Clague can be relied upon to visualize the condition of traditional music amongst the older rural population in the late 19th century. Following the premise that the collectors systematically wrote down every single melody that they heard, which is indicated both by the prevalence of fragments in the fieldnotes and the cross-referenced tunes contributed by different informants (*J.F. Gill Collection*), it would appear that variants are only applicable to a few particular melodies, and that in most cases, songs were only known by the person who sang them. Speers (1996-7:233) notes that;

... it is known that collectors of traditional music found that their sources were unaware of much of the material being supplied by their contemporaries and, likewise, that later sources produced 'new' material.

To reinforce this point, Gill stated that over half of the traditional songs in Barrow's *The Mona Melodies* which were "presumably, the then best known songs and dance tunes" (Gill 1896:ix), were unknown by his informants seventy years later. Those that were still known in the 1890s tended to be certain songs that had been published again during the 19th century, such as "Molly Charaine" ("Mylecharaine") in Issac Dale's hymnary of 1840, *The Mona Melodist* (see Bazin 2001). For these reasons, it can be surmised that the melodic material in the *Clague Collection* is not wholly representative of a national body of Manx music, and ultimately it contains the selected remnants of an oral tradition that was on the verge of extinction by the 1890s; a collection that ultimately "cannot be considered as providing an adequate archeological record" (Carswell 2001b:93).

68 Verbal source - Stephen Miller at the Sleih Gyn Thie Conference, Douglas, Isle of Man 2000.

This theory, however, appears to lose its conviction when considered against the collecting of Mona Douglas. If Moore, the Gill brothers and Clague had, more or less, admitted defeat at the end of the 19th century, how did a young woman come across a plethora of traditional music and dance, of a markedly different character, almost thirty years later?

Chapter Two

Manx Traditional Music - Source Material - Part II

Mona Douglas - Collector and Revivalist

Introduction

The next generation of collectors of the Manx language and culture followed closely on the heels of the first revival, and could be said to overlap in some aspects. However, the political and economic situation had changed by the early 20th century in the Isle of Man, tradition-bearers were scarce, nationalist feeling had grown, and the incentive to collect and revive had been given fresh impetus by the advent of the 'Gaelic Revival'.

The collecting of Manx traditional music did not continue for twenty years or more after Clague and the Gill brothers' efforts, apart from a few melodies noted down by the folklorist, Sophia Morrison.⁶⁹ Inspired by Morrison, Mona Douglas resumed the search for source material, collecting from the oral tradition in the Isle of Man [Appendix 7]. Mona Douglas began to gather musical material from oral sources in 1912, (when she was just fourteen), but from the 1930s onwards, she refocused her approach and used her own collection of source material to revive all aspects of Manx culture.

It is impossible to confine Mona Douglas within any one discipline within folklore and cultural matters in the Island, as her collecting and revival work encompassed all aspects of traditional culture. She was also successful through her own creative writing, producing many poems, two fictional novels and several plays, all on Manx themes.

Manx scholar, poet, writer, musician, dancer and perhaps above all else, a

⁶⁹ However, Manx music was not being completely ignored during this time. Classically trained composers were taking an interest in the source material provided by Gill and Clague, and orchestral and choral arrangements were composed by musicians such as Haydn Wood, Dr. James Lyon, Dr. Arthur Somervell, Henry Ley, and Vaughan Williams (Bazin 1997:115). Vaughan Williams wrote an arrangement of "Mannin Veen" (Four-part setting) in 1913, which was published by J. Curwen and Sons, and based on Dr. John Clague's version of "Haink and Winking (Hinkin! Winkin!)" (Jerry 1991:no. 114).

dreamer. Because it needed a dreamer to take up the challenge to restore Manx culture to the pattern it had [*sic.*] attained today.⁷⁰

Douglas was part of a larger cultural revival movement during the 20th century, which was dominated by the Gaelic language. However, her involvement in Manx culture pertained to the artistic side; dance, music and literature, and until the 1970s, this was essentially a solo mission.⁷¹

It is necessary for this chapter to extract Mona Douglas' work from the wider picture of Manx culture, so that her contribution can be isolated and analysed in the context of providing musical source material for later revivalists. However, it is impractical to separate music and song from Douglas' other work, as her pursuits within other disciplines must be considered for a full understanding of her methods, ideology and execution of material.

This chapter attempts to chart her life as a multifaceted folklorist by focusing on two main influences; first, the Celtic Twilight (Gaelic Revival), followed by the English

70 Eulogy to Mona Douglas by Sir Charles Kerruish, Chairman of the Manx Heritage Foundation and Speaker of the House of Keys, presented at the opening of the 'Yn Chruinnaght' inter-Celtic festival in Ramsey, 1986 [from "Doyen of Manx Cultural Movement", in an unidentified Isle of Man newspaper clipping - no date, but July 1986].

71 The broader concept of 'cultural revivalism' in the Isle of Man has been discussed by Broderick (1999b). He outlines three phases of revival in Manx culture, and although the focus lies mainly with the Manx language, musical activity is also present in all of the phases. Broderick states that phase one spanned from the end of the nineteenth century to circa 1930, a period covered in the previous chapter of this thesis. Inspired by the growing surge of interest in indigenous ethnicity and identity, and in particular, the foundation of the Gaelic League in 1893 in Ireland, Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh (The Manx Language Society) was formed in 1899, with A.W. Moore as the president. Although some members of the society learnt the Manx Gaelic themselves, and produced several publications of lessons in Manx Gaelic, the society tended to steer towards preservation, rather than promotion (Stowell and Ó Bréasláin 1996). The second phase, ca. 1930 to ca. 1945 is said to have been inspired by Professor Carl Marstrander (1883-1930), a philologist and linguist who visited the Island in 1929. Although he only found forty people who spoke some Manx at that time, he nevertheless encouraged local Manx language enthusiasts, such as J.J. Kneen (1873-1938) to continue collecting and publish their results. According to Broderick, a lull occurs within the language movement due to WW2, and the third phase is from ca. 1945 to the present. At this stage, attitudes regarding the Manx Gaelic language had changed again. Individuals such as Leslie Quirk, Doug Faragher, J.W. Radcliffe, Mark Braide and Walter Clark made recordings of the very last of the native speakers in collaboration with the Irish Folklore Commission and began to use Manx as a living language; effectively initiating the revival of Manx Gaelic. Broderick also names Mona Douglas as a pioneer in this phase of Manx culture, although he adds that, to a certain degree, she was present in all three phases.

Folk Dance Society. Links will be drawn between the Victorian collectors and Mona Douglas at the beginning of her career, and her relationship with the 1970s revivalists at the end of her life. To contemplate her work within the context of the modern-day music scene, she must not be seen simply as a provider of source material, but as someone who ultimately provided suitable conditions for a new generation of revivalists to succeed.

1. Mona Douglas (1898-1987) - A Link to the 'Folk'?

Due to a childhood illness, Mona Douglas never went to school. She was brought up with her grandparents in Ballaragh, near Laxey in the Isle of Man, and many of her writings mention her experience of wandering the hills “with all the farmers” and “out in the boats with the fishermen” (Douglas 1964). Inspired by family friend Sophia Morrison, Douglas set about collecting songs and tales from the locals. In her published articles she often mentions the music-making and dancing of her family, learning about classical music, and although she felt that she knew nothing of folk song as a child, *Manx National Songs* was familiar to her. “Well, when I found out so many of the songs were already noted and published, I began to try a little further afield and find something which hadn't already been put down” (Douglas 1979. See Bazin 1998:42).

By the early twentieth century, when Mona Douglas was just a teenager, she embarked on a venture that would lay the foundations for her later work in reviving Manx traditional culture; collecting from the 'folk'. In some of her articles (see Miller 1994), she admits that from her own experience as a child, traditional forms had all but disintegrated, but throughout her life she persisted in trying to persuade her audiences that a continuous tradition had nonetheless survived. She saw herself as the living proof, and the link to the 'folk' for future generations. According to Miller (2000a), if someone knew a few steps, or a few verses of a traditional song, they were a link in Douglas' eyes. Her ultimate legitimator was Sophia Morrison, a prominent folklorist in the Isle of Man who knew and worked with the 'folk'.

Sophia Morrison (1859-1917) formed the template and link between the Victorian antiquarians and the now commonly perceived stalwart of Manx culture, Mona Douglas. In an commemorative article, Douglas (1964) recalled her first encounter with Morrison:⁷²

I first met her when I was only nine years old, and one of the things she did when she discovered that I was ‘running wild’ among farmers and fishermen instead of going to school, was to present me with a stiff-backed notebook and propelling pencil (great treasures!) and tell me to write down all the Manx stories, games and customs I knew or could find out about. Later she insisted on a music notebook also, and helped my first attempts to write down tunes; and it was her friendship and encouragement which laid the foundations of my own collecting.

Douglas had great admiration for Sophia Morrison, and during their friendship, Morrison’s strong will in cultural and political matters concerning the Island obviously affected the young Mona:

She was one of the earlier Manx nationalists to realize that for the preservation of a country’s true individuality its characteristic culture is no less important than its political independence and institutions... (Douglas 1979. See Bazin 1998:42).

Morrison, an educated, middle class woman had grown up in the fishing town of Peel in the 1880s, and it was within this area that she collected many Manx folk tales, customs and several songs in the old language. Gaelic was still fairly strong in the west of the Island during this time, but the decline of the language in the rest of the Isle of Man inspired Morrison to join with native speakers from Peel in setting up a class for “the study of Manx Gaelic and its relationship with the two other branches of the Gaelic, Irish and Scottish” (Douglas 1964). She became a founding member, and later the secretary of ‘Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh’ (Manx Language Society), and was a Manx delegate at the Pan-Celtic Congress. A.W. Moore, Dr. John Clague and W.H. Gill were also present at the first Pan-Celtic Congress in Dublin in 1901, but Morrison exemplified a fresh approach to Manx traditional culture. She believed that active

72 See Maddrell 2002b for a detailed article about Morrison’s life and work.

revival, rather than preservation, was the only way to promote the Island's independent spirit:

Morrison's work contrasts with Moore's in two main ways: it involved a move away from an antiquarian approach to a more scientific and systematic method of collecting folklore, and it was applied to promote Manx culture to the general public (Maddrell 2002b).

In her term as secretary to Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh, Morrison tried to persuade the local education board to include Manx language classes in the primary and secondary schools. This request was denied, although sponsorship for adult evening classes was granted (see Douglas 1964).

In collaboration with A.W. Moore and Edmund Goodwin, Morrison compiled the *Dictionary of Anglo-Manx Dialect* (published in 1924), and she wrote books on Manx folk-tales, folklore, proverbs and sayings, local flora and traditional cookery. She also established the successor to A.W. Moore's journal *The Manx Note Book* (1885-7) with her self-funded journal, *Mannin*, where Celtic cultural nationalism was discussed and promoted by Morrison and her associates. Following the technological advances available for collecting and preserving, Morrison obtained funding to buy a phonograph in order to record songs and Manx Gaelic speech. Unfortunately, the wax drums deteriorated before any permanent recordings were produced, although she is known to have collected several songs from oral sources, the most well known being "Arrane Ghelby" (Morrison 1913 and Jerry 1978:13).⁷³

In the same year that the National Mod was formed in Scotland, 1892, the Manx Music Festival, better known as the 'Guild', was formed. Founded as a series of mostly classical choral competitions, Sophia Morrison and her colleagues persuaded the festival committee to include Manx music and language competitions in the programme. Arrangements by W.H. Gill and Miss M.L. Wood (arranger for Moore's *Manx Ballads and Music*) of songs in Manx Gaelic were employed, and the classes

73 Maddrell (2002b) states that "The suggestion to buy a phonograph was made in 1903, and reports of Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh confirm its continued use through to 1914 at least".

were funded by the Manx Society (Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh). Unfortunately, the classes in Manx were eliminated from the programme in the final year of Morrison's life, 1917. However, 'Yn Cruinnaght Vanninagh Ashoonagh' (which was later revived in 1977/8), a one-day competitive festival of Manx language and music, was founded in 1924 by William Cubbon, the Honorary Treasurer of both the World Manx Association and The Manx [Language] Society (Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh). This festival was formed in response to the omission of Manx Gaelic classes in the Guild, although they were reestablished in subsequent years (see Griffin 2001).

Sophia Morrison's endeavours to promote Manxness also emerged through her own creativity. Inspired by the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, she financially and physically supported 'The Peel Players', a society that staged Anglo-Manx plays, (i.e. in the Manx dialect), written by authors such as Christopher Shimmin and the locally celebrated poet, 'Cushag'. New works written in the Anglo-Manx dialect emerged as a response to the insecurity of the Manx Gaelic language. Stimulated by the work of modern authors writing in their traditional language, (especially in Ireland), the Manx cultural activists saw the need for a 'Manx national literature'. For many, it was deemed too late to save and revive the Gaelic language, and "they could not even call upon the literary tradition to provide authenticating weight" (Maddrell 2002a). The Anglo-Manx dialect, though, was based on an extant vernacular, and provided a characteristic symbol of Manxness. The dialect was codified through *A Vocabulary of Anglo-Manx Dialect* (by Moore, Morrison and Goodwin, 1924; 1991) and replicated by the writers mentioned above.⁷⁴

2. Mona Douglas and the Gaelic Revival/Celtic Twilight

Mona Douglas had an early introduction to cultural nationalism through her mentor, Sophia Morrison. When the first 'Pan-Celtic Association' was formed in 1901, Morrison was one of the representatives for the Isle of Man. This gathering attracted Celtic scholars such as Sir John Rhys, Runo Meyer, Celtic writers in English like W.B.

74 T.E. Brown and Hall Caine had already devoted their literary work to the Anglo-Manx dialect in the late 19th century. To a large extent, the authors of *A Vocabulary of Anglo-Manx Dialect* referred to Brown's work, because he was considered a reliable source who had collected from the Manx folk at an earlier date (see Maddrell 2002a).

Yeats and Fional MacLeod, and the controversial folk music collector and arranger, Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (see Bazin 1998:16, Ellis 1984 and Skinner-Sawyers 2000:110). The outbreak of the First World War halted proceedings for the Pan-Celtic Association, but after the war, the ‘Celtic Congress’ was resumed in Wales in 1917, replacing the defunct Pan-Celtic Association, and on this occasion Douglas was sent as one of the delegates, later becoming the corresponding secretary of the Manx Branch of the Celtic Congress at the age of 23. It was through the Congress that she made a life-long friend in Dr. A.P. Graves, an Irishman who worked as a school inspector in the Isle of Man, and in 1925 she became his secretary in Harlech while he was writing his autobiography.⁷⁵ In 1921, Mona Douglas spent a year in Dublin studying Irish literature and library studies with Agnes O’ Farrelly, the General Secretary of the Celtic Congress, and during this period, she came into contact with the nationalist ideology and the Gaelic Revival:

My sojourn in Dublin involved me in the turmoil of Irish national politics... my association with a number of national personalities convinced me firmly that the goal of nationalists in all the Celtic countries should be, eventually an independent federation of the Celtic states.⁷⁶

It was during her stay in Dublin that she encountered members of ‘The Celtic Twilight’, a term that was used to describe the Irish Literary Renaissance, a movement that was also referred to as the ‘Gaelic Renaissance’, ‘romantic nationalism’ or the ‘Gaelic Revival’ (see Foster 1997 and Jeffares 1972).⁷⁷ This particular branch of the movement was a by-product of the educational and political movement, ‘The Gaelic League’, which was formed in 1893. Forerunners of the league saw the need for the promotion of national attributes within Ireland after centuries of poverty and economic and cultural oppression:

75 A.P. Graves was a colleague of W.H. Gill’s and had contributed lyrics to *Manx National Songs* (1896). He was the father of celebrated poet Robert Graves.

76 From Chapter 2 of Douglas’ unfinished autobiography, *Celtic Contacts*, quoted in Bazin 1998:16.

77 The Celtic Twilight grew out of the larger Romantic movement encompassing Europe. The interest in Gaelic mythology arose out of the MacPherson’s *Ossian* in the 18th century, inspiring intellectuals of all artistic disciplines, such as Sir Walter Scott, Brahms, Mendelssohn and Lord Byron to indulge in Celtic romanticism.

The League spread like fire. With its pageants, its countryside “feisteanna” or festivals, its Gaelic song and music, rich with memories, its lectures on the forgotten glories of the Gael, it roused the whole mind of the country (McManus 1966:685).

Enthusiasts to the cause produced newspapers and magazines, and research into Irish culture and history flourished within the upsurge of pride. Parallel to this, the creative movement emerged, producing poets and playwrights who based their works on Irish folklore, the hub of activity being The Abbey Theatre in Dublin, directed by Lady Augusta Gregory and the poet, W.B. Yeats.

Mona Douglas’ associations with A.P. Graves, a founder member and president of the ‘Irish Literary Society’, led her to mingle with the ‘romantic nationalists’ resident in Dublin in the 1920s. Through this circle she witnessed her hero, W.B. Yeats, many times on stage at the Abbey Theatre, the poet George Russell (‘AE’) talked to her at length about the legend of ‘Mananan’, (a mythical character associated both with Ireland and the Isle of Man), and Yeats’ muse, Maud MacBride (formerly Gonne) expressed interest in the Manx national movement on several occasions:

... it was she, I think, who first turned my thoughts to the importance of working to make children nationally conscious, an influence which bore fruit later in the formation of Aeglagh Vannin (quoted in Bazin 1998:19).

Her associates were composed of an assembly of nationalistic, (but not politically active), poets, playwrights and artists, and Douglas, who was considerably younger than her new colleagues, undoubtedly would have been in awe of these theatrical characters and their beliefs: “I met people prominent in academic, literary, musical and artistic circles” (Douglas, quoted in Bazin 1998:15). Yeats and his friends took a particular interest in Irish and Celtic mythology, but were also attracted to esoteric subjects such as mystic religion and the supernatural, theosophy, Roscrucianism, Neoplatonism, spiritualism and magic (See Foster 1997 and Jeffares 1972). Douglas was deeply affected by her encounter with these ‘romantic nationalists’, and inevitably saw the potential in portraying Manx folklore, dance and song in a similar way; as ‘national’ art forms, but with an added mystical veil:

... only today are musicians and certain people interested in the drama and the ballet beginning to realize the significance and possibilities of folk music as an artistic medium (Douglas 1927).

On her return to the Isle of Man after working for A.P. Graves, Mona Douglas became a rural librarian and journalist, and as well as collecting source material, also developed her enjoyment of writing poetry and stories based on Manx themes: “I write about the Island just because it is the Island, and because I am Manx and proud of it” (Douglas 1915. See Bazin 1998:8). It has been suggested by modern-day academics that her interest in ‘all things Manx’ went further than mere romanticism, and that in fact her activities were spurred by nationalism:

Douglas’s interest in Manx nationalist politics (which for her was evidently inseparable from the promotion of the Manx language, music and dance) seems to stem from her view of hostile (English) immigrant attitudes over the years towards things Manx (Broderick 1999a:203).

The influence of the Celtic renaissance can also be observed through her creative writing and devotion to the arts. Continuing in the footsteps of Morrison, Douglas founded ‘The Ballasalla Players’ in 1919, who performed plays in the Anglo-Manx dialect based around Manx traditional themes, including Douglas’ own plays: “The Churning”, “The Lips of the Sea” and “The Faery Tune” (1921). Her poetry also denoted her romantic image of the Isle of Man, where references to Celtic mythology and mysticism are abundant:

Long mist trails sweep across the hills
Till every tree looks light [*sic?*] a ghost
And then the empty twilight fills
With flashing swords of the White Host...⁷⁸

It’s our little Ellan Vannin [Isle of Man] that is holding us in thrall,
And in countries half the world away we hear its mystic call,
So we dwell within the shadow of the ‘green hills by the sea’-
For a spell of love is holding us to ‘Thalloo veen ma chree’ [Dear land of my heart].⁷⁹

78 First verse of *The Offering* by Mona Douglas. See Bazin 1998:51.

79 Final verse of *Manxmen Abroad* by Mona Douglas. See Bazin 1998:25.

In 1931/2 Douglas formed a Manx youth club centred on Manx cultural activities called 'Aeglagh Vannin' (Manx Youth) which encouraged children to learn Manx songs and dances. In an article advertising the new club, she appealed to the young to join:

Volunteers! The new nationalism calls on. Look back on the splendour of our racial past - your own past... look forward into our golden vista of the future, alive with your dreams - and then step out under the banner of Aeglagh Vannin to do your bit for your country's sake... So shall Ellan Vannin go forward, steadfastly and full of national consciousness, to possess her Tir nan Oge (Douglas 1932:6. See Broderick 1999a:203).

Douglas feared the change caused by immigration and imported fashions, and this provoked her to take action, her motivation being to promote identity through Manx cultural emblems:

A modern and alien life is all about us now, and before its onslaught the old Gaelic culture of our land and race is in danger of being lost unless we can persuade the rising generation to love, appreciate and use our national heritage of artistic expression (Douglas 1941 (1949), in Broderick 1999a:204).

3. Mona Douglas and the English Folk Dance and Song Society

From the mid 1920s and especially in the 1930s, Douglas felt it was her vocation to promote Manx culture within the Island and in the eyes of the other Celtic nations and England. She wanted to see every Manx society promote song and dance, so that an indigenous identity would develop and future generations "might grow up with the traditional mental atmosphere of their race" (Douglas 1925). Although she rarely mentions Cecil Sharp in her writings, it is clear that she was influenced by his school of thought:

Will the Manx folksongs find an interpreter in these modern days? It is hard to say. Not every country is so fortunate as Scotland has been in Mrs Kennedy-Fraser, and England in Mr. Cecil Sharp... (Douglas 1927).

Until the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the study of folk music had

largely followed an antiquarian approach of collecting, preserving and publishing. Sharp is said to have pioneered the step away from this concept and saw the benefits that society could reap from the re-enactment of traditions. He saw the immediate need to collect more material and to bring “the songs back into the everyday lives of the English people” (Karpeles 1967:46). Harker (1985:172) claims that this reaction was due to the shared concern among the bourgeois that class divisions in England were widening due to industrialization and urbanization. The key to the promotion of traditional music and dance was education, teaching children from an early age. Children were perceived to be more adaptable in their musical tastes than adults, and Sharp thought that children would readily accept folk music in favour of “good” music, such as high-art music which they found “boring” (Boyes 1993:45). In collaboration with another collector, Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, he published *English Folk-Songs for Schools* in 1906, which marked the beginning of a series of educational publications. In order to present the collected songs for schoolchildren, an editing strategy was implemented. This resulted in the omission of offensive lyrics, the collation and invention of verses, and the addition of piano accompaniments, producing sanitized versions of the original, ‘authentic’ folk songs. In *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions*, Sharp wrote of his intentions:

Flood the streets therefore with folk tunes, and those who now vulgarize themselves and others by singing coarse music-hall songs will soon drop them in favour of the equally attractive but far better tunes of the folk. This will make the streets a pleasanter place for those who have sensitive ears, and will do incalculable good in civilizing the masses (Sharp 1907:165-6. Also quoted in Harker 1980:148).

Folk dance also became a major focus for Sharp and his colleagues: “In the attempts to create the basis of a nationwide movement between 1904 and 1911, the main cultural form chosen for revival was switched from folksong to dance...” (Boyes 1993:64). Douglas is believed to have been living in London in the early 1930s and was working closely with the ‘English Folk Dance Society’ at Cecil Sharp House.⁸⁰ The society held

80 Bazin (1999:20) states that although Mona Douglas had always chronologically documented her movements in detail, this period of her life is unclear. Letters addressed to Douglas at a London address provide an indication that she may have been living in England in the late 1920s. Cecil Sharp House opened in 1930 (Schofield [undated]).

an Easter Vacation School in the Isle of Man in 1929, and to illustrate her lecture, Douglas organized a small demonstration of Manx dance by a group of children from Albert Road School in Ramsey (see Douglas 1937). The reception to the dances was of surprise and enthusiasm from both the English and Manx audiences, and this inspired Douglas to revive Manx dance on a larger scale. Through her connections to the English Folk Dance Society, and recalling the advice of Maud MacBride (Gonne) earlier in the 1920s, Douglas recognized the potential in recreating traditions through schoolchildren. With the assistance of [Philip] Leighton Stowell, a primary school teacher at Albert Road School, who already held an interest in Morris and country dancing, she set about ‘restoring’ dances from her own collection and from her Grandfather’s notes; “... cryptic as they were, they became the foundation of my rebuilding of several dances...” (Douglas 1941). She admits on a few occasions that she only had fragments of details of dances, but enough to reconstruct performances with the aid of Stowell; “I began to dig out notes on particular subjects and put them together...” (*ibid.*).⁸¹

Douglas also worked in collaboration with Arnold Foster, (a former pupil of Vaughan Williams and head of music at Morley College), to produce two books of Manx folk songs in 1928 and 1929, and a third volume in 1957.⁸² Dance and song were both forms that could be easily integrated into the school curriculum; dance as a form of physical education and movement, and song as part of musical education. Everyone could take part, producing a visible spectacle welcome in a school environment by teachers, pupils and parents. Accordingly, Mona Douglas and Leighton Stowell continued to produce three books of instructions on Manx dances:

It is hoped that these three volumes, when complete, will be the means of re-popularising our traditional dances among Manx-folk everywhere, and I would here put in a plea for their more general use by Manx school children and in social gatherings of Manx Societies at home and abroad. Why cannot we use

81 Douglas’ versions of Manx dances came from the notebooks of her Grandfather, Philip Quayle. They apparently included outlines of the dances; “Peter O’Tavy”, “Car Juan Nan”, “Mylecharaine’s March”, “Car-ny-ferrishyn”, “Eunyssach Vona” and “The Dirk Dance”. See Bazin 1997:64.

82 Most of the songs were selected from A.W. Moore’s *Manx Ballads and Music* (1896) by Douglas and arranged by Foster.

them in our ballroom programmes, as the Scottish folk use their national dances? Our own are quite as enjoyable to perform and as pleasant to watch (*ibid.*).

The performance aspect of her work was further transmitted through several avenues. Youth group 'Aeglagh Vannin' gave children the opportunity to learn Manx songs and dances, and Douglas encouraged them to compete in the annual 'Manx Music Festival' (the 'Guild'). She wrote plays for the children and for her adult version of the society, 'Ellynyn ny Gael' (Arts of Mann; a Manx Gaelic Arts and Crafts Society formed in 1949), based around Manx themes, and spoken with strong feigned Manx accents, reminiscent of the rural dialect that Douglas would have witnessed as a youngster. Her outstanding achievement in music which still enjoys great success with today's Manx musicians was the revival of 'Yn Chruinnaght' in 1977/8, a festival of music, dance and the Gaelic language, based on a festival organized by 'Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh', which halted with the outbreak of the First World War.

4. Mona Douglas as a Revivalist

Inspired by the response of the English Folk Dance Society Easter school in 1929, Douglas refocused her position as collector to revivalist: "That lecture was really the start of the modern revival of the Manx dances" (Douglas 1941). This stage of Douglas' career brought her into contact with those involved in the revival under study in this thesis (and vice versa), and therefore this section will provide a chronological description of events leading up to the most recent revival of Manx traditional music in the 1970s.

4.1 *The Manx Folk Dance Society and Aeglagh Vannin*

Mona Douglas had worked closely with schoolteacher, Leighton Stowell to revive Manx dancing from the late 1920s, initially directing their efforts upon a group of primary school children from Ramsey. The interpretation of the source material and the revival of the results occurred simultaneously, as illustrated by one member of the dance team who recalled the contentious relationship between the two personalities:

Miss Douglas and Leighton Stowell... did not always agree on the methods and notations to be used... Long discussions between them would ensue... [The present Manx dance style] was the result of the combination of two strong and imaginative personalities (Marjorie Crowe quoted in Bazin 1998:99-100).

According to Douglas (1981 and Bazin 1998:102), Stowell had a tendency to “elaborate traditional forms” and was much more of a showman than herself, Douglas preferring to recreate the rustic spirit of Manx dancing as taught to her by the local fisher folk. After much deliberation over the proper interpretation of her notes, with Douglas “doing all the deciphering” and Stowell “doing all the jumping about” (Stowell, undated in Bazin 1998:97), a standard style and repertoire was achieved. The schoolchildren of Albert Road School went on to dance at various events around the Island and were invited by the English Folk Dance Society to perform at the Albert Hall in London. Due to the small number of recorded examples, and with the encouragement of Douglas, Stowell composed further dances in the ‘Manx style’:

All folk dances must have been composed at some time and by some person. Mine are really Manx dances composed by a Manx man, and I hope they will someday become traditional.⁸³

Stowell continued teaching children Manx dancing, but when he moved schools from Ramsey to Castletown in the south of the Island in 1937, he also began to teach adult classes. In 1951 he founded the ‘Manx Folk Dance Society’, a dance team that originally consisted of predominantly schoolteachers, and still exists today [Appendix 8]. They were formed especially for the ‘Festival of Mann’ celebrations of that year, and according to Sheila Corkill (interviewed 09/03/2001), a founding member and

83 Douglas 1981, quoting Leighton Stowell in the “Introduction” to *The Leighton Stowell Book of Manx Dances* (Manx Folk Dance Society 1981). In Bazin 1998:101-2. Leighton’s composed Manx dances included “Manx Jig”, “Fouyr Oarn” (Gathering in the Barley), “Daunse Noo George” (Saint George’s Dance), “Daunse Son Troor” (Dance for Three), “Madalcogh”, “Blasnagyn Aittin” (Gorse Sticks), “Dauns ny Moain” (The Turf Dance) and “Yn Billey Keirn” (The Rowan Tree). See Rinkaghyn Vannin. *Dances of Mann. Sleih Gyh Thie* (1983). See Miller 1994 for Introduction by Douglas) and *The Leighton Stowell Book of Manx Dances* (1981).

fiddle player for the society, there was great enthusiasm towards the new form of entertainment: “We got asked [to dance] all over the place. [They said] “Now, this is new, folk dancing””. The society often performed alongside groups from other British countries, and Leighton Stowell demanded that his dancers replicate the high standards of their counterparts where a polished performance was of the highest priority:

For a demonstration, you had to be good in those days... the Scottish ones were so marvellous, and they all were, and if we hadn't been, they'd have thought, “oh, that's a bit sloppy” (*ibid.*).

Concurrent to the development of the Manx Folk Dance Society, Mona Douglas continued her work with the children of Aeglagh Vannin at Mount Havelock in Douglas. The society had been running since the 1930s, and according to informants who attended in the 1970s, the format and ideology was virtually unchanged: “You got to know a lot of Arnold Foster arrangements” (Anne Kissack, interviewed 28/07/1999). The children came from all kinds of unrelated backgrounds and were taught songs in Manx Gaelic by ear, Manx dancing and even fencing!

Anybody she got hold of, and sort of nabbed. There were boys... it's amazing to think they were all teenage boys!... Mona rounded up people from all over the place. Most unlikely sort of backgrounds (*ibid.*).

The children of Aeglagh Vannin were expected to perform Manx songs at the annual Guild (Manx Music Festival) competitions, and Douglas continued to stage her Manx dialect plays in which the members of Aeglagh Vannin and Ellynyn ny Gael were expected to take part: “... we all had to be in them, we didn't get a choice. You were in this play!” (Clare Kilgallon, interviewed 19/04/2000). She also staged concert parties where a variety of acts were performed by children and adults; Manx music, dancing, drama and poetry:

... anybody in Manx things would be sort of made, I suspect, to go and watch and take part... we'd be dragooned into plays, Mona's dialect plays... It was always inappropriate, the sort of roles that people landed with were ridiculous! A handsome young man was never less than seventy, you know, the bright young thing was a sort of old age pensioner (Anne Kissack 28/07/1999).

4.2 *The New Generation - Bock Yuan Fannee and Bwoie Doal*

The formation of the Manx dance group ‘Bock Yuan Fannee’ (John’s Flayed Horse, meaning Shanks’ Pony) was an inadvertent by-product of the Manx Folk Dance Society. One of Bock Yuan Fannee’s founding members, Bob Carswell, had joined the MFDS in the early 1970s, and personally felt that the ideology of the society was preventing further development in repertoire and style within Manx dance. Their interpretation of dances continued to follow the guidelines of Stowell (who had died in the previous decade); graceful and courtly performances:

... there were a group of us who felt that the Manx Folk Dance Society, it wasn’t moving fast enough. We wanted to learn a lot more. We knew there were other ones [dances] that they didn’t do really, so we wanted to learn some more (Interview with Bob Carswell 20/05/1999).

Bob and others wanted to interpret Manx dance through a more modern, and perhaps more ‘authentic’ interpretation; “... a new, robust spirit” (Stowell and Ó Bréasláin 1996:22). Their aim was to steer away from the ‘prettified’ public displays and recreate something more spontaneous and ‘folky’ in a modern context. One interpretation was through the costume: The MFDS female costume had consisted of an apron tied at the side, (traditionally for holding knitting needles), lace bonnets, petticoats and white stockings (see interview with Sheila Corkill 09/03/2001). Later, Celtic patterns were added onto the long skirts. The men wore white trousers either with a white shirt and Celtic patterned waistcoat or a sweater embellished with the ‘Three Legs of Man’. The new generation, who incidentally were all men, aimed to wear ordinary clothing of their time - boots and jeans. Barry Pitts (interviewed 28/12/2000) explained the young revivalists’ view of the Society:

Tynwald Fair [St. Johns], you’d see the ‘Manx [Folk] Dance Society’, who were no doubt doing a good job at the time, holding things together in their way... Enjoyed it very much, but it didn’t lift any spark in me, you know. It was just a performance.

Although the group of men had already attempted to recreate some of the dances in

their own way, 'Bock Yuan Fannee' is said to have been officially established in 1977 at the request of Mona Douglas: "We were formed specially to do 'Mylecharaine's March'" (Interview with Stewart Bennett 19/03/1999). Douglas' plan was to stage the all men sword/stick dance at the annual 'Mananan Arts Festival' held in Port Erin. She brought together young individuals who were interested in Manx culture; art students, ex-members of the Manx Folk Dance Society, and a couple of musicians who at this point specialized in general Celtic music.

... she had this scheme that she'd get half a dozen fellas to do Mylecharaine's March which hadn't been done for a number of years. She wanted us to be doing it in Arran sweaters and sea boots! (Colin Jerry 10/03/1999).

The first Bock Yuan Fannee practices took place at the Kipper Yard in Peel, followed by various other venues, and those named as being involved at the outset included Stewart Bennett, Ian Coulson, Phil Gorry, Ross [Trench] Jellicoe, Colin Jerry and Bob Carswell.⁸⁴ In the group's infancy, they approached Mona Douglas in the hope of obtaining more dances from her personal collection, and for advice over interpreting her tabulation. Douglas was very enthusiastic over the new group and apparently "... she made Bock Yuan Fannee her own" (David Speers 23/05/1999). Consequently she accepted the role of 'tradition-bearer' or "old master" (Slobin 1983:39 and 42-3) to the new revivalists. Bob Carswell (20/05/1999) states that although they were grateful for her help, her advice sometimes held up the progress of the dance team:

We used to invite Mona down now and then. The only drawback there was, you'd say to Mona... "we've got instructions here, written down, and we think there's a couple of ways. Now, is this right?" And you'd sort of do that one [dance], and she'd say, "oh yes, that's right." "Well, we did think it might've been this other way." And we'd do this other way, and "yes, that's right"! Yeah, perhaps not an awful lot of help in a way...

Her conflicting versions of the correct interpretation of the dances can be read in several ways. Douglas was in her late seventies at this stage and perhaps her memory

84 Locations cited by informants for the original practices are the Kipper or Fish yard and the Viking Longhouse in Peel, Tynwald Fairground in St. Johns, an unnamed hotel on Douglas Promenade and the Prince of Wales pub in Ramsey. Apart from schoolteacher Colin Jerry, the group comprised of mostly students in their twenties, some of whom were from the Island.

was failing, or possibly the reinterpretations by the new dancers were, in her mind, preferable to the earlier versions that she had advocated. Perhaps her indifference to the accurate interpretation is explained through a statement by one of the members of Aeglagh Vannin in the 1970s: “It was almost like she [Mona Douglas] didn’t care how good it was or anything” (Anne Kissack 28/07/1999), presumably just as long as some form of Manx dance was being promoted.

A major consequence of this renewed interest in Manx dance was a revival in Manx traditional music, and the two disciplines merged where some individuals were involved in both. ‘Celtic Tradition’ had been playing a mixture of folk music since the early 1970s, and were mainly based at the Glen Helen pub in the west of the Island. Celtic Tradition was an informal session group that attracted an audience from all walks of life, and focused around a nucleus of local musicians including Colin Jerry and his wife Cristl, Phil Gorry, Tom Spencer and Jimmy Duke. They played a variety of tunes and songs from around Britain, but little of the material was Manx. Colin and Cristl, in particular, developed an interest in obtaining a Manx repertoire, and began to introduce a few songs into the Saturday night show:

I’d already been going to Manx classes to learn how to pronounce the songs in Manx. So, I had one of Mona Douglas’ set of twelve [Manx songs with piano accompaniment by Arnold Foster], which I wanted to use, and I was using them with Celtic Tradition, in Manx... And then when Bock Yuan Fannee formed as a dance group, I was one of the musicians that used to play regularly for them (Interview with Colin Jerry 10/03/1999).

Colin Jerry began to search for Manx material, and came across the *Clague Collection* in the Manx Museum, which provided further source material for the group. By the mid 1970s, Celtic Tradition had moved to the Central Hotel in Peel, and were renamed, ‘Bwoie Doal’, after ‘Blind Boy’, Tom Kermode, a regular informant of Dr. John Clague. The group gradually began to play exclusively Manx material, and as an early member of the session stated; “The break up of Celtic Tradition and the start of Bwoie Doal was the beginning of Manx music as it is now in the Isle of Man” (Interview with David Fisher 23/12/1998). Brian Stowell, a Manx-born teacher living in Merseyside part of the time, was also in the process of reviving Manx Gaelic song, parallel to the

Peel sessions, and he released an LP of traditional songs called *Arraneyn Beeall-Arrish Vannin* (Kelly Recordings, Isle of Man 1973) in collaboration with George Broderick in 1973. He was learning Manx Gaelic and had come across an old copy of A.W. Moore's *Manx Ballads and Music*, which he used to produce the record: "People just wanted to hear what Manx sounded like, or what the songs sounded like, or what they might've sounded like in the traditional world originally" (Interview with Brian Stowell 22/12/2000).⁸⁵

Where Mona Douglas fits into this scene is difficult to determine. She was certainly aware of the upsurge of interest; "Mona Douglas had her beady eye on everything and could see that there was a spark kindling there..." (Freddie Cowle, interviewed 11/03/1999), but it appears that she had little influence, stylistically, on the musical side of the resurgence. Brian Stowell (22/12/2000) admitted that "there was no direct connection with Mona" and his own music, and when asked if she had offered any guidance over the Bwoie Doal sessions, David Speers (23/05/1999) also answered "Not at all... I don't know that there was a connection". Musician, Peter [also known as Peddyr] Cubberley (29/07/1999) too, commented on her contribution:

I was only, what? Eighteen. Now, I wouldn't have talked to her on that level. To me, she was quite an old lady, although I respected that she knew a lot about dancing and singing, and she [was] into poetry and stories and stuff like this. As far as I'm aware, or as far as I was aware, still actually, I don't know if she was a musician herself. Did she play anything? I don't know. I was never aware, I never saw her play anything. She never seemed to have an input into traditional music as such. It wasn't obvious if she did. She was more... pushing the Chruinnaght on, she loved doing plays in the Gaelic, she had a leaning to the language, but songs seemed to be her thing, I would've said. Plays in the Gaelic, and songs, and obviously music went with that, a bit of it. But... she didn't stick out as a traditional musician... Liking the music or anything. She was a bit more rounded than that.

It is peculiar that Mona Douglas did not assert any influence over the musical side of

⁸⁵ There was no prescribed style of traditional Manx singing and no sources to refer to, so Ireland held a particular attraction because of its continuous tradition of Sean-nós (See Jerry 1983:289-95) and Brian imitated this style on his Manx Gaelic album. However, Brian was taught some of the songs by Manx Gaelic speaker Joe Woods, a contemporary of Douglas', and it is noticeable that Brian's style of singing was quite similar to that of Woods' on Peter Kennedy's field-recording (1975).

the scene as there were very strong connections between Bwoie Doal and the dance team she had ‘mentored’, Bock Yuan Fannee. Some of the members belonged to both pastimes and most of them were enlisted into Douglas’s Manx dialect plays and variety shows. Aeglagh Vannin was also still running in the mid 1970s, and when asked if there were any links between the club and the Peel-based music session, Fenella Bazin (interviewed 26/05/1999) declared that “I think there’s no relationship between Bock Yuan Fannee and Aeglagh Vannin, or Bwoie Doal and Aeglagh Vannin... their paths didn’t cross, that’s the curious thing”.

The musicians of Bwoie Doal commenced with their own interpretation of source material without any assistance or interference. But because her musical interest was focused upon the songs, Douglas felt compelled to criticize the sean-nós style of singing adopted by revivalist, Brian Stowell:

... she went to people and she noted down things from their singing, and she used to think that... Brian Stowell was singing things with far too much grace noting and so on in it. Because she said that all the Manx style that she had heard from Mrs. Bridson and people like that, was just simple and straightforward. And yet, when you heard... there are some recordings [Kennedy 1975] somewhere of Mona singing some of the songs, and you can see when she was singing it, you could hear she was using quite a few grace notes herself really (Bob Carswell interviewed 20/05/1999).⁸⁶

A bond was certainly formed between Mona Douglas and the music revivalists of the 1970s, but the extent of influence in regard to the revivalist ideology and interpretation is unclear. She tutored Bock Yuan Fannee to a certain degree by showing them the basic Manx steps and explaining (and contradicting) her notes, yet they quickly developed a style of their own which bore little resemblance to that of the Manx Folk Dance Society, a style which Douglas and Stowell had constructed. But her ‘restorations’ of traditional dances and the composed dances of Stowell were the only sources of reference, so unavoidably, limitations were already imposed on the revivalists of Manx dance. Although Douglas was openly supportive of all cultural

86 The 1970s revivalists observed the lack of ornamentation in all of the extant written sources, but this does not necessarily mean that there was no ornamentation in Manx music. The collectors may have ignored stylistic decoration because of the difficulties of transcribing such detail, or perhaps they felt, for their own purposes, it was of no importance.

activities, her advice was assigned only to the revivalists of Manx dance. Possibly she responded to the dancers' request for help merely because they asked her to and because it was her field of expertise, whereas the musical aspect continued without any assistance. Nevertheless, because of the close connections between the cultural disciplines, Mona Douglas was seen as a tradition-bearer or "old master" (Slobin 1983:42-3) by the entire folk community. Due to the instrumental focus of the recent revival, Douglas had less to contribute to the Bwoie Doal musicians, but because "she was the strongest link between the last traditional musicians and the revival of the late twentieth century" (Bazin 1997:116), she was regarded as an authority on all areas of traditional culture.

4.3 *The Revival of 'Yn Chruinnaght'*

In 1977 Mona Douglas organized a one-day Manx Festival, 'Feailley Vanninagh Rhumsaa', which served as an experimental precursor to the five-day inter-Celtic festival, 'Yn Chruinnaght' that was to be revived the following year.⁸⁷ The festival was held in Ramsey and featured a re-enactment of an old Manx wedding, a ceremony complete with Manx dialect, dancing, singing and traditional food and costume.⁸⁸ The entertainment also included a display by the Manx Folk Dance Society, a play performed by St. John's Primary School, a hill race to the top of North Barrule and back, and a "dramatic and musical presentation of 'Shennaghys '77'" which Bob Carswell had adapted from a play written by Douglas and Nikolai Giovannelli.⁸⁹ The performers of this play comprised most of the members of Bock Yuan Fannee and Bwoie Doal at the time, notably Greg Joughin, Colin and Cristl Jerry, David Fisher, Phil Kelly, Simon Capelan, Paaie Carswell, Anne Kissack [borrowed from Aeglagh Vannin], George Broderick and others. These individuals would be among those who dominated the Manx cultural scene from then on up till the present-day, and possibly

87 Some sources state that it was a three-day festival. In her articles though, Douglas states that it was held over one day.

88 Informant Sheila Corkill (09/03/2001) recalled performing "A Rale Oul Manx Wedding" with the MFDS in 1957 at Kirk Maughold. A re-enaction of a Victorian wedding with costumes, food and music typical of that era. See Appendix 8.

89 Taken from "Dorothy Dean's Window on the Week" in the *Isle of Man Weekly Times*, 6th September 1977:13.

Douglas saw the prospective success of a revived 'Yn Chruinnaght' because of these people:

... you could say that the way these things built up, by 1977 and '78, Mona felt that there was enough going on to justify... reviving the Yn Chruinnaght at that time, because things had developed in a certain sort of way (Bob Carswell 20/05/1999).

Around this time, the long running 'Aeclagh Vannin' came to an end.⁹⁰ Mona Douglas, who was also quite elderly at this stage, felt that Manx culture had gained a secure footing, and that its promotion through children was less essential due to the general awareness around the Island. Fenella Bazin (1997:116) claims that Aeclagh Vannin had "proved to be central to the modern revival of music, dance and the language..." (Bazin 1997:116), but it would really seem that the 'modern revival' had developed from a separate entity to the youth club, an area that will be discussed later in the thesis. A former member of Aeclagh Vannin, Anne Kissack (28/07/1999) explained her feelings towards the new members of the Manx folk scene:

I remember being madly jealous that suddenly there were all these people claiming to know about Manx things, like they'd been doing them for years... suddenly all these other people were, you know, seeing the light, so to speak, and [?] quietly thinking, "well, I know that"! Getting very mad about the Chruinnaght when some bossy person was trying to tell me how to do a dance that I'd done since I was six. But you couldn't say that, because nobody would believe [you].

Douglas, though, did not exercise any ownership over the revived material. Sensing that the widespread popularity of folk culture around Britain had hit the Isle of Man, she saw the perfect opportunity to provide a platform for the ever-growing scene. The original one-day 'Yn Cruinnaght Vanninagh Ashoonagh', (The Manx National Gathering) founded in the 1924 by William Cubbon, provided the blue-print for a revival, a festival in which Douglas herself had been a competitor and a member of the

90 An attempt was made in 1992 to form a nationalist society of the same name catering for the 14-21 age group. The revamped group was an off-shoot of the Manx Nationalist Party, Mec Vannin, and they hoped to maintain the aims of the original Aeclagh Vannin through the auspices of Manx nationalism: To "marry culture and politics for the young". The club was short-lived (*Isle of Man Examiner*, 21st of July 1992).

literary committee.⁹¹ The revived inter-Celtic version was to “include the former Manx competitions, Festival performances of Manx music, drama, dance and an exhibition of Manx arts and crafts” (Dean 1977). The original ‘Cruinnaght’ was based on adult and children’s competitions; the music competitions often employed Gill’s *Manx National Songs* (1896), and Anglo-Manx poems by T.E. Brown and Cushag were set for the poetry classes. For the revived version, though, Mona Douglas wished to “place far greater emphasis upon the Manx Gaelic language and the traditional arts as pursued today in both education and public events” (Douglas in *Yn Chruinnaght Programme* 1978, quoted in *Yn Chruinnaght Programme* 1998:11).

The new Yn Chruinnaght was to embrace all Celtic cultures as well as the Manx, but it was not until 1980 that it became “truly inter-Celtic, with representatives from all the Celtic countries” (*Yn Chruinnaght Programme* 1994:8), a permutation that was clearly influenced by the broad interest in Celtic culture at this time all over the world. Before the revival of Yn Chruinnaght, Douglas had already presented inter-Celtic events in the Isle of Man, employing people who had moved over to the Isle of Man and friends she had met through the Celtic Congress to provide representation of the other Celtic nations.⁹² By 1981 Yn Chruinnaght had branched further afield and featured visiting artists such as the piper Alan MacDonald and singer Caristina (Christine) Primrose from Scotland, the ‘Port Talbot Cymric Glee Society’ (Choir) from Wales, the ‘Mulcahy School of Dancing’ representing Ireland, and the Cornish dance team, ‘Roadshow’ (*Yn Chruinnaght Programme* 1981). From 1982, participants from Brittany also became a regular feature of the annual festival. The committee of Yn Chruinnaght 1978 had consisted of a small group of people, including Mona Douglas, Fenella Bazin and others from ‘Ellynyn ny Gael’, but within a few years, many of the Bock Yuan

91 The original festival had thrived till the beginning of the Second World War. The date of the festival’s origin is ambiguous, as sources give various dates. See Bazin 1997:117-119, (1926? 1929?) and a letter from George Broderick to the *Isle of Man Examiner* September the 6th 1994, dates its inception as 1924. The *Yn Chruinnaght Programme* 1998 names the date as 1925.

92 See interview with Clare Kilgallon (19/04/2000). She mentions local artists and friends of Douglas’ who participated in her inter-Celtic events: Sheila Merson and Gwyn Price both lived in the Island but represented Scotland and Wales through singing recitals, Eibhlin ni Cathailriabhaigh from Ireland and others that Mona had met through the Celtic Congress came over to take part. Manx participants included children from Aeglagh Vannin, singer Claire Clennell and local harp player, Charles Guard.

Fannee and Bwoie Doal members had become involved with the running of the organization, continuing to direct the festival after Douglas' death in 1987 until the present day.

It has already been stated that Mona Douglas saw the potential in creating a national art form through the use of Manx traditions. This was displayed through her own creative reworkings of local customs, language and cultural traits, through the medium of plays and poetry. However, she lacked the musical education that would have enabled her to fulfill her vision of a Manx classical music. Her ideals were not reciprocated by the new generation of revivalists, and this disappointed her. She believed that classical music and traditional forms should be combined to create a national style, but found revivalists were unappreciative and disparaging towards high art. In 1978, Mona Douglas wrote;

Surely if we are ever to produce great music with a national character, what we need is a blend or synthesis of both elements and a recognition of both standards of value...

Douglas felt that the Isle of Man needed a composer of its own in the ilk of national composers such as Grieg and Vaughan Williams, and earlier in the century had placed her expectations on her colleague Arnold Foster.⁹³ She thought it was a pity that Foster had never produced a Manx symphony or opera, and therefore urged contemporary folk musicians to fulfill her values:

But what about the building on this foundation of new and perhaps more sophisticated Manx music which could aim at becoming someday classical and international in its own right? Is this too high an aim? (*ibid.*).

But Mona's dreams reflected out-of-date cultural elitisms, and the folk revivalists of the late twentieth century could see no connection between the two art forms. The new generation had different motivations and aspirations to Mona Douglas; most had little

93 Haydn Wood, Dr. James Lyon, Dr. Arthur Somervell and Vaughan Williams had all written works on Manx themes, but none of these composers were actually Manx. Douglas wanted a composer who was a resident or Manx-born to create a unique classical style associated with the Island.

interest at all in classical music or art and considered it as a completely separate entity to their own art-form. In some respects, the new generation were antagonistic towards classical music and its implications upon traditional music, possibly associating previous interpretations with the drawing-room scenario of the Victorian era. Brian Stowell (22/12/2000) felt that the revival was, to a certain degree, an anti-elitist movement, and stated that “People of my generation were in full-scale revolt against anything Victorian, you see, and just thought it was absolutely ridiculous, this stuff... I just rejected the whole lot”. David Speers (23/05/1999) agreed that there was a general sense of rebellion within the folk movement: “...it’s a reaction against a sort of classical tradition, if you like, in some ways”.

This seems to have been the only source of contention between Douglas and the revivalists. In the main she was thoroughly delighted over the developments of Manx culture within her lifetime. The growing success of her creation, Yn Chruinnaght, also fulfilled her long desired expectations of Manx culture. She had generated a festival that was now recognized by all of the established festivals of the neighbouring Celtic countries; the Royal National Eisteddfod and Gorsedd of the Bards, An t’Oireachtas, (the national festival of Eire), An Commun of Scotland (the Highland Mod), and the Cornish Gorsedd.⁹⁴

Mona Douglas was awarded an MBE in 1982 for her services to Manx culture, and was admitted to the Principle Order of the Gorsedd of Bards at the National Eisteddfod of Wales in 1987. Mona was eighty-nine at this stage and was too unwell to receive the honour in person. Long-time friend, Gwyn Price accepted the award on her behalf and presented the white head dress in an intimate ceremony at her hospital bedside on his return to the Island. “She passed away peacefully a few days later, leaving a great void in the Manx and indeed Celtic culture.” (Gwyn Price 1998. “A Tribute to the Late Mona Douglas.” Quoted in Bazin 1998:114-7).

94 See Mona Douglas’ message to Yn Chruinnaght after ten years (1987). Quoted in Bazin 1998:108-10.

5. Source Material - “A Manx Folk-song Expanded By Mona Douglas”⁹⁵

Mona Douglas was an all-round folklorist, who incorporated all aspects of Manx culture into her work. Although she collected folk songs earlier in her life, her lack of musical knowledge may have prevented her from a more extensive promotion. Douglas is appreciated more so for her work with Manx dances and folklore, but her collection of song has contributed to the repertoire of today’s musicians.⁹⁶

Douglas realized that tradition-bearers had grown scarce, (there were limited enough sources in Clague and Gill’s time), and she felt that she needed a connection to the past to authenticate her work. It appears that she saw herself as the essential link. As the protégée of Sophia Morrison, she had a bond with the late Victorian collectors, and through her great-grandfather, Philip Quayle, who had noted down traditional dances in the 19th century. In several of her articles, Douglas mentions his notebook, a selection of sparse notes on Manx dances that were said to have been destroyed during the WW2 blitz when on loan at Cecil Sharp House in London (see Bazin 1998:42). She also stresses her contact with the older folk during her childhood, that she belonged to the ‘fisher-folk’, thus creating a “living link” or “memory” to the past (Miller 2000a). In fact, Charles Guard (interviewed 27/04/2000), a protégé of Mona Douglas remarked that;

... she was very proud of the fact she’d never been to school, and in her teens, up till that age, she was wandering the hills and actually collecting from people in their eighties and nineties. So you know, “I know someone who knew someone who went back to maybe 1820, 1830”.

Throughout her writings, Douglas seems anxious to prove that she was not reviving a ‘dead tradition’, and rarely uses the word ‘revival’ because of its connotations, preferring the term ‘restoration’:⁹⁷ “... I want to emphasise the fact that such a tradition

95 Title of paper by Stephen Miller, discussing the work of Mona Douglas, and given at the Manx Museum, April 2000.

96 For instance, Arrane Ben-vlieaun (or Cur Dty Vainney) collected by Mona Douglas is known by most schoolchildren in the Isle of Man. See Jerry 1978:61.

97 Douglas uses the term “national revival” in hindsight but rarely during her years as an active revivalist. See her introduction to *Yn Chruinnaght Programme* 1979, in Bazin 1997:117-9.

does - or did in my childhood - actually exist..." (Douglas 1941). In an interview with David Speers (23/05/1999), he stated that;

She wanted to create national music and dance. She wasn't too bothered about authenticity... she needed to have some link to the past. So then Phillip Douglas' [*sic.* - Quayle] chest or something from an attic, which nobody's ever seen, so nobody can ever substantiate what she did, but she had a load of stuff that was allegedly sort of written, taken from traditional material.

Because access to her collection is currently prohibited, the methodology behind Douglas' song and music collection has not yet been studied in detail, and is ultimately dependant on her own accounts.⁹⁸ Throughout her extensive publications, she avoids revealing her collecting methods and carefully covers her tracks when referring to informants or any discrepancies that she may have met during her fieldwork. With regard to her musical collection, she admits that her musical ability was not as competent as her classically trained predecessors, Gill and Clague, and clearly this will have affected the accuracy of her transcriptions.

... I was learning music so I knew how to write notes. But I could never write notes straight down from the singing. I can't pitch them properly for one thing. What I have to do when I learn a tune is to learn it from the person who teaches it to me until I can sing it myself and then I work it out on the piano (Douglas 1941 *Folk Song and Dance in Mann*. See Bazin 1998:7-8).

Dr. Fenella Bazin was a friend of Mona Douglas, and in 1998 compiled a tribute to the collector in the form of a montage of her writings. She spoke of Douglas' collecting methods in an interview:

[She] Committed them to memory and pedalled like mad to get home, and then sat down at the piano and wrote them down. And then went back to the person she'd collected them from, and said, "is this right?" Now if it were you, would you say, "no, that note's wrong"? Or would you say, "oh, that's [?]", you know, this young woman's so enthusiastic, "oh, that's really good, yes" (Interview with Fenella Bazin 26/05/1999. Also see Bazin 1998:62).

Douglas even admits that she was unqualified to collect in an scholarly and objective

98 At the time of writing, Douglas' music manuscripts are being catalogued by Dr. Breesha Maddrell (Centre for Manx Studies) at the Manx National Heritage Library.

manner:

Much of my own life has been spent among the shepherds and farmers and fisher-folk... I have absorbed that point of view to such an extent that I feel I am not and never shall be a satisfactory collector from the scientific standpoint (Douglas 1941. See Bazin 1998:59).

However, as Miller (2000a) points out, Douglas displayed potential as an excellent folklorist for the first few decades of her life, as demonstrated in the detailed and impartial reports of “Ceremonial Folksong, Mumming, and Dance in the Isle of Man” (1928) and “Animals in Manx Folklore” (1930). But after the English Folk Dance Society workshops in 1929, her position as an antiquarian collector shifts to that of Manx cultural revivalist and promoter. Less collecting occurs, the fruits of her earlier collecting are actively put to use, and the ‘cloak of mysticism’ becomes more apparent in her written work. Douglas wrote prolifically about her findings, and influenced by the Celtic Twilight era, portrayed material through a romantic lens:

Like the people of Faery in W.B. Yeat’s poem, Mann is:

Old and grey, Oh, so old-
Thousands of years, thousands of years,
If all were told-

And Manx history goes back until it is lost in mythology. From the earliest times almost down to the present day, that history reads like a romance... (Douglas 1941, quoted in Bazin 1998:51).

Douglas appears to have combined the influences of the Celtic movement and the British folk movement in her execution of source material. She followed the belief of Sharp and his colleagues of reviving dance and song through school education, as a “regenerative prescription for modern society” (Brocken 2000, Chapter 2a), yet she still saw the possibility of transforming traditional art into high art, as her contemporaries in the Celtic Renaissance had done before her:

... what she was really after was... a national music, national dance. She would have been quite happy... to see a ballet set in Peel. That sort of thing (Interview with David Speers 23/05/1999).

Mona Douglas could also be said to have been influenced by another exponent of the Celtic Renaissance; Marjory Kennedy-Fraser (1857-1930). Douglas was very likely to have met Kennedy-Fraser, a delegate for Scotland, through the Celtic Congress, and certainly met her daughter, Patuffa at the meetings. Kennedy-Fraser began to collect Gaelic music in the late nineteenth century and published *Songs of the Hebrides* in 1909 in collaboration with Reverend Kenneth MacLeod, and subsequently produced a series of collections in 1917, 1921 and 1925 (see Skinner Sawyers 2000:110 and Ahlander 2003). Inspired by the widespread Celtic renaissance, she was also involved in the revival of the Scottish harp, the ‘clarsach’, with her daughter, who accompanied her mother’s songs on the instrument. Although she was very popular at the time, Kennedy-Fraser has received much criticism since for her arrangements of the source material, because she ‘improved’ and sentimentalized texts and melodies to conform to the expectations of the upper-class concert-goers. The piano was still the fashionable instrument for accompanying the solo songs, a trend set by the Victorian drawing-room mode (see MacLeod 1996:129), and accordingly, Mona Douglas produced the first volume of *Twelve Manx Folk Songs* with Arnold Foster in 1928. Foster arranged the melodies for voice and piano, and Douglas translated the texts from Manx into English. The source material was refined in the published collections of Manx folk songs, and in the introduction to *Twelve Manx Folk Songs with Manx Gaelic and English Words* (1928), Douglas admits that some of the lyrics were combined from several sources:

I have tried to choose the best words available. I have also, in some cases, found it desirable to select the best verses from songs which had too many for all to be printed.

For the second set (1929), airs were chosen from the *Clague Collection* (1896, and published in *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 1924) and Moore’s *Manx Ballads and Music* (1896). Because of the frequent absence of song-texts in Clague’s work, Douglas states that the lyrics employed were taken from Moore (1896) and variants of the same song were, in some instances, combined to produce “a careful blend of the best lines and verses...” (Douglas 1929).

The arrangements by Foster were of the mode fashionable at the time. Although his harmonic workings of the traditional melodies were not as sophisticated as those of his mentor, Ralph Vaughan Williams, he followed the same genre. British composers had moved away from the traditional dominant-based harmonies employed earlier by Victorian composers, (as locally exemplified by W.H. Gill in *Manx National Songs* and *Manx National Music*), and ‘creative collectors’ were now adapting the vernacular of folk idioms in order to further their own personal styles. Parallel harmonies and unresolved seventh chords were common features in the styles of Vaughan Williams and Holst, and Foster attempted to emulate these attributes (see Griffiths 1992, Eisentraut 2003 and Ling 1997:205).

The *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* devoted several editions to Manx folk song between 1922 and 1926, predominantly analyzing the collection of Clague, but with some examples contributed by Morrison and Douglas. It has been suggested that Douglas may have invented some of the contributed songs and sent them to Anne Gilchrist, sometimes anonymously. Bazin (1998:21) printed a letter written in 1925 from W. Walter Gill to Douglas, where he jokingly parodies Douglas and William Cubbon’s contribution of “The Arbory Cradle Song”:⁹⁹

In the Glen of Ballacomish,
Where those little birdies sing,
There they found a lullaby with local colour
For the Folksong Journal in the Spring.

At the house of William Cubbon,
Where those cradles used to swing,
There they faked a folksong for a little hoax on
Miss Gilchrist’s Manx number in the Spring.

The Society were conducting a serious study of folk song from around the British Isles, consulting the leading folk song collectors of each country, so Gilchrist would have had

99 The cradle song was collected from W.W. Cubbon by Mona Douglas, and she also sent Gilchrist a variant of the song from Peel, which therefore corroborated his version. Cubbon and Douglas’ words were: “In the Glion of Balla Comish The Lhondoo [blackbird] will build her nest, Sleep thee, my baby, Sleep thee, my [griahagh] baby, Sleep thee, my baby, And thou’ll get the birdie”. Gilchrist 1926:164.

no reason to doubt the authenticity [Appendix 9]. Why then would Douglas feel the need to invent material for the journal? It could be interpreted as disregard of the Society because it was English; Mona Douglas apparently held racial prejudices against the country at this time, and she could have been resisting the growing forces of British academia for political reasons (cf. Broderick 1999a). Or because she was a Manx woman and a self-proclaimed part of the living tradition without any formal schooling, Douglas possibly abhorred the idea of academic interference and was retaliating by mocking the English establishment. Whatever the case, scientific collecting and methodology within folklore were still in their infancy at this time, so Douglas may have been assuming the role of her contemporaries, where field-work techniques were often more creative than analytical.

A few years after Gilchrist's articles were published, Douglas began to recreate Manx folk dances based on her transcriptions in order to recreate a 'national' art form for the Island. In an interview with Dr. George Broderick (23/03/1999) he commented on Douglas' intentions:

Mona Douglas created this stuff because there was a need to have something separate Manx in the face of this English folk dance material which was becoming very popular in the Island's schools here. Because Mona was anti-English, full stop. She... makes that quite clear in an article to the Observer in 1924 [Quoted earlier. See Broderick 1999a:203]. Mona did not like... this place being what she regarded as swamped out with English people that were unsympathetic.

Although there is no doubt over whether Mona Douglas physically collected songs and other material from oral sources, questions have recently been raised over the authenticity of her published work. Scepticism now exists over both the subject matter and the melodic content of her collected songs, and there are several reasons why some of her revived material is suspected to have been invented, or at least elaborated.

Clague and Gill's melodies which were collected in the 1890s contain few literary references to Celtic folklore of the Isle of Man. Moore had published a few songs referring to Celtic heroes including the words to "Fin as Oshin" which he had obtained

from manuscripts written in 1789, but admits there was no evidence of these songs in the contemporary oral tradition: "... the last trace of such ballads as these had, some years later, entirely passed away" (1896:xv).¹⁰⁰ However, at this time, Manx nationalists including A.W. Moore himself, had begun to reconstruct a more inspiring Manx history that concentrated on the Island's Celtic links: "In myth, folklore and legend, the Manx found the Celtic empowerment that history withheld" (Belchem 2000:222 -3).¹⁰¹ This viewpoint was passed onto Douglas through her mentor Sophia Morrison, and a few decades later, Douglas accordingly 'discovered' songs that referred to the whole pantheon of Celtic mythology: Complete songs collected first-hand from the oral tradition, with references to the legends of "Mananan and Fin Mac Cumhal" (Douglas 1927). The songs "Sea Invocation", "Mannanan Mac Leirr", "Invocation to St. Bridget" and "Pader Colum Killey" all conformed to the aspirations of the Celtic Twilight movement in the neighbouring Celtic countries.¹⁰² Douglas also collected the melody to "Fin as Oshin" (in Jerry 1991:nos. 316 and 317), which matched the words in Moore (1896:2-5); an amazing feat considering that Moore had stated in 1896 that "Fin as Oshin has never been mentioned by any one since that time [1789], until discovered [in manuscript] by the present writer" (1896:xvii) [Appendix 10]. Douglas also found several 'songs of occupation', a genre which Gilchrist had previously noted were "scantly represented in Clague's Collection" (1924-6:68). Douglas collected "Churnal Jiu as Churnal Jea" (a churning song, in Gilchrist 1924-6:121 and Jerry 1979:68) and "Arrane ny Fee" (a weaving song, in Jerry 1979:58) and other songs related to occupation. However, Douglas is known to have collected from female informants, whereas Gill and Clague mainly collected from men, and this may account for the nature of these songs.

100 The lyrics to "Fin as Oshin" were said to have been collected from an elderly Manx woman at Bishop's Court in Ballaugh. A possibly "improved" (Moore 1896:xvii) version was donated to the British Museum in 1789 by Deemster Peter Heywood. Without actually denouncing the authenticity of the ballad, Moore does note that it was collected during the period of excitement provoked by Macpherson's *Ossian* (1762).

101 Belchem (2000) also refers to Christopher Shimmin, Hall Caine and T.E. Brown as exponents of the new Celtic image.

102 "Arrane Ghelby", collected by Sophia Morrison was also an example. Although it had no lyrics, the accompanying tale referred to a creature similar to the Scottish water-kelpie. See Mannin 1913(1):51 and Gilchrist 1924-6:104-5.

Douglas also claimed that Manx folk melodies bore “a striking affinity with the Hebridean music and with certain Breton songs...” (Douglas 1927), an element that was not located in the collections of Clague and Gill, nor commented on by them. Whether this was a genuine trait of the Manx folk idiom is unclear due to the reliance on the few major collections. Douglas’ discovery of several melodies in the pentatonic mode, in particular, have raised doubts, as few solid examples were evident thirty years earlier in the collections of Gill and Clague, and W.H. Gill actually commented on the absence of the mode: “As to the Pentatonic Scale it cannot be said to exist” (Gill 1896:xiii).¹⁰³ However, in 1927 Mona Douglas confidently stated that; “The Manx music is for the most part cast in the older modes - Dorian, Pentatonic...” Without questioning the earlier comments made by one of her predecessors, Douglas had chanced upon several examples, including “Padjer Son Shee” (Jerry 1991:no. 313), “Padjer Columb Killey” (314), “Mannanan Beg Mac y Leir” (349) and “Arrane Ben-Vlieun” (355).

It would be unwise to presume that Douglas had personally invented these melodies, as it is very likely that she did indeed collect them, but the pentatonic mode may have been applied to tunes of a similar musical nature because of her leaning towards the Celtic Renaissance. Consequently, Douglas’ belief (or wishful thinking) that Manx melodic material possessed similar features to those of the popular Hebridean melodies may have manifested itself through her notation. In her defence though, two years after Gill stated that there were no pentatonic melodies in the Isle of Man, he recorded examples in the form of “Bollan Ben” [Bollan Bane] and “Lord Bateman”.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, there are many examples of melodies collected during Gill’s era that could almost be in the pentatonic mode, if it were not for the odd note. The melody “Booil” (Jerry 1991:no. 20) collected by Dr. John Clague would be in the pentatonic mode if the fourth of the scale were omitted. As it is, the tune remains in a major scale. “When I was young and in my Prime” (128) stays in the dorian mode, yet by extracting

103 Further research would need to be conducted to draw conclusions over whether the pentatonic mode was introduced to the Island via contact with other countries at the time of Mona Douglas’ collecting. Details of the informants used by Clague and Gill in the 1890s are currently being investigated by Stephen Miller.

104 “Bollan Bane”, in Gilchrist 1924-6:109 and Jerry 1991:no.245. “Lord Bateman”: Gilchrist 1924-6:315, Jerry 1991:72. Both are in the Clague and Gill Collections. Gill did not comment on these examples.

the passing 2nd and 6th notes, it comfortably becomes pentatonic [Appendix 11]. There are many more examples of this trait in the collections of Clague and Gill, which could suggest the pentatonic mode did exist in Manx folk song at some earlier date, but was possibly modified by contact with the gap mode (Karpeles 1973:35) as exemplified in other folk music traditions in Britain, or had been altered by a growing familiarity with the diatonic scale as used by the church and in classical music.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the informants of Clague and Gill, or the collectors themselves, may have adapted traditional melodies by conforming to the current harmonic language, filling in the gaps of a previously pentatonic tune by adding diatonic passing notes.¹⁰⁶

The song, “The Sea Invocation” (Douglas and Foster 1928, and Jerry 1978:49) collected by Douglas from Mrs. Shimmin of Foxdale (a regular informant), is also a mysterious example [Appendix 12]. The song is in Manx Gaelic and consists of one phrase followed by the chorus of vocables, “Ho ro y ree y ro, Ho ro y ree y ro”, followed by one phrase and so on in the style of a ‘call and response’ pattern. No other example of this style has been found in the Island, and the vocables are characteristic of the Hebridean ‘waulking’ songs (Isle of Lewis in particular), yet Douglas never commented on its unusual idiom (see Skinner Sawyers 2000:104). In fact, she states that;

I think some of our songs might have migrated to the Hebrides because there was a lot of communication... some of ours probably went elsewhere and have been credited to other places (Douglas interviewed by George Broderick, in Bazin 1998:70).

Idiosyncrasies also appear within the reconstructed dances of Douglas. In particular, “... the display-oriented nature of some figures make their traditional origin suspect” (Speers 1996-7:23). One example is the curious amalgamation of two contrasting tunes in the dance, “Shooyl Inneenyn”. Although this continues to be a very popular dance

105 Other examples of this include “All Ye Who are to Mirth Inclined” (in Jerry 1991:no. 14), “Step Dance” (41), [no title] (60), [no title] (70), “Twas Once” (73), “Eaisht Shiu as Clasht Shiu as Kiaullyms Shiu Arrane” (100) and “Mie Moghrey Dhyts y Gerjagh” (116).

106 Another instance of this is found in a tune collected by both Clague - “As yn Mullin, Mullin O, as yn Skeilley, Skeilley Noa” (in Jerry 1991:81) and Douglas - “Arrane ny Bleih” (ibid. 347), where the mode is almost pentatonic but for the presence of C, fixing the tune in G major.

performed in the Island, its unusual nature has been noticed by some individuals involved in the current revival. Dancer and musician, David Speers (*ibid.*) points out that the two melodies, “Myr Hooyl Mee Magh Moghrey Laa Boayldyn” (“As I Walked Out On May Day Morning” - *Clague Collection A:30*, in Jerry 1991:no. 92) and “As I Walked Out One Morning Clear” (*Clague Collection C:2*, in Jerry 1991:no. 182) were presented on facing pages in Gilchrist’s analysis (1924:142-3) of the *Clague Collection* because of their similar title content. He explained the dubious connection between the two unrelated melodies:

... it would seem that this was the first time they were brought into association with one another. It would also seem to confirm that they only came to be associated with the dance *after* the appearance of this particular publication (Speers 1996-7:240. His italics).

Douglas claimed to have collected the combined tunes in the form of “Shooyl Inneenyyn” (Jerry 1991: no. 338) from Mrs Callow of Cardle Veg in Maughold (date unknown). Of course, the JFSS was not in general circulation, so the informant herself is unlikely to have adapted Gilchrist’s version, unlike Douglas’ claim that another dance, “Chyndaa yn Bwoialley”, was performed to Gill’s (admittedly) reconstructed melody “Booil”, which was printed in *Manx National Music* (1898:105). In this instance, Douglas (1937) stated that “Gill’s tune... seems to be quite well known by now (and for some years past) in its present form, and may have been learnt by ear...”

However, the authenticity of her collected and published material has never posed any moral dilemma for her colleagues or the revivalists of the 1970s: “Joe Woods [a colleague of Mona Douglas] always said... “Mona made no bones about this stuff...”, that she used to make it up... you’d guess she obviously invented quite a lot of the stuff” (Brian Stowell 22/12/2000). From recent debate, it would appear that the only people that have a problem with the legitimacy of her work are academics working in this field.¹⁰⁷ In 2000, Dr. George Broderick caused a stir amongst the Manx folk

107 See papers given at the Sleih Gyn Thie seminar, “Reconstructed and Ready for Use”: Revival and Dissemination of Manx Folklore and Tradition During the Twentieth Century. Manx Museum: Isle of Man, 1st of April 2000.

community and its associated academic circles, when he publicly declared that Mona Douglas, the ‘figurehead of the Manx folk revival’, had manipulated the evidence to suit her cause. He claimed that Douglas had never pretended otherwise, but that her writings had been largely ignored by the revivalists who were trying to perpetrate a myth of the Manx folk past. Such offence was taken by the traditional music and dance scene that these allegations were featured on the Manx Radio News (02/05/2000) with a call for a response from the ‘Centre for Manx Studies’! On the whole though, the revivalists have either appeared to have taken an indifferent stance to questions of authenticity in her work, or have accused critics of ‘navel-gazing’.

Charles Guard (27/04/2000), a protégé of Mona Douglas in the 1970s, perhaps spoke for the general feeling held among the majority of the folk scene:

... a lot of people criticize her [Mona] because they say as a collector she altered things... But what they misunderstand, you see, is that if you have the oral tradition, you have an occasion when somebody picks up any old tune and adapts it to the needs of the moment... So... if she did alter something and adapt it... and you know, put her own stamp on it, that, to me is no problem. To an academic of course it’s an anathema... but Mona wasn’t just a collector, she was in the unique position of being part of the culture herself. And if she did alter, tweak things, possibly from a romantic point of view... There’s a lot of debate about the authenticity of the “Dirk Dance” and whether in fact the whole thing’s a complete fake. Well, so what of it was? I mean, everything’s composed at some stage. Every folk song was composed by somebody.

Conclusions

Whether or not the melodies and songs were “genuine or spurious” (Handler and Linnekan 1984), Mona Douglas’ collection filled the gaps that the *Clague Collection* seemingly neglected. In her desire to reconstruct a Manx identity through a “national revival” (Douglas 1979, in Bazin 1997:117), Douglas had compiled a collection of complete Manx Gaelic songs and dance melodies. Although the examples were few in comparison to the *Clague Collection*, Douglas’ three volumes of *Twelve Manx Folk Songs* and dance melodies fulfilled the traits that she and later revivalists felt were missing in previous collections; the Celtic imagery and lively accompaniments of her

reconstructed dances.

Mona Douglas' dedication to all aspects of Manx life earned her the position of authority on Manx culture. Even those from the younger generation active in the scene today, who had never known her, see her as an almost legendary figure: "She was quite a good one, 'cause she collected all the tunes I suppose... so if it wasn't for her I wouldn't have been able to read them in the yellow book" (Adam Rhodes 06/12/2000). Obviously this is not entirely true as most of the Manx music material in Jerry's "yellow book", *Kiaull yn Theay* (1978), was collected by Clague, Gill and Moore, but this comment illustrates the high esteem built up around her name.

Mona Douglas' life and work embodied the changing attitudes and trends of the 20th century. Elements from the Celtic Twilight, the English folk dance revival and the British folk movement of the 1960s and '70s were adapted, all in the dream of promoting Manx culture at home and abroad: "She had the Manx nation at heart" (Sheila Corkill 09/03/2001). After almost a century of perseverance, Douglas had created an environment that would readily accept new forms of traditional culture in the Isle of Man. Through her revival of Yn Chruinnaght, she provided a platform for young musicians and dancers to develop in an atmosphere that corresponded to the contemporary folk scene, and in the latter part of her life she was satisfied to hand the mantle over to the new generation:

So, I think that after a long, long struggle to preserve the tradition, it is now safe. I feel that it won't be allowed to lapse again as it did for good many years and I'm very grateful to all the people that have helped to preserve it. I hope they'll go on doing it (Douglas 1979, quoted in Bazin 1998:113).¹⁰⁸

108 Douglas. 1979. Ian O'Leary Lecture given at Yn Chruinnaght.

Chapter Three

The Core Revivalists

Introduction

The principal period under discussion in this thesis is the rediscovery of the *Clague Collection* and the practised revival of indigenous Manx music from the 1970s to the present day. In 1977, a platform was established for the revival of Manx traditional music; an exclusively Manx music session called 'Bwoie Doal' which was held every Saturday night in a public house in Peel, a small fishing town in the west of the Island.

This chapter is based upon the first stage of Livingston's model of music revivals; the initial interest from either "an individual or a small group of "core revivalists"" (Livingston 1999:69). Academic research in this field has concluded that revivalists are usually from middle class backgrounds (Livingston 1999:66 and 77, MacKinnon 1994:59 and Blaustein 1993), and are either professional or amateur musicians. There is a noticeable prevalence of individuals from teaching professions, but revivals also attract artists, academics and those from a variety of professional backgrounds. They often possess a dissatisfaction in regard to aspects of contemporary popular culture, and use traditional culture as an alternative form of expression. These individuals can be either insiders or outsiders to the tradition and its place of origin, but normally feel a strong connection and duty to actively rescue the tradition and pass it on to future generations. Nusbaum (1993:211) notes that "Participants idealistically believe themselves to be performing an important cultural service, while enjoying themselves". Revivalist motivations encompass political issues, intellectual curiosity, and even the potential for financial gain, although Ronström (1996:16) warns that "... there is a large risk of mistaking the effects... for the intentions or motives". Studies have found that the majority of revivals contain an element of political behaviour, although musicians may be unaware of the underlying political manifesto, and consider themselves to be apolitical or non-political. This aspect is especially important to this chapter in order to determine whether the music revival emerged from the nationalist movement of the

time, or whether it was a separate movement that was embraced by the political activists.

The instigators or “core revivalists” (Livingston 1999:70) of the Manx traditional music movement came from widely differing backgrounds, musically and socially, and their interaction with each other inevitably brought together a fusion of varying ideals. By looking at the general folk music scene in the Island, the local socio-political climate surrounding the movement and the motivations of the core revivalists, this chapter will attempt to unravel why the traditional music revival took place.

1. The Inception of the Revival: Identifying the Core Revivalists

In compliance with Livingston’s suggested first stage, Slobin (1983:39) also states that “It is usually a very small number of key individuals who set the pace and/or serve as a source for an entire ethnic community”. The revival of Manx traditional music in the 1970s was conducted by a small group of people, but was ultimately led by one individual. Colin Jerry has been acknowledged by most of my informants as the pioneer in the latest revival of Manx traditional music, because of his determination to bring the music back to life and because, in subsequent years, he single-handedly copied out the *Clague Collection* for publication.¹⁰⁹

The revival of Manx traditional music initially grew from the band ‘Celtic Tradition’. Led by Colin Jerry, they performed mainly Irish music every week at the Glen Helen pub, and later accompanied the dance group, Bock Yuan Fannee on a regular basis. Heavily influenced by the popular Celtic bands of the era, such as Boys of the Lough, Na Fili and The Chieftains, the instrumentation of the band emulated the fashionable acoustic line-up of the time: Fiddle, mandolin, guitar, and recorder or whistle. Along with instrumental dance tunes and popular folk songs, the band began to introduce some material from Mona Douglas’ collection, which inspired Colin Jerry and his wife Cristl

109 Initially, Jerry printed a sample of the melodies for the Board of Education Local Studies Group, in a booklet called *Kiaull ny Manninee* (1976). He then published *Kiaull yn Theay* (1978), *Kiaull yn Theay 2* (1979) *Cur Cheb (Have a Try)* (1982) and *Kiaull Vannin* (1987 [1991]).

to learn the Manx Gaelic language and search for further Manx musical material.

The turning point was the ‘discovery’ of the *Clague Collection* in the Manx Museum. According to George Broderick, it was Ross Jellicoe, an student archaeologist spending time in the Isle of Man, who chanced upon the transcripts:

Ross Jellicoe came to me with a photocopy of the Clague collection. I said, “what the hell’s this?” He says, “this is traditional Manx music collected by Clague”, and he told me this was in manuscript... he said, “I only came across it by chance”... the following day I went to the [Manx] museum... library, and I got the number out and said, “right, can you make a photocopy of all this?” and they went and made a photocopy of the entire Clague collection for me...¹¹⁰

In turn George Broderick drew the 300+ melodies to the attention of Colin Jerry and others:

I got photocopies of the whole darn lot. They [the Manx Museum] weren’t so fussy in those days... Phil Gorry had a copy [of the *Clague Collection*], I had a copy, George [Broderick] had a copy, and it’s very likely John Kaneen got himself a copy as well I’d say, probably Bob Carswell... they didn’t mind us doing it. I’ve still got mine, but of course that’s all been transcribed now anyway (Interview with Colin Jerry 10/03/1999).

Over a couple of years, the *Clague Collection* was introduced into the local session scene that had taken off in response to the new popularity of instrumental folk music. The Central Hotel¹¹¹ on Castle Street in Peel provided the regular venue, but gradually a few of the musicians noticed the reliance on Irish material. George Broderick (interviewed 23/03/1999) recalled the response from an Irish researcher visiting the Island in the mid ‘70s, when he was taken to one of the music sessions in Peel:

Desmond Fennel said to Colin [Jerry]... “you know... there are many, many groups that are playing Irish music”, he said, “but, except yourselves... there’ll be nobody else playing Manx music... it’s entirely a matter for yourselves but if

110 Interview with George Broderick 23/03/1999. Celtic studies scholar with Manx connections who was researching ‘The Chronicles of Mann’ at the time. He had also learnt Manx Gaelic. Ross Jellicoe and Bob Carswell were members of the Manx Folk Dance Society.

111 The Central Pub was also referred to as ‘Thie Bouyr’ (The Deaf House) by the revivalists, because in the past, the Central had been owned by a deaf publican.

you want to promote Manx music, then it's only you that's going to do it... there's groups by the penny... that can play Irish music... So you might as well..." So, and Colin took that on board and through 1975 there was this sort of drift, right, to Manx, and I do remember on one occasion Colin saying, "we should be in a position", he said, "in Ireland, they would go to a session and they would play Irish tunes from the time the session started to the time it finishes, and in Scotland, no doubt it's the same. But here it's not". He said, "we get all sorts of stuff" and he said, "we should... strive to be in a position that when we go in and when we go out, we've played Manx music from the start to the finish", right? And I remember that night when it first happened... That we actually achieved that... And consequently there started to be a drift towards... less of the... popular folk, like "MacPherson's Rant" or "Whisky in the Jar" or "The Wild Rover"... And some of this Manx stuff was creeping in... Colin and Cristl were practicing on their own, they had their own... [copy of the *Clague Collection*] And... people then got hold of their own copies and in fact they were getting very annoyed at the museum about how many photocopies of the Clague collection they had to do... So there must've been about between seven and ten people asking for photocopies of the *Clague Collection*.

With the rediscovery of the Clague manuscripts in the Manx Museum, Celtic Tradition adopted the Gaelic title, 'Bwoie Doal', and embarked on a venture to reestablish Manx indigenous material:¹¹²

The introduction of Manx tunes... was gradual, and I well remember the Saturday evening around 1977 when we got through the evening playing only Manx material. There was a feeling of considerable satisfaction all round, that we had achieved a significant milestone in the promotion of Manx music (Broderick 1999b:22).

From then on a growing community of people started to attend the Saturday night sessions both as players and audience members, which included dancers from Bock Yuan Fannee and those involved in the concurrent Manx Gaelic language revival. A pen and ink sketch of the members of Bwoie Doal in Colin Jerry's tune book, *Kiaull Yn Theay 2* (1979) identifies the main protagonists of the revival with their instrument of that time: David Fisher (bodhran, who later played flute), Bob Carswell (flute), Phil Kelly (banjo), Colin Jerry (uilleann pipes), Cristl Jerry (harp), Simon Capelan (banjo)

112 Bwoie Doal, the session, was named after one of Dr. Clague's informants, "Blind Boy" Thomas Kermode from Bradda, Port Erin (1825-1901). Also spelt 'Boy Doal'. See Bazin 2003a and Kermode [undated] for short biographies of the singer.

and Mike Boulton (guitar) [Appendices 13 and 14]. Although not pictured in the sketch, other participants who were attendant at that time are also mentioned in the book's introduction: George Broderick (mouth organ), Ross [Trench] Jellicoe (concertina) and Freddie Cowle (Manx Gaelic speaker).¹¹³

Most of the above individuals have been interviewed for this thesis, along with non-musicians who were also present during the beginning of the movement, including Stewart Bennett (dancer and Gaelic speaker), Bernard Moffat (member of Mec Vannin), and Barry Pitts (former dancer and political activist). Musicians that joined the revival shortly after its inception, or who were involved sporadically included David Speers (mandolin and bouzouki), Dr. Brian Stowell (Manx Gaelic speaker, singer and concertina player), Fiona McArdle (dancer, Gaelic speaker and singer) and John Kaneen (singer and button accordionist), all of whom have given their side of the story. Musicians involved in other elements of the folk scene in the Isle of Man have also been interviewed, such as Norman Clague (singer with Mannin Folk), Charles Guard (Celtic harpist) and Fenella Bazin (musician and friend of Mona Douglas). The following reconstructed story of the revival is based upon these interviews.

2. The Folk Scene on the Isle of Man: Pre-Revival

The purpose of a revival movement is usually to serve as a cultural alternative, with those involved making a deliberate attempt to improve the existing culture through historical values. However, the impression given by some of the Manx musicians is of a chain of coincidental events where the *Clague Collection* was accidentally stumbled across and revived. But would the revival have occurred if the *Clague Collection* had not been rediscovered by this particular group of people? Although a few scholars, including Mona Douglas, were familiar with the collection, this source had potentially

113 Freddie Cowle was not one of the musicians, but a language revivalist who supported the music scene. Some of the named musicians later went on to play other instruments, and some were also dancers and Gaelic speakers. Other musicians named in the interviews as being involved included Bernard Caine (whistles), Phil Gorry (guitar), Tom Spencer (fiddle) and Mick Kneale (fiddle). A few of the named members are no longer involved in the traditional music scene, or have left the Isle of Man.

been available to anyone since it was donated to the Manx Museum earlier in the 20th century. However, it had been of little interest until the 1970s, and this indicates that there was an extra-musical reason for its revival.

This section will examine the folk music scene leading up to and surrounding the revival of Manx traditional music, when the general folk revival inspired the Island's music circles to express themselves through "local vernacular mode[s] of expression" (Jerry 1983:290). There appear to have been two distinct strands of style and approach in Manx folk music leading up to the revival under study. The general fashion for folk song in the 1960s and '70s was represented through Manx groups such as Mannin Folk, Treadmill, Triad and Pocheen, "chorus-prone groups" (Woods 1979:54) that performed at the local folk-clubs and pubs.¹¹⁴ The alternative element of traditional music was directed by Mona Douglas who encouraged performers such as Charles Guard and Claire Clennell to concentrate on Gaelic material. These artists performed at formal concerts and represented the Island at the inter-Celtic festivals.

2.1 "*Ching-a-Ching Songs*"

By the 1960s the folk revival of the USA had swept across Britain and in turn had provoked the popular music scene in the Isle of Man. Originally a political and social

114 These bands steered towards more general folk music, performing modern American and English folk songs, and between them employed 'traditional' instruments including fiddle, guitar, flute, banjo, concertina, harmonica and whistle.

The 'Mike, Al and Laurie' trio also played in the Island's clubs, but specialized in the folk-comedian act mastered by their Scottish and English counterparts, such as Billy Connolly, Jasper Carrott and Mike Harding. The progressive element of the Manx folk scene mirrored the work of English bands Pentangle and Fairport Convention in their folk-rock fusion, and was expounded through the work of 'Henry's Headband', (resident at the Globe Hotel in Douglas) who expanded the style of 'song-cycles', where one song merged into the next. Marine biologist, Roger Pullin, who sang and played guitar with Henry's Headband wrote "Song of the Terns" in protest to a proposed oil refinery on the Island (in Guard 1980:116-8) and other compositions on ecological themes. The style, musical content and instrumentation of these Manx groups reflected the contemporary interest in folk music in Britain at this time, but none of the groups were particularly political. Nor did any of them really incorporate Manx traditional material. There were plenty of pubs willing to employ these acts in the 1960s, and informants have named several main meeting places: "The Wheel Bar" at the Coach and Horses in Laxey, The Glen Helen pub in the west of the Island, the Athol Hotel in Douglas, The Mitre in Kirk Michael, The Tholt-e-Will in Sulby, and The Raven in Ballaugh. Folk-clubs were especially plentiful in the capital, Douglas, with venues such as The Globe, The Fort Anne, the Castle Mona, Falcon Cliff and The Crescent.

movement that was “opposed to the conventions of mass music-making” (Frith 1978:29), the American folk revival represented the neglected music of the working classes. Inspired by American political groups such as The Weavers and The Almanac Singers, the fashion for using authentic ‘songs of the people’ as a vehicle of political expression was becoming wide-spread among certain circles of the young middle class. However, the success of the American folk revival amongst the young intelligentsia ironically attracted an abundance of commercial solo singers and groups, who introduced the movement to new ears across the Atlantic. Recordings by artists such as Burl Ives, Peter, Paul and Mary and The Kingston Trio “turned many people on to the enjoyment of folksong” (Woods 1979:55). Although the left-wing message of the movement became less discernible through these commercial groups, the realization that folk music belonged to everyone certainly left its mark: “Everyone could play and sing folk music; and this became one of its most significant and attractive features” (Eyermann and Jamison 1998:121). People in Britain and Ireland began to look into their own histories for song material, and consequently regional styles and repertoires became widely known.

This enthusiasm did not go unnoticed in the Isle of Man, and it was especially embraced by those who had studied in England and had become involved in the university folk-clubs. Advances in radio and television were also a strong influence, and ensured the rapid dissemination of popular songs and artistes. Bob Carswell (20/05/1999), one of the Manx ‘revivalists-to-be’ spoke about his own introduction to the folk music scene:

There used to be a programme on BBC called ‘The Tonight Programme’... and Robin Hall and Jimmy [Mac]Gregor were regulars on that, and he used to sing Scottish folk song [?] as part of it. I don’t quite know why it came about. Or there used to be a fella called Cy Grant who was West-Indian originally, and he used to do songs... Sometimes a calypso or something like that, sometimes just a straight folk song... The Dubliners were on it in about 1963 or 4, just passing through. So obviously somebody had their ear to the ground at that time. There’s another programme, a series that was on... called ‘Hootenanny’. I think it was ‘61, ‘62, you know... and you’d get people like ‘The Settlers’ and ‘The Seekers’, these kind of “children, go where I sent thee”, kind of hootenanny gospely type of things. Very pleasant, but then you’d get Martin Carthy... various other people who would sing English traditional songs. So again, that was bringing a bit of a

sort of focus to it all. And radio programmes... what my father used to do, he used to come back in on an evening, we used to scan the radio dial, and occasionally you'd get 'Radio Athlone' as it was then, before it was RTE, and you'd get a ceilidh band playing or something like that. Or you'd find 'Radio Pakistan' or somewhere, where you'd find sitar music... so you got quite into this idea of different sorts of music...

One of the most popular folk bands in the Isle of Man in the late 1960s and early '70s was 'Mannin Folk' who performed material from around the British Isles. I spoke to singer and double bass player Norman Clague about his introduction to the "great boom" (Rosenberg 1993:29) of the folk revival:

I was at London University, King's College, and... the folk clubs started to open then, but there was also the skiffle craze going on at the same time, which was sort of jazz based songs... a lot of people were involved in that. And as students, we had quite a good little... group and we did sort of gigs and things. So, I came with that behind me as well... And I also used the guitar... as a teaching instrument, you know? And songs. When I was teaching in primary schools, which I was for two or three years in the early part of my career, I used the guitar quite a lot... with... the classes. And we did quite a lot of song and... singing then was very strong in schools. I think it's rather faded [nowadays] to be honest (Interview with Norman Clague, 16/03/1999).

Norman had joined a folk group when he began teaching languages at Ramsey Grammar School. Although born and brought up in England, he was of Manx descent, and took an immediate interest when several teachers and pupils proposed forming 'The Travelling People', a folk group comprising of singers, guitar, double bass and violin. Along with popular 'folk hits' by The Spinners, The Dubliners and The Clancy Brothers, they began to introduce songs from W.H. Gill's *Manx National Songs*.¹¹⁵ This new interpretation of regional 'folk' songs "went down very well" (*ibid.*) amongst their local audience at the folk-clubs around the Island, and they accordingly renamed themselves, 'Mannin Folk':

After a while, with due consideration, we wondered whether we shouldn't include more Manx based material in it, and I think... I did suggest it at some

115 Songs from the collections of Mona Douglas and Arnold Foster were also used, such as "Smuggler's Lullaby", "Sheep Under the Snow", "The Goodnight Song" ("Oie Vie", reprinted in Guard 1980:94-7) and Gill's "King of the Sea", in addition to popular and music-hall songs including "The Pride of Port-le-Murra" (*Ibid*:27-9) and "Ramsey Town".

stage. And Marlene was keen too. So... we added that to it, and then we changed the name to Mannin Folk (*ibid*).¹¹⁶

The band later expanded their repertoire by popularizing local singer-songwriter Stuart Slack's compositions. These songs were written in a general folk style, but employed local themes in the lyrics.¹¹⁷ The subject matter reflected the English folk movement in that the songs covered working class labour and hardship, such as "The Foxdale Miner's Lament" and "Laxey Wheel". Other songs mirrored the fashion for skiffle, with its tendency towards rail-road themes: "The Bulgham Bombshell" (a song about the Manx Electric Railway), and "Ride the Rails" (concerning the Isle of Man Steam Railway).¹¹⁸ Because of their use of Manx themed material, Mannin Folk became a household name in the Island and released several LPs including *Mannin Folk Sing* (1972) and *King of the Sea* (1976). As the British folk scene continued to subdivide into regional vernaculars and repertoires, Mannin Folk and their fans believed that they were representing the Manx version through a "a spate of songs... composed on local subjects in the 'folk' idiom" (Guard 1980:iii).

However, in a review of *Mannin Folk Sing*, along with a commentary on David Callister's *The TT Hall of Fame*, for the *Folk Review* journal, Eric Winter (1972) complained about the lack of Manx traditional material on both LPs:

Manx folk? Well . . . The Mannin Folk sing 'Whiskey in the Jar' and 'North Country Maid', two down and two to go. 'Ellan Vannin' is a song by Welshman Hugh Jones - true it is about an IOM [Isle of Man] ferry that tragically sank. Laxey Wheel common to both records, is a c/w [country and western] ching-a-ching song, and so is David Callister's TT song. Both records have a jaded air about them. I'm certain the island can do better. Let me make a couple of points very simply. Dave Callister (whom I have known for years, and who has done a lot of good things for the folk scene) and the Mannin Folk are not without talent. It seems to me, however, that if they put out between them five songs, two

116 Founding member of Mannin Folk, Francie Hughes had moved to the Island from Northern Ireland where he was brought up in the folk song tradition; a style and repertoire that he adapted to the band. Norman Clague, John Liddle and Marlene Kinrade (later Hendy) had all studied at university in England in recent years, where they were subject to the folk music revival.

117 David Callister was another singer-songwriter who accompanied himself on guitar. He wrote songs around Manx themes such as "The T.T. Hall of Fame" about the famous Tourist Trophy motorcycle races held annually on the Island (in Guard 1980:119-21).

118 See interview with Norman Clague (16/03/1999) and Mannin Folk records and song-sheet.

American in conception and treatment, one Irish, one English, and one written by a Welshman, there must be a very non-flourishing Manx tradition - or else they are very busy ignoring it. I wouldn't complain if the songs had much to offer, but they plainly do not.

Although Eric Winter's review of 1972 was unlikely to have been a catalyst for the ensuing revival, this opinion reflected what some individuals were already sensing; that there was a need for native Manx traditional music, an indigenous equivalent to their contemporaries in Britain and Ireland. Folk artistes were becoming increasingly competent, regional repertoires and styles were becoming more specialist, and the musicians were looking to tradition bearers and through archives for more authentic material: "Traditional singers... became meccas for young singers, anxious to hear songs in their 'original' form" (Woods 1979:30) and this too applied to the traditional instrumentalists (see Munro 1996:28, Evans 1979:108-9, Skinner-Sawyers 2000:259 and interview with Dave Richardson from 'Boys of the Lough' 04/12/2000).

Perhaps Mannin Folk could have raked through the Manx Museum library and discovered the original Gill and Clague manuscripts for themselves, or referred to Gilchrist's publication of material in the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* (1924-6), but at this stage, apart from *Manx National Songs* and some of Mona Douglas' material, there were no other publications still in print and available, nor were there any audio recordings of Manx tradition bearers.¹¹⁹ As with the other groups operating at the time, no fervent attempts were made to revive Manx music in its 'original' context, but this must be considered against the background of the social conditions of the era. Although Manx nationalist feelings were existent at this time within a minority of the population, culturally the manifestations of these sentiments lay temporarily "dormant" (Kermode 1979:16), and it unlikely that Mannin Folk felt such a strong need to assert their Manx identity. Some of the songs taken from *Manx National Songs* did refer to traditional

119 A.W. Moore's *Manx Ballads and Music* (1896) which potentially could have provided an wealth of material was not reprinted till 1998. Mona Douglas was well aware of the activities of Mannin Folk, and if consulted, she might have advised them where to look for additional material, but the revival of Manx traditional music was not their aim, and they felt no need to extend their Manx repertoire. Douglas (1978:30) evidently saw this, and accepted that the objective of Mannin Folk was that of light entertainment, in the style of popular folk bands of the day, with no prominent political or nationalist motivation.

source material collected and arranged by W.H. Gill and his affiliates, such as ‘Wreck of the Herring Fleet’ (Gill 1896:10-17), but this type of music was deemed outdated by the younger folk enthusiasts, who associated *Manx National Songs* with the Victorian era and the music-hall styles, and therefore linked them to the older generation. Bwoie Doal musician, David Fisher (23/12/1998) recalled the revivalists’ opinion of the type of material sung by Mannin Folk, such as “I’m a Native of Peel”, “Ramsey Town” and “The Pride of Port-le-Murra” (Gaelic: Purt-le-Moirrey, meaning Port St. Mary):

... they were sneered at... “this isn’t traditional Manx”... It was of an English music-hall tradition... there’s nothing Manx about them at all really... I mentioned before about people listening to us [at the Bwoie Doal session] saying, “Go on, give us a Manx tune! The “[Give me the] Bus fare to Laxey””... That’s not a bloody Manx tune!... “Ramsey Town” is quite old, but it... harp [*sic.*] back to a Victorian music-hall tradition rather than with just Manx... words in it. Using Manx names and things, but it could have been... [sings] “Morecambe town, Morecambe town, shining by the sea”. It could be anyway. There was... nothing... just the name “Ramsey Town” was the thing that made it Manx. “Kelly from the Isle of Man”, they’re all music-hall traditions.

In accord with Eric Winter’s critique, these songs were displaying little in the way of Celtic, or more importantly, unique Manx traits. While Mannin Folk were to the fore of popular folk music in the Isle of Man, reflecting the fashions of the American, British and Irish popular folk scenes, others were engaged in their own concepts of ‘traditional’ Manx music-making.

2.2 *Remnants of the Celtic Twilight*

Although a Manx music tradition seemed non-existent to Winter and others, secluded from the public eye, traditional music forms were being exercised. Mona Douglas was still active at this time, and although she acknowledged the work of the forenamed performers in her articles for the Manx press (see 1978:30), she did not appear to take much interest in them. She was still running Aeglagh Vannin until the mid 1970s, encouraging the children to perform the arrangements of Manx songs by Arnold Foster and herself. However, a colleague of Douglas’s and a member of Ellynyn ny Gael, was performing and recording Manx Gaelic song in the late 1960s. Claire Clennell recorded

two albums of unaccompanied secular and religious Manx songs, a stylistic trait that she insisted adhered to its original context.¹²⁰ This manner of performance was completely separate from the folk-club and pub scene, as Claire Clennell usually performed in formal concerts, often with ‘Aeg Threshlyn’, a classical choir who included Gaelic arrangements in their repertoire. Another protégé of Mona Douglas was the young Celtic harper, Charles Guard (interviewed 27/04/2000):¹²¹

When I went to study at the Royal College of Music... I was having English folk music rammed down my throat by Frank Howes, who was a pupil of Vaughan Williams and people like that. And I came home on a first Christmas holiday wondering if there was such a thing as Manx folk music. Never heard of it, and I found, of course, there was. Went to the museum and somebody said, “oh you ought to see Mona Douglas”, who of course was still very active in those days and... this was the early [19]70s. And I met her and that sort of introduced me to it and created an interest in it since then. So most of what I know about it, I learnt from her originally.

Along with Irish melodies, Charles also performed a selection of Manx material from Douglas’ collection, as illustrated on his solo harp album *Avenging and Bright* (1977). Although they existed side-by side, there was little common ground between this style and ideology of Manx music-making and that of the popular folk groups, as Charles Guard (1972:74-79) noted:

I am dealing with traditional folk-music, not the music which is sung today in clubs and on disc by so-called “folk-singers”; this is not true folk music and is only called such for want of a more correct title. True folk music is really “music of the folk”.

By the 1970s, Mona Douglas was still heavily influenced by the Celtic Twilight from her youth, and this trait was transmitted through her students. Her perception of Manx traditional music reflected a desire for a national ‘high art’, founded on her own selection of Celtic cultural attributes. Knowing that the *Clague Collection* contained a mixture of melodies of various origins, it is therefore very possible that she discouraged any of her protégés from exploring any further from her own publications.

120 *Fair Maid of Mann* (undated) and *Let the Whole World give Hearing...* (1975)

121 Originally a classical piano student, Charles Guard took up the Celtic harp and studied at Trinity College in Dublin for a while, later appearing in many of Mona’s concerts.

Consequently, when Celtic Tradition rediscovered the Clague Collection and officially introduced it as the basis of the Bwoie Doal music session in 1977 (Broderick 1999a:22), Manx music which had not been heard for almost a hundred years was again being practised. Till this period, none of the ‘folk’ musicians on the Island had seen the potential in digging deeper into the Island’s musical heritage.

But what also distinguished this movement from its predecessors was the involvement of ‘new’ musicians, who had not previously been involved or even interested in folk music. As word spread about the Bwoie Doal sessions, individuals who had never played before were taking up an instrument for the first time and joining in. The same applied to Manx dance and the Gaelic language. People with no prior experience or knowledge were suddenly inspired to recreate indigenous traditions. While some informants have attributed the change of approach to trends within the wider folk movement, such a dramatic change in the Manx folk scene must have had some political motivation. As witnessed elsewhere, a community is only conscious of its nationality when it is perceived to be under threat, and therefore the raised visibility of its culture is often the main motivation for a revival (see Slobin 1993¹²² and Berresford Ellis 1984:200).

3. The New Manx Identity

The revival of Manx traditional music occurred at a time of political and economic turmoil in the Isle of Man. Instigators of the music revival have often personally denied any political motivation, but considering the undeniable relationship between the political and cultural scenes during the 1970s until the present day, the musical movement has to be interpreted as either an effect of nationalism, or as an innocent and apolitical pastime that has unconsciously attracted the nationalist community. To understand the enthusiasm triggered by the prospect of reviving Manx traditional music, a brief overview of the political situation in the Isle of Man until and including

122 See Ronström 1996:12 who refers to Slobin’s *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (1993).

the 1970s must be considered. This section examines whether the music revival was a direct reaction to the political and economic situation, or a coincidental phenomenon that reinforced nationalist beliefs at a time when the Manx identity was perceived to be under threat.

3.1 *Manx Nationalism and the New Resident Policy*

By the period under observation, the Isle of Man had witnessed the decline of its own Gaelic language and culture in the 1800s, and had been through several economic depressions which forced many people to emigrate. But throughout that time, there was little indication that the Manx were serving a foreign master, and there was little resentment towards the Island's status as a Crown dependency. During the 1950s though, the Island saw a major economy slump. Between 1951 and 1961, a "dramatic exodus" (Kermode 1979:11) occurred, as almost 13% of the local residents emigrated, causing a noticeable imbalance in the age structures of the population:

In the ten years prior to 1961 the population had dropped from 55,253 to 48,133, a drop of approximately 12 1/2% in ten years. During the 1950's there was chronic unemployment with approximately 1,200 men looking for work every winter... "Skilled tradesmen left the Island in large numbers... Young professional men were leaving the Island for training and never returning."¹²³

The Manx Government countered this by the introduction of direct taxation laws which were brought about in 1958, with the hope of encouraging wealthy incomers, many retiring from the Colonies, to settle. This resulted in the formation of a 'tax haven' status or "off-shore financial centre" as the government have preferred to call it (Miller 1993), but in 1961 a new statute, called the New Resident Policy (NRP) was enforced, in order to lure investment companies and "a plantation of rich white tax-exiles" (*ibid.*) via its lax immigration legislation.¹²⁴ The concept of establishing an attractive financial

123 Chairman of the Isle of Man Government Finance Board Mr. John Bolton, M.L.C., quoted in the Isle of Man Examiner, 6th October 1976.

124 To achieve the status of tax haven, the Isle of Man Government abolished surtax on personal incomes, estate duties and Capital Gains taxes. The rate of income tax was reduced from 4/6d in the sterling pound (22.50%) to 4/3d (21.25%), and the Island achieved its status as a tax haven. Solly 1980:7.

climate certainly worked as many companies and individuals took advantage of the low tax rates, but the NRP brought as many problems as it solved. The Manx found themselves usurped as UK companies brought in their own staff: "... the Manx workforce were mainly unskilled in this 'new' area and there were no training programmes or immigration restrictions applied to ensure that the local workers would in fact be employed" (Bridson 1983:298).

Due to its new political status, the economy of the Island grew so rapidly that the native population saw themselves relegated to second class citizens in their own country, where incomers were the only ones benefitting from the Government's new policies. Stewart Bennett (19/03/1999) recalled his experiences of the NRP:

The Government was really selling out... the Government was only interested in getting money from the new residents coming in... new residents were only bringing in money when they were coming in, and once they were in, they were actually costing money. Because they had a lot of houses built, roads had to be improved, sewers had to be improved, or if they weren't improved, they had to be improved sooner or later. Hospitals... would have to be enlarged because a lot of people were retired people. You know, it's not like now, where they're [incomers] all whiz-kids working in... insurance offices and banks and things, aged twenty to forty. These were people who'd retired. They were... in their late fifties, in their sixties and such like, so they were going to be a drain on the economy before very long, when they got ill and had to be put into old folk's homes and things. And that's... how it's turned out really.

As house prices soared, the Manx residents found themselves unable to compete against the wealthy incomers. Resentment grew towards those who had no connection or allegiance to the Island, while the locals struggled to find work or to buy a home; an outcome which nationalists perceived as being directly due to foreign ('English') interference. However, an element of distrust also developed within the native Manx themselves, as local landowners, builders and politicians profited from the housing boom:

And sometimes too, people would say, "I'm selling the house, but I want it to go to a young Manx couple", and the young Manx couple would come along, give them the money for it, or take out a mortgage on it. Within six months, the young Manx couple would've sold that house to a retired English couple for

several thousand pound more, and just moved on. You know... you couldn't trust anybody (*ibid.*).

While properties were being hastily built on rural land, some of the old traditionally built houses were evacuated and demolished to make room for the new estates and blocks of flats which were to accommodate the growing population. Freddie Cowle (interviewed 11/03/1999) recalled the demolition of Old Ramsey to make way for a block of high-rise flats and a concrete shopping precinct, while the former residents were rehoused in a new council estate on the outskirts of the town:

Tynwald [Manx Parliament] passed a compulsory purchase order to... get them out, to evict them. I mean, they wouldn't have got away with it today... Virtually evicted in a sense. Yeah, and some of them of course, you know, their parents and grand-parents had lived in the little cottages in Maughold Street [Ramsey] an' all... it really was a lovely little place. Lovely little place. You had a bit of history as well there, you know, in some of the little buildings... I saw an old man watching his cottage being pulled down, and he was crying, out on the sea wall there. He was just crying to see it. It was sad to see that, but I still remember it. None of them really wanted to go.

The growing resentment amongst some of the native residents was represented by the nationalist party, Mec Vannin (Sons of Mann) formed in 1964.¹²⁵ The party established itself as an independence pressure group, and they deliberately accentuated the differences that they perceived between themselves and the incomers, focusing especially on the Manx Gaelic language and its associated culture: "Mec Vannin stimulated the Manx to assert their identity and shake off the feeling of political apathy" (Berresford Ellis 1985:159).¹²⁶ In an anti-English gesture, there was a call for the Union Jack to be withdrawn from the display of flags that fluttered along Douglas Promenade, and it became an offence within nationalist circles to refer to England as 'the Mainland', instead of the 'adjacent Island'. Incomers were dubbed 'Come-overs',

125 Although 1964 is quoted by most, dates referring to the formation of Mec Vannin vary according to different sources. The Aims and Objectives page of the Mec Vannin website cites 1962, yet other sources state that it was 1963. Mec Vannin is often referred to as the Manx nationalist party, but due to a dispute in the late 1970s, an off-shoot pressure group was formed which was actually called the 'Manx National Party'.

126 See interview with Bernard Moffat (28/07/1999), Founding Member and Former Chairman of 'Mec Vannin'.

‘When Is’ and ‘Foreign Devils’.¹²⁷ Mec Vannin persisted with their campaign for independence, and encouraged its followers to recognize and promote the Island’s indigenous symbols: “The revival of all forms of Manx culture and traditions and the need to formulate alternative political and economic policies for future development were stressed as the main objectives...” (Bridson 1984:301).

But the problems continued. Between 1961 and 1976, the Island saw an 30% increase in population due to the New Resident Policy, which took the figures from 48,133 to 61,723 in fifteen years. Over 90% of the immigrants were from UK and Ireland, 90% of which were English, and by 1976, less than 50% of the Isle of Man’s population were native (Kermode 1979:11).

As a reaction to the growing population, Fo Halloo, a “shadowy” protest movement was formed in 1972, which echoed the Welsh demonstrations of the early 1960s by Mudiad Amddiffyn Cymru (Berresford Ellis 1985:159 and 88). The purpose of Fo Halloo (Underground) was direct action against the New Resident Policy, and although it was intended to be a secret movement, many public protests took place [Appendix 15]. Over five years, campaigners relentlessly crusaded forward. They vandalized building sites and daubed newly-built houses and roads with slogans such as “New Residents Out - Close Tax Haven - Mannin a Nation or a Prison?”. A newsheet was regularly circulated that detailed alleged corruption within Tynwald, satirized and pilloried leading members of the Government and carried news of imminent property developments [*Fo Halloo* 1976 and Appendix 16]. Although there was a certain amount of fear produced among the public, (possibly because of the over-reaction of the police, Government and media), Fo Halloo found support from the Manx residents in their campaign:

[Fo Halloo]... got an awful lot of support. Tremendous amount of support. Much more than they ever hoped for, I think, and amongst ordinary people. And they also got a lot of support... from people who had come over to live... it sounds a bit ironical, you know, the people who’d come over to live were supporting the people who were trying to stop the people coming in!

127 Oral sources. Also see Prentice 1990:77. ‘Come-overs’ generally referred to all of those who had immigrated to the Island. ‘When Is’ concerned retired Colonialists who had settled in the Isle of Man. e.g. “When I was in Kenya...”

(Interview with Barry Pitts 28/12/2000).

As a long-term member and former Chairman of Mec Vannin, Bernard Moffat saw the offshoot movement as a distraction from the real aim of his party, that of independence, but admitted that Fo Halloo had made a difference to the Government laws and the Island's outlook. New legislative laws including the Draft Development Plan, a Land Speculation Tax and a Register of MHK's (Member of the House of Keys) interests were executed: "... for the first time Tynwald was being forced to act because of political campaign and public pressure" (Bridson 1983:303).

The identity of the underground political activists of this period remains, for the most part, a secret. Even as an unofficial offshoot of Mec Vannin, many members deny any participation in the Fo Halloo campaign, possibly because of the unlawful acts that took place by "... those who probably wouldn't own up to it now" (Bernard Moffat 28/07/1999). However, it has been implied by some informants that these political activists were also involved in Manx language and cultural circles.

Concomitant to Mec Vannin and Fo Halloo's protests was the strengthening of the Manx language movement, which in turn reflected upon the associated traditional music and dance revivals. Continuing where previous language activists of the 1930s and 1940s had left off, a new generation began to learn the Manx Gaelic: "Manx advanced through night classes taught by people who had learnt their Manx from the last of the Manx speakers."¹²⁸ This renewed interest in the language was seen as a political move by the nationalists, by many of the speakers themselves and by the Manx Government. Consequently the associated cultural forms of music and dance reinforced the new Manx identity and were seen as potential nationalist statements.

128 Stowell and Ó Bréasláin 1996:21. Douglas Fargher in particular was central to the recent revival of the language by conducting classes in Manx Gaelic. He had learnt from the last native speakers whilst recording for the Irish Folklore Commission in the 1950s, and he and his colleagues of that era had begun to use Manx as a living language. Lewis Crellin, Jack Irving, Murray Kaighen and Sheila Cregeen were also pivotal members of the revival.

3.2 Manx Nationalism and the Revival of Manx Traditional Music and Dance

Most Gaelic language revivalists in the Isle of Man have attributed the boost of interest in the language to the nationalist unrest during the 1960s and '70s. In very similar conditions to the revivals in the other five Celtic countries, the indigenous language was seen as the ultimate symbol of the Manx identity:

At the cultural level, the practical barrier of language enables different groups to develop, diversify and enrich their own inherited cultures, instead of having their individuality dissolved in a flat, colourless uniformity (Berresford Ellis 1984:205).

The relationship between Manx nationalism and the language revival of this period are accepted as being synonymous, so this leads us to examine the extent to which the politics effected the language's "attendant culture" (*ibid*:13). Cultural and political circles met regularly on a social level because of their shared concerns, and it is the closeness of this community that presents a dilemma when attempting to decipher the origins of the music revival. Even before the establishment of the exclusively Manx Bwoie Doal sessions, traditional musicians and Manx language speakers were already mixing on a social level:

And in 1974... it was at Tynwald fair day and [I] met Colin Jerry there, [and his wife] Cristl. In fact... I had a mouth organ then you see, and [?] spontaneous session started on the 'Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh' [Manx Language Society] stall there... (Interview with George Broderick 23/03/1999).

The issue here is deciding whether the music revival was a direct result of the nationalist groundswell, or whether the nationalist movement hijacked what was primarily a musical pastime for many. It seems that the answer varies depending on individual motivations, which suggests that possibly there was no collective reason. Over a decade after Colin Jerry (1983:290) initiated the Manx music revival, he still questioned why it had occurred:

It is difficult to say, even with hindsight, whether something begins in one particular place, or whether it is part of a spontaneous movement and

simultaneous movement in several places. It is also hard to determine whether something is a new departure or part of an evolving process.

Some informants claim that it was Manx nationalism that drew them into the cultural side: “I think it [Fo Halloo] got some more recruits into cultural circles” (Freddie Cowle 11/03/1999). Learning the Manx language was seen as the ultimate demonstration of their political beliefs, and by joining the nationalist party, individuals were in direct contact with many Manx speakers:

The political thing was always in the background with our... age group. Not with everybody of course. It was a minority kind of thing at that stage... but you did feel sort of cornered and [a] certain amount of anger spilled over in various places too, you know about the building situation, and how much the building was going on and how much houses cost and that sort of thing. So it's partly a political thing, and because of that... some of us joined Mec Vannin. And there [were] people like Lewis Crellin and Jack Irving and Murray Kaighen ... Lewis and Jack were both good Manx speakers. And that... led us into other avenues like learning Manx... You suddenly felt that this whole cultural, musical movement was on like a sort of a roller coaster ride, you know? And you started to realize that, especially through meeting people like Lewis [Crellin] and Jack Irving and Murray Kaighen and Sheila [Cregeen], and many others, that you'd missed out on a lot... you wondered why you hadn't been taught a lot of these things at school. You know, you'd grown to the age of twenty five and hadn't touched on so many of the Manx cultural aspects. So, I suppose that's one of things that carried us all on. And of course there was younger people always being drawn in as well. You know, people like my nephew... David Fisher, and I think in a way, the people who were drawn in after us were even more enthusiastic than us (Barry Pitts 28/12/2000).

Nevertheless, the growth of Manx language classes also attracted a great many non-political enthusiasts, an element that often agitated nationalist members:

... they were very popular. There were all sorts of people... I can still see the classroom now, twenty or thirty people in there. There was a bit of friction actually... some of them tended to be retired people and there were, say for instance, there was a fella called Bell from out Ballachrink between Ballig Bridge and the Poortown Road [near Peel]. And he spoke with an English accent. I think he was a Manx fella who'd been away for a long time, but we, you know... there were the ones in their twenties. People like me, Ian Coulson, Pat Bridson... you know, we were members of 'Mec Vannin', and we were nationalists and everything, and we tended to look down on these older, retired people, because we thought they were just doing it as a hobby. When we look

back, they were part of the revival as well, 'cause they could just as easily have done German or painting for pleasure as a hobby, but they took up Manx (Interview with Stewart Bennett 19/03/1999).

The three branches of Manx cultural activity; language, music and dance, were inevitably linked by politics, and enthusiasts for the nationalist cause either actively supported or were involved in at least one of the disciplines. "The Manx nationalists made a regular habit of gathering to participate in the cultural revival" (Nixon 1983:75), and as illustrated by Barry Pitts (interviewed 28/12/2000), the music was seized as a symbol of their nationalistic loyalty:

I mean I bought a fiddle on the strength of all this..... I bought a concertina..... People like David [Fisher]..... they tackled the flute from scratch and an awful lot of other people of his sort of era and that all happened quite quickly really.

David Fisher (23/12/1998) also explained how each area was closely associated and how easy it was to transfer from one to the other:

The music and dance, so it was really the language and as I said, there was this core [of] people, about twenty, who were doing everything and I ended up doing everything as well. So it was really the language that dragged me in first, then... the dancing... then... because I was there with the dancing and I was with the musicians, I was saying, "oh, I could do that", and I sort of took up the music. So that was the order it was in really.

For others, actively participating in the music or dance revivals was a safe way to assert their discontent about the political climate, without directly becoming involved in the nationalist movement:

You've got particularly the New Resident Policy causing a lot of resentment. And I think a lot of people at that time felt, well, what could they do, but show... not necessarily that they resented the new residents, but that they were connected with the Island in some... positive sort of way (Bob Carswell 20/05/1999).

With such close links between each cultural form, it was inevitable that those involved generated a social group of like-minded people. Those engaged from the purely

political angle also identified the Central Hotel and the Bwoie Doal music session as the main meeting place for both political and cultural activists:

I would say, mainly based on the sort of people who came together at the early music sessions [Bwoie Doal] that there were in Peel in the late '60s and '70s, that the music scene was also the focus for nationalism. And political dialogue, exchange of ideas, and to a certain extent, the section of Mec Vannin that came to dominate the nationalist party later and continues to up to this day, its thinking, it developed in the west of the Island around that music session (Bernard Moffat 28/07/1999).

Although clearly linked in many ways to the objectives of Mec Vannin and Fo Halloo, those involved from the nationalist slant have admitted that the cultural side has progressed regardless of political progress:

Manx cultural movements... have re-emerged despite the lack of sustained moves towards independence. It has not been a galvanizing force in politics in this sense to any significant degree (*Carn* 1999:20).

In agreement to the above statement, some musicians have also denied any political motivation in their revival. Interviewees have explained that although their music was connected to the political scene, it was not actually a product of it:

CW What part did music play in the Fo Halloo campaign, or was it a separate entity at the time? Were the music revivalists interested in politics?

FM I think... some of them were. But how much... well, music's another expression. It is an expression of nationalism, the political side was, and the musical side was as well. But quite a lot of the leading musicians weren't particularly interested in active politics as such. No, that's not to say they weren't interested in politics, but they weren't interested in some of the protest movement as such, and getting deeply involved in it (Interview with Fiona McArdle 19/05/1999).

Although Brian Stowell (interviewed 22/12/2000) sang in Manx Gaelic and played concertina among the music sessions of this era, he personally felt that the language and politics were of prime importance. However, he explained that this was not the case for most musicians:

The driving force behind all these things is basically political. Behind the language anyway, not so much the music... The music's not political at all, I don't think, not really. It just happens that the people involved in it, will, in general, be sympathetic to the Manx language. But they mightn't know much on it... the whole lot just co-exists you see.

For Colin Jerry (interviewed 10/03/1999), the main protagonist in the musical movement, the revival was a merely a response to the folk movements in Britain and Ireland:

I think it was just part of a general movement throughout the British Isles, 'cause if you look at any part of the British Isles, not just the Celtic countries... in a way I think they were trying to counter the blanket culture coming from America... But, I think in all the countries, that includes Brittany as well, around about the same time, there was a growing awareness of national identity, and one of the forms that it took was playing folk music. And there certainly was in England this... strong counter to the American culture movement going on. Quite a lot of stuff that influenced 'Celtic Tradition' came out of that...

Yet, Colin Jerry and his wife, Cristl were also involved in the language movement, and were both members of Mec Vannin. Although his actions seem to imply nationalist sentiments, Colin insists that his motivations were purely cultural, and that his approach to Manx music simply reflected the ideology amongst the wider folk music scene. So, if it were not due to the impact of the rigorous nationalist protests at the time, which forces did influence the inception of the Manx music revival? Progress in the other Celtic nations undoubtedly effected the ideology of both the political and cultural aspects on the Island. "Celtic consciousness" (Berresford Ellis 1984:196)¹²⁹ had reached a peak by the 1970s, and the larger Celtic countries encouraged their cousins to assert their Gaelic roots:

... there is not only national awareness but a Celtic awareness and a sense of unity which is a tangible force, uniting those sixteen million people of the Celtic nations in new attitudes and with a new hope for the future (*ibid*:198).

129 The title of 55 essays edited by Professor Robert O' Driscoll (1981), which provided a title for the 20th century phenomenon. See Berresford Ellis 1984.

Inevitably, this concept of a common identity dictated fashions among traditional music circles, and this was displayed by the group, Celtic Tradition who later became Bwoie Doal. Consequently, this observation of ‘fashion’ may have unintentionally aligned the musicians to nationalist thought in the Isle of Man.

From this angle, it would appear that the traditional music revival did not directly descend from nationalism like the language movement had, but because of its associations had involuntarily attracted political activists either as its audience or as participants. While the revival of Manx traditional music may have been an innocent or intellectual curiosity for some of its performers, those who came from a political stance evidently identified with the meaning behind the music, and not so much with its aesthetic qualities: “Music cannot express anything extramusical unless the experience to which it refers already exists in the mind of the listener” (Blacking 1995:35). Therefore, for musicians and nationalists alike, the music became an important part of their national and communal identity:

The informal and formal local groupings in the music sector comprise the backbone of any musical culture. The activities of these groupings are interwoven with other activities in the local community. Together with language, music seems to play a decisive role in the formation of the identity of individuals and their feelings of belonging to a group (Wallis and Malm 1984:43).

Furthermore, music and dance provided an expression of the Manx identity without the long-term commitment of learning a new language. For some, dance was an easier option, but a substantial number of people took up instruments from scratch, concurrent with learning the unfamiliar repertoire. But from the nationalist point of view, music was employed in order to demonstrate their Manxness, and for some it was a serious vocation:

... in the early days, [there was] a sense of you’ve got to do this, because even if you don’t like doing it, you’ve got to do it because it’s Manx. And yes, we’d like to play some Irish music, but you can’t do it here! No smiling! No enjoying yourself! (David Speers 23/05/1999).

Fiona McArdle (interviewed 19/05/1999) agreed that the creation of a ‘Manx identity’ was the prime motive for some of the revivalists:

A lot of people just went to do these things for a Manx badge. To say, “oh, I’m Manx, I speak Manx”! But, I mean, that doesn’t wear off on me, I mean, you can be the world’s best Manx speaker, the greatest musician on the Isle of Man, in Manx circles, the best dancer, it doesn’t make you any more Manx than the Manx man next door who doesn’t go to anything like that... it’s a ... peace [*sic.*] of mind really.

There are always various personal motivations behind a complex movement such as this, and Ronström (1996:16) warns that the effects of a revival should not be mistaken for the motivations. While most politically inclined followers of the cultural revival in the Isle of Man saw the revitalization of its indigenous music as a useful tool for their purpose, others saw the music as a separate and non-political movement. As demonstrated, these contrasting perceptions essentially depend on individual and personal motivations.

There seems to be a fine line between whether the music either represented or merely accompanied the political scene of the time. To illustrate this disparity, Brian Stowell (interviewed 22/12/2000) stated that one vigilant activist in the nationalist movement of the 1970s was sympathetic to the cultural forms, but “spectacularly uninterested in the music”.

4. Characteristics of the Manx Traditional Music Revivalist

Ronström (1996), Baumann (1996) and Livingston (1999) have all identified recurring characteristics amongst the personalities found in revival movements: They are often ‘outsiders’ to the chosen culture, they are usually from middle class backgrounds, and there is the prolific involvement of those from the teaching profession. This section will take these characteristics as its main topics to observe whether the Manx traditional music revivalists possess the ‘typical’ qualities as described by these scholars.¹³⁰

130 Manx-by-connection/ancestry who had settled in the Island: Bob Carswell, David Speers, John Kaneen, Brian Stowell, George Broderick. Some of these individuals were academics who

4.1 *The Outsider*

The involvement of outsiders or “immigrants” (Slobin 1983:37-44, see Rosenberg 1993:196) is not unusual in any traditional music movement. In fact, it is often an outsider to the culture that instigates a revival, and this feature is certainly reiterated through the revival of Manx traditional music. Here, the implications of the outsider or immigrant also apply to the nationality of many of the core revivalists. Although many young Manx-born people related to its aims and took an active interest in the politics and revived culture, it was actually newcomers to the Island that initiated the musical movement.

In the revival of Manx traditional music, the identity of these ‘outsiders’ can be further divided into two types: Incomers who have family or historical connections to the Island, and those with no previous links at all. The first trait applied to most of the core revivalists, as “many of the immigrants had family connections with the Island” (Kermode 1979:11) and there are several possible explanations for this. This category usually concerned individuals who had been brought up elsewhere by Manx parents, and therefore, an element of ‘getting back to one’s roots’ often attracted people to the movement. For many, the language movement, the dance revival and therefore, the music revival presented a ready-made Manx identity and community:

Their consciousness of being British is much less evident than their consciousness of being Manx and this probably applies almost as much to

had Manx connections and presumably appreciated the prospect of what appeared to be an open field of possibilities for research. Ross Jellicoe, John Kaneen, Bob Carswell and others had attended university in England during the late 1960s and early ‘70s, at a time when the British folk music circuit was thriving. John Kaneen moved back to the Island after living in England and ran a folk-club in Douglas in the 1960s. Although he became involved in the Manx traditional music revival, he retained an interest in English folk song.

Incomers with no previous connection: Colin and Cristl Jerry were teachers who had moved to the Island from Essex with no family connections to the Island. Originally an amateur jazz musician, Colin had recently taken up folk music. Fiona McArdle, a schoolteacher, moved to the Island from Scotland and took up the music, dance and language.

Manx-born: Mike Boulton was a schoolteacher who became involved with the Bwoie Doal sessions and Manx language movement in the early days, later taking the musical material into the classroom. Manx-born David Fisher originally came from the political stance, but chose music as an expression of his beliefs, rather than direct protest.

immigrants or ‘come-overs’ as to native Manxmen (*ibid*:4).

David Speers (23/05/1999), who joined the music scene in the late 1970s, counted himself as ‘Manx-by-connection’:

... probably mainly people who are either English, or have lived a lot of the time away, so it’s people looking for roots. And I count myself in that as well, because I was, although I’m Manx by parentage and all the rest of it, I was born and lived all over the place. In England and Germany and places like that when I was a child. So, coming back here and sort of seeing this sort of thing take off was, “oh, I’ll get involved in that”.

This element also applied to the coexisting political, language and dance movements, where there a significant involvement of incomers:

I’d say again that there’s a good chance that on the cultural side we wouldn’t have made the progress that we have done if it hadn’t been... through the interest of people coming in from the outside. Again, there’s a parallel to this in the Nationalist Party [Mec Vannin] as well. A lot of people that were active in the Nationalist Party, some of whom still are, are not indigenous Manx people. But it was more so in the music, I think. Music and dance. A lot of it was to do with people who’d moved here, decided they wanted to live here... but who sort of totally committed to it (Bernard Moffat 28/07/1999).

Incomers saw the Manx culture in a different light in comparison to the locals who had perhaps taken it for granted:

I think they were seeing what had happened with their cultures in various parts of Britain and they were trying to stand up for it over here..... to save what we had. I would think that would go for the music and the language... they could instantly see more so than the Manx people. An outside view, you know, there’s something here to save, you know, there’s something important to resurrect (Barry Pitts 28/12/2000).

This interpretation also applies to the notion of the ‘paradise island’ mentality, where incomers have found their ‘Shangri-La’ and consequently develop strong feelings of protectiveness towards their new home and its heritage. It is also possible that newcomers to the Island had a heightened awareness of their position in the community during this period of tension caused by the New Resident Policy. However, not all of

the incomers held explicit reasons for joining the folk scene. Some members became involved simply to make friends, to continue a hobby or because of a “vague love of music” (Wallis and Malm 1984:120). This was apparent all over Britain and Ireland during the 1970s when many incomers fled to the countryside, choosing to escape the larger conurbation and the ‘rat race’ of the city, and involve themselves in the community spirit of rural life:

Some of it’s academic, some of it’s social. They get friends here and they just join in with the social life. They... [think] “well, I can do that” and pick up an instrument, or some are musicians already and they come in, they look around for what scenes are going on, and they find Manx music and they adapt to it (Interview with David Speers 23/05/1999).

The involvement of incomers has rarely posed a problem for Manx participants, which interestingly contradicts some of the policies held by ardent nationalists and Fo Halloo at the time. In fact, many of the Manx-born people involved from the nationalist stance were full of gratitude for their intervention:

Colin and Cristl [Jerry] were new residents... But in spirit... you’ve got to admit that they were more Manx than the Manx! They would never admit it. But they were, I’m telling you as a Manx man, you know, that they were, and we’ll always be indebted to them (Freddie Cowle 11/03/1999).

4.2 *The Teachers’ Hobby*

In accordance with the patterns of other revival movements all over the world, there was also the considerable involvement of members of the teaching profession and academics in the inception of the Manx music revival (and in its following): “... a lot of them were teachers that came to the Isle of Man... Some of them were Manx teachers and some of them were from away who came to the Isle of Man” (David Fisher 23/12/1998). This phenomenon echoed the times of Cecil Sharp and the English Folk Dance Society’s reign, and of Mona Douglas and Leighton Stowell’s efforts in the Isle of Man, where they believed that education was a tool for social change.

Dave Richardson, who was involved in the English folk music revival (interviewed

04/12/2000) believes that the extensive involvement of teachers was due to the expansion of university education in the 1950s and '60s, where many young people from working class backgrounds went to university and suddenly found themselves as middle class; a lifestyle that they were not yet accustomed to. By romanticizing the lives of fishermen, miners and industrial workers, a working class connection could be kept alive through song and music. He recalled this interesting phenomenon from his own experiences:

You got all these geography teachers standing up with beards and jerseys singing them, and it's quite a pretty weird thing when you look back on it now. But there was this thing that they... must've felt, "well, I'm not really a middle-class geography teacher with white hands with no scar tissue on them, I'm really kind of from harder stuff than that." There must've been something going on in the mind that made them want to be associated with these more heroic occupations... (*ibid*).

4.3 The Middle Class

Although teachers have become the stereotype of the folk enthusiast, the general folk movement also attracted a whole realm of the middle class from scientists to artists. Overt cultural and political beliefs often aggravated an overall dissatisfaction of contemporary popular culture, leading individuals to pursue alternative genres. After an extensive survey of folk-club patrons, Niall MacKinnon (1994:68) came to a feasible conclusion for the considerable involvement of this section of society, which echoed that of Dave Richardson:

It may be of no coincidence that the folk scene has attracted a disproportionately large number of the upwardly mobile middle class in the service sector... These people are one generation removed from working class origins, from the memory of social hardship and collective social solidarity. Yet these people in their new social location find little to identify with in terms of elite culture and resist the cultural passivity of middle class Britain.

Brocken (2000: Chapter 3) agrees with this theory, and explains that although the British folk revival was based around working class culture, the actual working class remained largely unaware of the existence of a revival:

It would appear to be the product of left wing intellectuals who somehow lost control of things when it was taken up by the young middle class intelligentsia, grammar school boys, university graduates, teachers and the like.

The core revivalists of the Manx movement were a variety of characters, but their individual backgrounds have tended to dictate their perception of the movement and their motivation for joining. Manx-born participants have generally joined in empathy to the nationalist cause, but of course there were many native people who did not feel the need to assert their identity. The Manx-born revivalists have tended to come from artistic or unskilled professions, but this was not exclusive. Non-Manx or 'Manx-by-connection' participants have predominantly come from middle class backgrounds, and have usually attended university. They were often sympathetic to the nationalist situation, but seem to have been motivated by either intellectual curiosity or the desire to belong to the Manx nation.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to identify the core revivalists responsible for the revival of Manx traditional music and to work out why the revival occurred. While the pioneers of the "new dawn of Manx music" (Biography of Bwoie Doal in *Yn Chruinnaght Programme* 1991:49) have been acknowledged, their motivations are not so simple to deduce.

Throughout the interviews, most of the revivalist musicians indicated that the revival was merely a response to the fashions of the day, rather than a nationalist manifestation. Instead, they saw their music as a "vernacular" (Jerry 1983:290) version of the wider folk scene, although they were evidently biased towards the Celtic image. From the political viewpoint, informants have also been hesitant to state that the music revival was a direct product of nationalism, although they do admit to a connection. The Manx Gaelic language revival of the 1960s and '70s was always recognized as a political statement, and this has inevitably reflected upon the music movement: "Coupled with the revival of interest in the language went the revival of Manx folk music and dancing"

(Kelly [no date]).¹³¹

The music revival was not an independent movement, and has developed from multiple influences that cannot be easily categorized. Therefore, identifying one communal motivation behind a complex movement such as this is very difficult. The music, language and dance revivals went “hand in hand” (Jerry 1983:219) with each other and involved many of the same people: The dancers and musicians were frequently Manx Gaelic speakers, and the language movement was heavily influenced by the nationalist movement, which in turn inspired people to participate in the cultural revival. Consequently, to extract the music revival from these other cultural movements, and then dissect it further in order to identify individual motivations presents difficulties. The origins of the music movement are too ‘multi-stranded’ to form any specific conclusions. Ronström warns that;

[A] risk is to look for explicitly formulated goals, ideals and intentions, which of course do exist as well. Some people involved in revival movements are extremely self-conscious; they know what they are doing and what they want to get out of it. But the risk is to mistake those persons for the whole movement (Ronström 1996:16).

Ronström’s reference to ‘self-consciousness’ is of prime importance to understanding the revival of Manx traditional music. This self-consciousness is particularly concerned with the term ‘revival’, because it denotes a deliberate action that participants are often embarrassed to admit to. Because “revivals do not happen randomly” (Livingston 1999:68), the ‘accidental’ stumbling across the *Clague Collection* by Ross Jellicoe, (a former member of the Manx Folk Dance Society and founding member of revivalist dance team Bock Yuan Fannee), seems rather unlikely. Apart from Mona Douglas, who was aware of the collection, the Clague manuscripts had been “previously difficult of access to all but determined scholars” (Bazin 2001).¹³² This implies that Ross Jellicoe and his associates were actually ‘searching’ for more traditional material, and that the

131 Phil Kelly, who later became the Manx Language Officer in the Isle of Man, was one of the core music revivalists.

132 Although Jerry contradicts this by stating that the *Clague Collection* “was always accessible” (1983:290).

movement was much more pre-meditated than the revivalists would like to admit.

This self-consciousness also concerns issues of identity and nationality; the source of personal questions which many of the informants wished to avoid during interview. As demonstrated in the earlier section about the revivalist characteristics, the entire cultural movement attracted a significant number of incomers or 'outsiders'. To become involved in a movement that ultimately concerned the construction of a 'Manx identity' was a highly conscious, yet very personal decision for most of these participants, and in the main, has proved to be a delicate issue. Generally, newcomers have joined the folk scene for non-political reasons: To assimilate with the local population and feel part of a distinct community, to help locals recover their culture, or because they are simply interested in the new or unique qualities of a local tradition. In contrast, Manx informants have been quite open about their motivations: They wanted to assert their Manxness and learn about their heritage, and in general, these individuals were more likely to admit to having nationalist leanings.

Although there was definitely a relationship of some kind, it is impossible to say whether the nationalist connection was a "motive" or an "effect" (Ronström 1996:16) of the Manx traditional music revival. The answer varies depending on personal and individual perspectives. In general though, it can be said that there were three main strands of people involved in the revival of Manx traditional music, and that they had equal influence over its establishment: Amateur musicians who directed the revival and approached the music either as a cultural alternative or intellectual curiosity; inexperienced musicians who entered the scene primarily (and often temporarily) as a vehicle of political expression and to raise the visibility of the new Manx identity; and the hardcore political activists who viewed the music as a useful tool for their campaign, and were present during the music revival, but did not necessarily participate musically. Therefore, the Manx music revival contained an element of political behaviour because of its associations, although, in the main, the leaders of the revival considered themselves to be apolitical or non-political. This feature reflects the statement of Livingston (1999:81) and appears to be fairly typical of revivalist movements:

The oppositional tendency of music revivals has made them open to alliance with various political and social movements throughout history, nationalism being the prime case, although they continue to preserve an independent dynamic centering on music.

To conclude, the Manx traditional music revival has developed from a combination of several prime motivations, which will perhaps be further revealed through the ideology and interpretation of the *Clague Collection* which is discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

Ideology in the Revival of Manx Traditional Music

Introduction

Following the location and contact with “revival informants and/or original historical sources” (identified and analyzed in the first two chapters), Livingston suggests that the third stage of a revival movement is the establishment of “a revivalist ideology and discourse” (1999:69).

Primarily, this chapter will discuss the formation of creative boundaries, which are essential to achieve a specific revival of music. To create the type of traditional music that they believed would reinforce their new Manx identity, the revivalists had to select particular characteristics from the Island’s past.

The ideology behind a revival is normally dictated by a few core revivalists who establish unwritten rules which act as a census for the group. With reference to the personal experiences and predilections of the core revivalists, the practicalities of reviving the source material, and the social and political environment that surrounded the revival, this chapter will identify the decision-making processes and the ensuing outcome of the revival.

With consideration of the purpose behind the revival, this chapter will also address the interpretation of the selected source material by the 1970s revivalists. Within a very short time, a ‘new tradition’ was formed from the selection and rejection of source material on offer, the use of particular instruments, the deciphering and interpretation of source material and the organization of a session environment.

1. Principal Objectives of the Core Revivalists

Within months of its rediscovery in 1975, photocopies of the *Clague Collection* were distributed among the small group of musicians frequenting the general folk music

session at the Central pub in Peel, and by 1977, 'Celtic Tradition' the band became the open session 'Bwoie Doal'.¹³³ Their main objective was to "jettison the popular folk repertoire and to concentrate solely on Manx traditional material..." (Broderick 1999b:22), recreating the tunes in a 'grass roots' context rather than the formal and concert-style environment associated with Manx music in the recent past. Although they shared an interest in the "Celtic revolution" (Berresford Ellis 1985:9), Bwoie Doal's approach to the music presented a distinction between the (still active) ideology of Mona Douglas and her followers. In an effort to promote a 'Manx national consciousness', Douglas' aim had been to create a national art form, "different and unique, rather than record or revive something which had been part of Manx community life" (Speers 1996-7:226). In contrast, the creation of a "new living tradition" (Jerry 1993:41) was the common objective amongst the core revivalists, but in order to utilize the repertoire, a shared ideology and discourse had to be established.

... knowing that this repertoire had not been touched in... an ordinary 'grass roots' way for something like fifty years and more... You had to be looking for a way of interpreting that was folky rather than concerty. And from that point of view I think it's really quite exciting (Colin Jerry, interviewed 10/03/1999).

Although the term, 'grass roots', implied a sense of impromptu music-making and "fun"¹³⁴ to many, ironically, decisions had to be made over which tunes or songs should and should not be practised in their 'new' tradition.

A session, whether instrumental or vocal, is informal only to the extent that the event is not staged. Beyond that it is tightly rule-governed (MacKinnon 1994:102).

With no living tradition to refer to, and a collection of a few hundred bare tunes of various styles and origins to consider, a selective process had to be exercised. Several factors determined the choices made by the revivalists in the initial stages of the revival, and a level of control over the repertoire had to be applied by the pioneers of the movement. Reflective of the trends set by similar movements in Britain and Ireland,

133 See Broderick 1999b for further details on the transition from Celtic Tradition to Bwoie Doal.

134 In many of the interviews, the revivalists declared that their prime motivation was to have "fun".

the codification of a set repertoire was paramount among the Manx revivalists:

The post-war and traditional music revival in the British Isles was a complex phenomenon which involved more than just the simple rediscovery and promotion of neglected music and song. The ideology of key individuals was important in determining the scope and subsequent direction of the revival including the sources of the revived repertoire and how it should be re-packaged (Eydmann 1995:41).

Outside and local pressures were both considered, along with the individual predilections and needs of the revivalists in the selection of what was to become 'Manx traditional music'.

1.1 The Need to be Different - Identity and Boundary Formation

Owing to the popularity of folk music in the neighbouring countries, a sense of urgency existed in relation to the revival of the Manx music: A core of distinctive tunes had to be hastily selected and established within the revivalist group. As with other examples of revivals, the sense that their tradition was disappearing (or had disappeared) also conformed with the necessity for quick action in order to save it (Nusbaum 1993:211).

Because of their own political leanings and aesthetic preferences, the Manx revivalists chose to focus upon the Celtic background of the Isle of Man. Throughout the twentieth century, Mona Douglas had arduously striven to create a Celtic image for the Island's culture and had established links with the other Celtic countries, which led the way for the new generation. And as the Manx revivalists looked out towards the musical developments of contemporary inter-Celticism, "... other countries were showing interest in the Isle of Man" (Jerry 1983:291). Being 'under the spot-light' in this way placed expectations on the Manx musicians that had to be taken into consideration in their ideology. To legitimize their traditional musical culture, the Manx needed their music to be accepted by the other Celtic countries, and this involved the creation of a tradition that was equal to the continuous traditions of Ireland and Scotland in particular. However, in order to promote the new Manx identity, the revivalists also had to produce a tradition that was patently distinct from the other countries:

For the vindication of the ethnic group, it is sufficient that a border be drawn between itself and similar groups by means of a few cultural emblems and values that make it different in its own eyes and in the eyes of others (Roosens 1989:12).

Corresponding to the ideology of Douglas, Bwoie Doal wanted to create something unique, but of equal status, and the 'Manxness' of the music had to be highlighted to gain recognition. Unlike some music revivals, where "traditions are chosen because they are associated *by the dominant society* with the minority culture" (Livingston 1999:69), the Isle of Man had few cultural traits that were immediately recognizable by outsiders; with the exception of the T.T. motorcycle races, Tynwald (parliament), Manx cats, kippers and the Island's tax haven status. Other countries did not identify the Island with any specific musical instrument or musical genre. The Irish had *sean-nós*, the Scottish had *waulking* songs and *pibroch*, the Welsh were well-known for their choirs and *pennillion*, the Bretons had the singing tradition of *kan ha diskan* and the Cornish had a strong carol tradition (Skinner-Sawyers 2000:4). To outsiders, the Island had no identifiable musical tradition, a perception that had both advantages and disadvantages for the Manx revivalist ideology: The revivalists were granted the freedom to select and highlight any cultural traits they wished without any predetermined expectations from outsiders, but they simultaneously needed to modify outside perceptions to gain visibility in the Celtic world.

The revivalists believed that the most obvious (and quickest) method of achieving a cultural boundary and raising their "visibility" (Ronström 1996:8-9) was to play exclusively from Manx source material during the Bwoie Doal session. John Kaneen (interviewed 18/03/1999) commented on the hasty endeavour to eliminate all non-Manx material:

Well, it was artificial in many respects. The... simple fact I think that those people that played at the Central Hotel in... Peel decided that... these tunes were all they were going to play. [It] Was an artificial environment in which to play these tunes. It was force feeding, I suppose, those people who went to the Central Hotel.

In accord with other examples of folk revivalism, an awareness of the nation's identity

was paramount to the revivalist ideology in the Isle of Man. By striving to counter the equivalent traditions and highlight their own, a 'unique', yet 'similar' style and repertoire had to be created. Peter Symon (1997:213) discusses this element of 'friendly rivalry' in his study of the folk revival in Scotland. He claims that the Scottish instrumental revivalists of the 1970s were not only attempting to enforce cultural differences between themselves and their political opponent, England, but were also countering the popularity of Irish music, their cultural ally. This also applied to the Manx revivalist motivations. John Kaneen (18/03/1999) noted that; "What it [Manx traditional music] has been used for again is for political ends, with a small 'p'". Therefore, while the music represented an element of the Manx nationalist movement and its struggle against Crown dependency and the influx of new residents, it simultaneously sought to combat the overwhelming popularity of Irish traditional music, which ironically belonged to their cultural and nationalist counterparts.

Indigenous symbols had to be emphasized to gain recognition, and the well-established relationship between traditional music and the Manx Gaelic language was particularly useful in illustrating their cultural disparity: "... there were lots of attempts early on at... introducing ballads and songs and that sort of thing in Manx, and talk in Manx" (Interview with David Speers 23/05/1999). Many of the revivalist musicians had learnt to speak Manx, and the Bwoie Doal session also became a base for conversing in the revived language by both musicians and non-musicians. Although the session provided the perfect location to practise and actually apply the language in a 'normal' setting, it may have been seen as antagonistic by others. According to some of the revivalists though, the use of the Manx language during the session was not a deliberate attempt to create symbolic boundaries:

... the idea wasn't to be exclusive... so much as to actually create an environment which was Manx, you know? But it in fact was exclusive in [that] a lot of people chose not to go to the sessions because they thought it was... bit like being stranded in Wales without any Welsh, you know? (David Speers 23/05/1999).

In compliance with Stokes' observations of other revival movements (1994:3), the

Manx revivalists had constructed a musical 'place' for their own physical performance by simulating a social activity within a geographically determined environment: "The 'places' constructed through music involve notions of difference and social boundary. They also organize hierarchies of a moral and political order." In an effort to counter the influences of the dominant traditional musics surrounding the Isle of Man, the revivalists had to construct an exclusively Manx environment, however unrealistic or inauthentic that was:

... one of the faults with the Manx musical community... in the past, they wanted to live in musical isolation. And you can't do that. The *Clague Collection* is a fairly... as I've said, the songs are there from elsewhere outside of the Isle of Man, it's a fairly cosmopolitan musical collection... What I think the Manx musicians of twenty years ago were afraid of was being swamped by English or Irish folk music... to the extent where just Manx music would be ignored (John Kaneen 18/03/1999).

To form a boundary between the Manx tradition and other domineering forces, a decision was made to concentrate solely on Manx material. This involved a consensual endeavour to abandon previous predilections in favour of a new, controlled environment of 'Manx music-making'. Considering that many of the revivalists came from varying musical backgrounds, including skiffle, jazz and other types of folk music,¹³⁵ a level of stringency had to be applied. The decision to play exclusively from the Manx repertoire was exercised, with a particular prohibition on Irish music.¹³⁶ George Broderick (1999b:22) explained the ideology behind the Manx revivalists' tactic:

... at the Central, a conscious decision and effort was made to concentrate only on Manx material... The reason was simple. Manx music had not been played for many a year and was thus in a weak position when set against a thriving Irish tradition. If Manx music was not played at the Central no one else would play it.

135 See various informant interviews for further details.

136 The Manx revivalists were possibly unaware that the same measure had been implemented in the Edinburgh session scene at the same time, due to the overwhelming fashion for Irish instrumental music. Symon (1997:207) states that in a move to highlight the Scottish tradition, there was "an 'unspoken rule' in the group that they would not play Irish tunes".

Although this strict notion was observed and supported by the regular players of the Bwoie Doal session, the initial concept was commonly believed to have been imposed by the unofficial leader of the revival: "... it's only Colin [Jerry], typically who isn't Manx, who insisted on Manx music only" (Brian Stowell 22/12/2000). John Kaneen (18/03/1999) agreed:

If Colin [Jerry] was there, then he would play solely Manx music. This was a decision, I think... that had been made by Colin that he, until such time as there was a corpus of players who were aware of it and sufficiently competent in playing Manx tunes, then he would play solely Manx tunes... he decided that Manx music was all he wanted to play in order to influence other people to... see the attractions that were in the music.

While most of the musicians involved in the revival believed that a restriction on Irish music had been 'officially' enforced, Jerry, in an interview, stated that this was never the case, and it was merely his personal choice:

I never said to anybody else, "you mustn't play Irish tunes". I said, "I personally will not do so"... But there was no ban on it. That's a myth! I'm glad to have put that on the record! ... They believed it! Oh no, there was never any ban on Irish music... it may as well've been so, because I was not going to start an Irish tune that year, and we got so much into the habit of not doing it that that's the way it went (Colin Jerry 10/03/1999).

Whatever the version of events, the 'force-feeding' of solely Manx traditional melodies was the prime method in the establishment of a repertoire that displayed characteristics hypothetically indigenous to the Isle of Man: "... if nobody had said anything, or had unwritten rules that said you can't play Irish jigs and reels, then that would've taken over, because pretty soon it would've been more popular" (David Speers interviewed 23/05/1999). However, after years of performing popular folk music, this notion of playing exclusively Manx material was not accepted by all of those involved in the scene, and consequently, those that did not comply found themselves 'blackballed' by the core revivalists. George Broderick (23/03/1999) recalled an incident in the early days of the Bwoie Doal sessions, when one member refused to stop playing Irish folk music: "... he would be singing his "MacPherson's Rant" and... his sort of 'Clancy Brothers' stuff... but there was this drift... And it came to a point where all of us saw

that he had to go.”

Outside influence came from the development of the folk festival phenomenon in Western countries: “... there was the temptation of these trips elsewhere to other countries...” (Colin Jerry 10/03/1999). By attending the international festivals and by demonstrating their tradition in public, the Manx folk scene had the potential to raise its visibility. The Manx musicians did not go short of invitations either, as established festivals saw the benefit of displaying the sixth Celtic country alongside its larger cousins.¹³⁷

... a lot of festivals started up. The inter-Celtic festival in Lorient [Brittany], Perranporth [Cornwall], the [Yn] Chruinnaght [Isle of Man], and everyone had such fun at these festivals, it was a great incentive to speak Manx, play the whistle or dance (Interview with David Fisher 23/12/1998).

This admittance into the very fashionable Celtic world further inspired the Manx musicians to focus upon their Celtic image and pass over any Anglo-Saxon history. Although the Pan-Celtic societies had acknowledged the presence of the Isle of Man for over a century (with representatives such as A.W. Moore, Sophia Morrison and Mona Douglas), the new Manx revivalists sensed that they had to prove their worth to the more powerful Celtic countries: “I don’t think they [Ireland and Scotland] give us the same respect as they give each other” (Mike Boulton interviewed 27/12/1998). So, while striving to match the neighbouring countries with its claims of an equivalent and genuine tradition, the Manx folk scene also sought respect for its uniqueness, proclaiming that their tradition was similar, yet removed from its Celtic relatives.

1.2 Local Pressures - Links to the Manx Nationalist Movement

Adjacent to the dance and language movements, attempts to promote purely Manx musical material further adhered to the aims of the coexistent nationalist movement. As discussed in the previous chapter, the cultural side of the Isle of Man was unavoidably

137 The music, language and dance of Cornwall were in a similar stage of revival during this period.

linked to the political aspect of the 1970s, and the nationalist party, Mec Vannin, encouraged all angles of the cultural scene to highlight their 'Manxness' in the face of domination by outsiders. The language and dance movements were considered more 'nationalistic' than the music movement by many, but because of their close connections these sentiments were inevitably transmitted back to Bwoie Doal:

I'd certainly say that the original Bock Yuan Fannee [dance group that many Bwoie Doal musicians played for]... they did have quite a fair sprinkling of thorough nationalists amongst them... Seemed to go together! (Colin Jerry 10/03/1999).

The Manx language was also a influential factor for revivalists who wished to express nationalist beliefs. In the same manner that the dance movement had merged socially and creatively with the musical revival, some of the musicians had transferred from the language movement, and vice versa. Singer and Gaelic speaker Brian Stowell (interviewed 22/12/2000) commented on his own position within the music revival:

I took a very strong line in this and still do. I don't sing in English. I just sing in Manx. That's it. 'Cause it's the language first and foremost for me.

This potentially restrictive view was shared by most of the music/language revivalists, and although criticized by some followers of the movement for being too political and historically inaccurate in many ways, it clearly shaped the development and interpretation of musical source material in the Manx language.

The inevitable links between the concurrent dance movement and the music scene also cultivated a preference for instrumental music among the majority of the revivalists. At the beginning of the revival, instrumental folk music on the Island had functioned as an accompaniment for the dancing, but over a short time, had developed into a separate entity; the session. Furthermore, the influence of the wider British and Irish folk movements reinforced their decision to focus upon instrumental music. Up until the 1970s the folk revival in Britain had been concerned primarily with folk song, but with the "instrumental explosion" (Munro 1996:162) stimulated by popular groups such as The Chieftains, Boys of the Lough, Na Fíli and Planxty, a shift of objective and style

had reached all corners of the British folk scene. Instrumental folk music could function as entertainment on its own, without a reliance on dance.

1.3 “A New Living Tradition” - Creating a Grass Roots Environment

Deciding what was to be included and excluded in the musical repertoire was largely dependent on the revivalists’ perception of a ‘grass roots tradition’. Whilst the concept was to recreate something that was once performed by ordinary people as part of their community life, the musicians’ aim was not to re-enact for public performance, but to recreate “a new living tradition” (Jerry 1993:41) based around a selection of Manx traditional values.¹³⁸

The idea may have been to rekindle a community spirit which the revivalists perceived to be missing in the present day, but the aesthetic output of the revival was ultimately limited by the availability of suitable source material and by the absence of traditional source bearers. In similar circumstances to the modern revival of the concertina in Britain, as discussed by Eydmann (1995:47), the Manx traditional music revival was also “undertaken in almost total isolation from the past as far as the conventional *source musician-revival musician* relationship is concerned” (his italics).

Subsequently, the Manx musicians were granted the freedom to interpret source material in any way they felt appropriate. Due to modern influences and political beliefs, and with little authenticating evidence of the original context or style of the music, the revivalists were unavoidably transforming the context that they were trying to revive. It is assumed then that the revivalists’ perception of the style of Manx traditional music was predominantly based on what had or was occurring in the neighbouring countries. The larger Celtic countries had admirable histories of communal music-making in a variety of styles, but what the Manx revivalists saw and aspired to were events that were happening in contemporaneous conditions.

If you’re into authenticity, you think you know how would it have been played

138 See MacKinnon 1994:63 for the conceptual differences between re-enactment and revival.

and what sort of instruments. But whether a tradition has gone like that, then how can they know unless you've got it written down in a book somewhere... So all I would imagine if I was in the same situation today, I would've looked to the other Celtic countries to see what they're doing. You know, looked to the living traditions, like Ireland would've been the obvious one... So I suppose you've got to turn to your neighbour and see what's happening there (Peter Cubberley, interviewed 29/07/1999).

The Manx musicians favoured the unrehearsed and spontaneous manner of the instrumental session, a style practised in Ireland at this time. The source material used by Irish instrumental groups consisted mainly of traditional dance tunes; predominantly jigs and reels (see O' Connor 1991:69), and the Manx musicians decided to tackle the Manx musical material and instrumentation from the same stance. Songs in Manx Gaelic were also preferred, as these displayed an affinity with the past and a unique portrayal of the Manx identity. However, while popular contemporary Irish folk artists such as Christy Moore sung with an instrumental accompaniment, most of the Manx revivalists chose to follow the older surviving Irish tradition of 'sean-nós', a highly ornamented style sung unaccompanied (see Skinner Sawyers 2000:100). Their preferences regarding the interpretation of Manx song also may have been reflective of the tradition of unaccompanied singing in folk-clubs, a side of the folk scene that several of the revivalists had previously been involved in.

To summarize, the Manx revivalists wished to recreate a past tradition, not for the purposes of a historically correct re-enactment, but as an ordinary function, part of an extemporaneous and 'grass roots' lifestyle. Ronström (1996:10) labels this approach the "little tradition", a characteristic of European cultural revivalism in the 1970s, where the aim was to make "the folk tradition again a part of everyday life". However, creating this supposedly natural environment of music-making was not as simple as proposed, and instigators of the Manx revival had to select appropriate elements from the tradition to suit their requirements, whilst rejecting others.

2. Selection of Source Material

By the 1970s in the Isle of Man, there was no musical living tradition of a ‘grass roots’ nature to refer to.¹³⁹ There were also only a few extant publications available to the revivalists, including Volume 3 of Douglas and Foster’s *Twelve Manx Folk Songs* (1957) and reprinted copies of W.H. Gill’s *Manx National Songs* (1896). However, after the rediscovery of the *Clague Collection*, “it soon became clear that what was in existence only represented a small fraction of what could be of use in the new situation” (Jerry 1983:290).

Further research by the core revivalists revealed other sources that were out-of-print and housed at the Manx Museum: Volumes 1 and 2 of *Twelve Manx Folk Songs* by Douglas and Foster (1928 and 1929), *The Mona Melodies* by J. Barrow (1820), W.H. Gill’s *Manx National Music* (1898), A.W. Moore’s *Carvalyn Gailckagh: Manx Carols* (1891) and *Manx Ballads and Music* (1896), and Anne Gilchrist’s analysis of Manx songs and melodies for the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* (1924-6).¹⁴⁰ For reasons that will be discussed in this section, the *Clague Collection* became the main focus of the revival that followed. Photocopies of the entire collection (around 270 tunes including their variants) were swiftly circulated within the revivalist group, and by 1978 musician and core revivalist, Colin Jerry, had transcribed and edited a selection of the material for the publication of *Kiaull yn Theay* (Music of the People), a tune and songbook that would prove essential to the dissemination of traditional material among the modern-day enthusiasts.

With a diverse array of material on offer, the revivalists tackled the selection process from a discriminatory position which reflected their current objectives. Most of the revivalists interviewed claim that authenticity was of no importance whatsoever in their selection and interpretation of the Manx source material, because there were so few

139 Although they were ongoing, Mona Douglas’ musical projects with Aeglagh Vannin and Ellynyn ny Gael, and the music performed by Manx Folk Dance Society did not conform to the revivalists’ perception of grass roots.

140 The *J.F. Gill Collection* which corresponded with the *Clague Collection*, and confirmed that the Gill brothers had had a substantial involvement in the collecting of traditional material was not discovered till 2000.

historical references to traditional music-making in the Island, and no extant audio recordings: “Hardly anything was known about the way in which the last few carriers of the tradition actually performed” (Jerry 1983:292).

Authenticity is the focal point of most revival movements, and the revivalist ideology will often rely upon historical continuity and symbolism to create boundaries:

The term “authentic” is most commonly employed to distinguish the revived practice from other musics and to draw attention to its supposed “time depth”. This is the centrepiece of music revivals, around which all else is secondary (Livingston 1999:74).

In fact, Bohlman (1988:130) states that “revival is an overt and explicit act of authentication”. Authenticity is interpreted through performance practices and instrumentation based upon historically accurate sources, and as Livingston (1999:75) points out, “the notion of “folk” as a mythical people living in a land and time far removed from modern society plays a part in defining authenticity”. Tradition changes incessantly, and revivalists can invite complications when attempting to recreate something in an authentic manner. To establish an authentic style of music, revivalists have to limit themselves to the specialization of traditions belonging to a particular period, region and context, based upon the authority of uncovered historical sources. These limitations have to be implemented, as it cannot be denied that “the unchanging folk society never existed” (Handler and Linnekan 1984:274). By referring to a tradition, revivalists do not hold a natural relationship with it, but a symbolic relationship, and tradition, by its general definition, suggests that it is an inherited substance, which is transmitted from the past to the future. Ronström (1996:14) notes that;

Tradition is a model of the past which implies reference to the past; this past, however, is continuously recreated in the present and, because continuity is constructed, it includes an element of discontinuity. This means that authentic reconstructions are impossible simply because they are re-constructions.

Where historical authenticity would often set the boundaries for a revivalist group to work within, the Manx revivalists set their own rules based around romantic ideals.

This presents a disparity in comparison to other documented revivalist movements where authenticity would commonly act as;

... a discursive trope of great persuasive power... a way of saying to outsiders and insiders alike ‘this is what is really significant about this music’, ‘this is the music that makes us different from other people’ (Stokes 1994:7).

With the same motivations in mind, but without credible historical sources to touch upon, authenticity assumed a minor role in the Manx revivalists’ ideology when concerning the selection of material. Where positive evaluation through historical sources cannot be achieved in a revival such as this, elements of the past are selected and used to legitimize the revivalist ideology and interpretation. However, “the past presents people with a problem: What to select and what to ignore; what to emphasise and what to screen out” (Edwards 1988:150). Feintuch (1993) comments on the tendency amongst revivals to reinvent and transform traditional material. He states that some revivals create their own repertoire, style and authenticity by focusing upon certain characteristics while discarding others, resulting in a reorganization of the remaining material. Clifford (2000) agrees that “This hooking-up and unhooking, remembering and forgetting, gathering and excluding of cultural elements- processes crucial to the maintenance of an “identity”- must be seen as both materially constrained and inventive”. In the same manner, the Manx revivalists concentrated on elements of the source material which they considered appropriate for their requirements, whilst they simultaneously rejected the remainder; thus inventing their own “new authenticity” (Bohlman 1988. See Livingston 1999:67):

I think they were set on creating something Manx, [and] perhaps didn’t have a clear idea as to what that may be. They perhaps knew what it shouldn’t be... But yeah, there were certain rules certainly, that shaped it (David Speers, interviewed 23/05/1999).

2.1 Inclusion - “what to select and emphasise”

Owing to an accumulation of the influences discussed earlier, the revivalists had set themselves boundaries within which to make music; that of predominantly ‘Manx-

sounding' instrumental dance tunes and unaccompanied songs in Manx Gaelic:

The manner in which some of this work was presented, and some of the results which flowed from it, reflect the desire to create something different and unique... the issue of identity was of paramount concern while authenticity was only a matter of secondary importance (Speers 1996/7:226).

The prerequisites implied that the musical material be 'pure' or 'untainted' rather than corrupted by artistic forms by previous generations, although the revivalists agreed that authenticity was not a factor when considering their repertoire, because there was little point in even attempting to do so:

...we got our hands on this material, this source material, and we're putting it across in a different sort of way. Whether that way... striving for authenticity, but I mean, what's the worth? The chances that it's anything like... a song performed, sung, played on an instrument, whatever it is, the chances of it being performed a hundred years before is completely [?] very, very remote (Bob Carswell 20/05/1999).

The relationship that the revivalists had attached between traditional music and dance had a significant influence over the choice of musical material. There was little reference and no instructive advice on Manx dances in the *Clague Collection* or Gill's publications,¹⁴¹ and although dancing was likely to have been associated with some of the tunes collected at the time, (which is especially evident through the first of Clague's notebooks, entitled *Dances and Singing Games* and in the dance section of Gill's *Manx National Music*), it must be supposed that the Victorian collectors either chose not to refer to the actual dances or there were few dance melodies in the oral tradition by the 1890s. Moore (1896:xxxv.n.), whose main interest was the Manx Gaelic language, also chose to disregard certain types of music that he did not need for *Manx Ballads and Music*:

... There are, doubtless, also many tunes now in existence which I have not been able to secure, especially dance tunes, to which I have not particularly directed my attention.

141 W.H. Gill inserted a section devoted to Manx dance tunes in *Manx National Music* 1898:101-119, but did not mention any associated dances, nor any information connected to the music or dances.

Therefore, apart from a few living traditions,¹⁴² the collections of Mona Douglas and Leighton Stowell provided the only documented evidence of the relationship between Manx tunes and dances. The “completed and ready to use”¹⁴³ instructions of Douglas and her practical advice during rehearsals were followed rigorously by the dance revivalists, and consequently her prescribed tunes were also performed in the Bwoie Doal sessions with or without the dancers. It would appear that because her collection of dance material was compiled in an instructive and complete manner, her musical material was also taken at face value and regarded as valid material. Furthermore, her unique position as a living link to the past, or as the only “old master” as Slobin (1983:42-43) has named revivalist source bearers, also reinforced her authority over music and dance material. Whether believed to be spurious or not by the revivalists (see Chapter Two), her songs had entire verses in Manx Gaelic, distinctive melodies and the appropriate histories or customs associated with them, and provided seemingly dependable material for the revivalists to work with. Mona had connections with many of the revivalists on a personal level, and as a self-proclaimed living link to the past, doubts over the authenticity of her collection were purposefully overlooked:

Take Mona as an example. It doesn't make a blind bit of difference... that people say, “that's not a traditional song, Mona wrote it herself”... People are not really interested in facts, you know, they sort of deal in mythologies all the time... (Brian Stowell, interviewed 22/12/2000).

Along with the dance tunes provided by Douglas, the *Clague Collection* offered extensive instrumental material for the revivalists. The collection of Dr. John Clague consisted of melodies that had been taken directly from the ‘folk’ and were presumed relatively unaltered in comparison to some of the other source material on offer.

Around ten¹⁴⁴ revivalists had a photocopy of the original Clague manuscripts and from

142 ‘Hunt the Wren’ is one continuous tradition that has been performed every Boxing Day all around the Island. Variants of the music, dance and associated rituals differ depending on the geographical location. The same applies to ‘Hop-tu-Naa’ which is performed around the Isle of Man on the eve of the Celtic New Year [Hallowe’en].

143 Douglas lists descriptions of her collected and restored dances to date in *Manx Folk Dances: Their Notation and Revival* (1937).

144 Rough estimate given by George Broderick in an interview (23/3/1999) of the number of people with a copy of the *Clague Collection* at the inception of the revival.

the outset, it became a prime source for the Bwoie Doal session repertoire:

... several of us got hold of the copies of the manuscript, and we started working our way through. We started going down, it was the Central [hotel] then, 'Thie Bouyr', the Deaf House in Peel on a Saturday night, and what it was, we'd play through some of these tunes that we know, and some of them would've worked on some of the little bit of it. They'd play a tune, "this is a nice one", you know? You'd listen to that. So yeah, start swapping these tunes about, so it was going to the source material (Interview with Bob Carswell 20/05/1999).

The Clague manuscripts were found in their original state at the Manx Museum, and when compared to the 'tainted' publications of W.H. Gill and others, they were seen as the most pure, and therefore 'authentic' source:

... there's no living tradition as such that I knew of at the time... so we had the sort of Clague and the *Clague Collection* mainly... (Interview with Peter Cubberley 29/07/1999).

In their original form as handwritten notebooks, the Clague manuscripts symbolized, perhaps in a superficial sense, a source that visually appeared ancient and genuine and this earned Clague an "iconic status" (Carswell 2001b:12) among the revivalists. But how representative of music-making in the 1890s were Clague's transcripts? Was the collection really a link to an earlier 'grass roots' tradition, as the revivalists perhaps hoped? First, the Victorian collectors were reliant on the methodology available in this period, producing skeletal transcriptions of what they heard from informants, and was further dictated by the restrictions of classical notation, so their records could not be entirely relied upon as definitive evidence, especially when concerning the interpretation of the material. But secondly, and perhaps more importantly, their own agenda behind the collection determined what was actually recorded in the notebooks, implying that what was noted down may not have been fully representative of the tradition under observation:

The mediation of the musical reality which is there often begins, for instance, with collectors who only select from a single repertoire certain songs which sound to them appropriate or ancient (McNamee 1992:7).

In this instance, the authors of *Manx National Songs* made no secret of their intentions.

W.H. Gill, the spokesman for the three (his brother J.F. Gill, Dr. John Clague, and himself), announced that the songbook was not intended to be historical reference material (Gill 1896:x). They merely required traditional Manx melodies from the mouths of the local ‘peasant class’ to be individually selected and arranged for voice and piano. The authors disclose that the melodies were all notated from singing, and according to W.H. Gill (*ibid.*), “... even most of the dance tunes, have words, and in many instances the same tune is sung to different words”. However, there were very few examples of lyrics accompanying the melodies in the *Clague Collection*, and those that featured in the consequent publication of *Manx National Songs* were either composed, or loosely based around the original content of the songs:

[In the *Clague Collection*]... sixty tunes have the first stanza or what is seemingly the first stanza, of the song written under or above the notes; of these only twenty are in Manx... (Broderick 1982:2).

The revivalists of the 1970s drew broad distinctions between the *Clague Collection* and the songbook that followed, although they were aware that the original manuscripts had a connection with *Manx National Songs*. As it stood, it appeared that Dr. Clague had independently conducted all of the fieldwork, while the brothers W.H. and J.F. Gill later poached his work for their own purposes. However, at this time, the revivalists did not realize that Deemster J.F. Gill also had a copy of the same material, a manuscript book that was not rediscovered until 2000. The *J.F. Gill Collection* provided evidence that his brother W.H. Gill had, in fact, collected a substantial amount of the material that was transcribed in the *Clague Collection*, but had not been credited by Clague.¹⁴⁵

Although the revivalists considered the *Clague Collection* uncorrupted in comparison with *Manx National Songs*, it was not assumed to be perfect. Some mistakes within the notation were identified by the musicians, and were accordingly restored to comply with the melody structures and modes found in the equivalent music belonging to other countries:

145 Although the rediscovery of the *J.F. Gill Collection* provoked great excitement amongst Manx academics, in general, the reaction amongst traditional musicians in the Isle of Man has been of indifference. There are no plans to revise the Manx tune books and credit W.H. Gill in accordance with the new evidence. See Chapter One for more details.

... there are mistakes in the Clague manuscript. They're very few as a matter of fact... there's at least one tune I can think of where he's going along a treat for the first three sets of eight bars, and the final eight bars are in a completely different key. He just started on the wrong line. But you can spot them... what other people have done, picking up a bit of another tune that ... didn't seem complete and then constructed a second part for it. There's quite a lot of that goes on, which is a damn good thing too. There's... some tunes in the [Clague] manuscript maybe only sixteen bars long, well, that's a bit unsatisfactory for most people in the session... thirty two bars seems to be the standard (Colin Jerry 10/03/1999).

Curiously, the original nationality of individual tunes did not present any grounds for discrimination among the instrumentalists. The *Clague Collection* contained many variants of melodies found elsewhere: "It must be admitted that in music claimed as Manx we find imperfect recollections of English and Irish folk-tunes, as well as of some well-known published airs" (Kidson 1910). However, providing that a particular tune appeared in an original Manx source preferably with a Manx Gaelic title, then it did not matter if it was also to be found in other musical cultures; it was simply taken to be a Manx variation. For example, "Thurot" (Jerry 1978:67), a variant of the Irish tune, "Haste to the West", and "Car ny Ferrishyn" (Jerry 1978:63), most well known as Neil Gow's Scottish "Fairies' Dance", both became popular 'Manx' traditional melodies. Jerry (1983:294) even admitted that "many of the tunes we describe as Manks came from elsewhere and were transformed by the new environment".¹⁴⁶

While the traditional music revival attracted a fairly large gathering of devotees, decisions over which material was to be performed was dictated by a few individuals. For contemporary and consequent followers of the revival, the publication of Jerry's *Kiaull yn Theay* (1978), a collection of 81 songs and melodies, became the first accessible source book of traditional Manx music:

... the only stuff we had available was the stuff that Colin went into the (Manx) museum, and just dug out. And he wrote it all out in hand for some reason... But he produced two books anyway, in them days. You know, *Kiaull yn Theay* one and two, within a few years of each other... So that was the only thing we

146 Manks is an alternative spelling of Manx, and although its use is not recommended in academic literature (e.g. "Notes for Contributors" to *Studeyrys Manninagh*, The Centre for Manx Studies E-journal), it remains popular among members of the folk scene.

had really, nothing else to go on... (Peter Cubberley 29/07/1999).

Colin Jerry, a schoolteacher, saw the potential in a published source book that was available not only to followers of the revival, but also “for school use” (Jerry 1978:70). Although the Manx revivalists had tried to maintain an informal ‘grass roots’ spirit that occurred outwith formalized tuition and without the involvement of any academic institutions, Livingston (1999:73) claims that the educational element of revivalism is impossible to resist: “Revivals almost always have a strong pedagogical component in order to pass on the tradition in a controlled manner.” Jerry’s first attempt was *Kiaull ny Manninee* (1976), a 28 page photocopied booklet that was commissioned by the Board of Education Local Studies Group (see Carswell 2001a). The extended version, *Kiaull yn Theay*, was published two years later, which made a timely appearance with Mona Douglas’ Yn Chruinnaght, an inter-Celtic festival that featured junior and adult music competitions:¹⁴⁷

The revival of *Yn Chruinnaght* in 1978 with its emphasis on songs in Manx and music with a Manx provenance sent people to *Kiaull yn Theay* and its successor, *Kiaull yn Theay 2* (*ibid.*).

As the only extensive source book of Manx traditional music since *Manx National Songs*, which was “still regarded by the majority of Manks people as the Bible of Manks music” (Jerry 1983:289),¹⁴⁸ the effect and success of *Kiaull yn Theay* amongst the new generation cannot be underestimated. It would not be an exaggeration to state that the path of the Manx traditional music repertoire has been very much dependent upon this publication. It has come to represent the standard repertoire of most of the musicians involved in the revival, children (at schools where traditional music is encouraged) and the musical content of the Yn Chruinnaght competitions.¹⁴⁹ Therefore Colin Jerry, whether intentionally or not, had accepted a great responsibility in producing a book that became the authoritative guide to Manx music.

147 As explained in Chapter Two, Jerry and other revivalists had been involved in the pilot version of Yn Chruinnaght in 1977, ‘Feailley Vanninagh Rhumsaa’.

148 ‘Manks’ is an alternative spelling of ‘Manx’.

149 Jerry also published a selection of the melodies as *Cur Cheb (Have a Try)* in 1982 which was designed specifically for children.

The nature of the book provides evidence of the revivalist ideology and subsequent direction of the movement. It could be read as a personal account of what Colin Jerry, who was ultimately the ring-leader in this revival, believed Manx music should be, or alternatively, it could reflect the preferences of the revivalist group as a whole. Either way, by selecting music from collections deemed suitable by Jerry and his peers, *Kiaull yn Theay* dictated the course of the development of the Manx music repertoire both in its initial stages and beyond.

But was Colin Jerry deliberately discriminative over what material was to be published and circulated? It would seem that Jerry researched every possible avenue, as he selected melodies not only from the Clague manuscripts, but also from the publications of Gill, Moore, Morrison and Douglas for material: “That [*Kiaull yn Theay*] was collected from anything I could lay my hands on” (Colin Jerry 10/03/1999).

Authenticity was not an issue either, as many of the melodies were transposed to more accessible keys, chord symbols were added, and in some examples, a tune was taken from one source and placed with Manx lyrics from another. Through his publications, Jerry played an essential role in the dissemination of material among enthusiasts in the early stages of the revival. Most followers of the movement exclusively used Colin Jerry’s ‘yellow book’, *Kiaull yn Theay* (1978) and to a lesser degree, the ‘red book’, *Kiaull yn Theay 2* (1979), and therefore they serve as a fairly accurate indicator of which tunes were played by the musicians at this stage in the revival.

Kiaull yn Theay

Although *Kiaull yn Theay* and *Kiaull yn Theay 2* contain a diverse array of material, the preferences of the revivalists are revealed through Jerry’s choice of material. Although “There is not a great corpus of Manx language songs” (John Kaneen interviewed 18/03/1999) in the source material, almost all of the songs in the *Kiaull yn Theay* series have Manx Gaelic lyrics, and this was often because Jerry had combined a melody from

Clague with the lyrics from another.¹⁵⁰ For example, the melodies and lyrics for “O Ven Aeg Ven Aalin Aeg” (Jerry 1978:28) and “Yn Chenn Dolphin” (Jerry 1979:2-4) were combined from the *Clague Collection* and Moore (1896). Other ‘complete’ songs in Gaelic such as “Arrane ny Niece” (Jerry 1978:66) and “Arrane Ben-vlieaun” (*ibid*:61) were provided by Douglas. Instrumental tunes taken from Douglas tended to be the dance tunes which served to accompany the dances concurrently being performed by Bock Yuan Fannee: “Mheillea” (Harvest Dance, Jerry 1978:51), “Eunyssach Vona” (*ibid*:1), “Peter O’ Tavy” (*ibid*:50), “[C]hyndaa yn Bwoailley” (Return the Blow, *ibid*:12), “Car Juan Nan” (*ibid*:7).¹⁵¹ Many tunes in the *Clague Collection* had titles suggesting they were originally songs, but due to the virtual absence of lyrics in the original manuscripts, they were transformed into instrumental pieces by the revivalists: “Betsy Baker” (*ibid*:20), “Our Ship did Sail” (*ibid*:15), “Moylley gys Jee my Chaarjyn” (“My Saviour Says to Satan”) (*ibid*:58). Perhaps a trait of Douglas and her collecting, or a even a preference of the revivalists’ selection is the considerable content of ‘occupation’ songs or tunes connected with a ‘function’: “Arrane ny Fee” (Weaving Song, Jerry 1979:58), “Arrane Ben Drogh Hraghtalagh” (Smuggler’s Lullaby, Jerry 1978:11), “Churnal Jiu as Churnal Jea” (Churning Song, Jerry 1978:68), “Shooyl Ineenyn” (Hiring Dance, Jerry 1979:60), and songs reminiscent of the Celtic Twilight: “Mannanan Beg Mac y Leir” (Jerry 1978:32), “The Sea Invocation” (*ibid*:49), “Clean Suggane” (or “Invocation to St. Bridget”, *ibid*:56).

Jerry was codifying the repertoire for the revivalists and for future generations by providing the only accessible and available source book. Depending on whether Jerry is perceived to have personally dictated the course of Manx traditional music, or if he was in fact recording the developments of the movement so far, *Kiaull yn Theay* can be seen to epitomize the revivalists’ concept of what traditional Manx music should be during

150 In “Yn Shenn Laair” (Jerry 1979:65), Colin Jerry combined the melody of “To the East Indies we were Bound” from Clague (A:38/B:4) with the Gaelic words of “Yn Shenn Laair” (The Old Mare) from William Cashen’s *Manx Folklore* (1912). There was no melody to “Yn Shenn Laair” in any of the collections, and the melody for “To the East Indies we were Bound” had only one verse in English in the *Clague Collection* (B:4). Jerry changed the time signature from 3/4 to 3/2, and shifted the emphasis of the beat to accommodate the new words. He also altered some of the time values and transposed the melody from D to G major.

151 Leighton Stowell’s composed dances and accompanying melodies were not employed.

this period. At a glance, the chosen repertoire appears to be an established and multi-faceted tradition, encompassing all manner of traditional music genres: Songs of the working classes - occupation songs and children's games; songs about the Island's Celtic history; songs in the Manx Gaelic language; and dances with their associated melody and custom. The selection embodied a combination of the popular elements existing in the other Celtic countries, yet was considered unique enough to hold its own against the domineering cultures. However, there was a great deal of source material that was neglected in the desire to create the ideal Manx music tradition.

2.2 Exclusion - "what to ignore and screen out"

While the revivalists had no intention of attempting to perform the chosen material in an 'authentic' style, believing it to be an unfeasible notion, the limitations that they set themselves in regard to the selection of source material were as equally bounded by rigorous restrictions. Decisions over what should be excluded from the repertoire appear to have relied on the use of the English language, the historical connotations of particular songs and melodies, and to a lesser degree, tunes that were written in unfamiliar modes.

W.H. Gill immediately put himself out of the running with *Manx National Songs* (1896) by having the lyrics composed entirely in English, so Moore's *Manx Ballads and Music* (1896), an extensive collection of song words in Manx with English translations, proved a far more credible source, although unfortunately there were few musical notations to accompany them.¹⁵² The *Clague Collection* contained mainly songs, rather than instrumental melodies, but in most cases the lyrics were not included. Where lyrics were notated, they tended to be fragments and many were written in English (see Broderick 1980-1 and 1982). Because of the language, these examples were either ignored or translated into Manx Gaelic: "England's a huge influence which no one will acknowledge, and at least no one wants to acknowledge" (Fenella Bazin 26/05/1999).

152 Perhaps if Gill had published his composed lyrics in Manx Gaelic rather than in English, there would not have been such a stigma attached to his work. Douglas and Foster published both Manx and English words in their songbooks, and these songs have been included in the modern repertoire, minus the piano accompaniment.

John Kaneen (18/03/1999) also commented on the omission of these examples by the revivalists:

...they have virtually been ignored by the Manx musicians... not because they're in English, but because they're not in Manx... Which is a slightly, subtle difference... what they want to do is foster the Manx language and make people aware that there is a Manx... musical culture. I... think in different circumstances, they might sing English songs, but the fact that, as I say, something like "Jenny is all the go" which Colin Jerry and I put into a song book [*A Garland for John Clague* 1988]... I put on one side of the page the English version of this song, and Colin would put a translation on... the other side. And I think there were about ten songs that we did this with. The fact that people have learnt the Manx version of the song, because they want... to improve their Manx, they want to sing in Manx, as I say, it just seems to be a shame that they're ignoring what is a good song in English anyway.

Another prime element in determining what was to be excluded from the new Manx repertoire concerned the treatment of the source material by its collectors. The foremost example of this is the way that the revivalists differentiated between the *Clague Collection* and *Manx National Songs*. To a certain extent, their reasoning followed the common notion of many followers of the British folk scene, who considered 'folk' music as the opposite of 'art' music (see McNamee 1992); a symbolic struggle between the lower classes and the elite:

The [general] folk revival was predictably attractive to the left. Fundamental to the enterprise was the acknowledgement of the value of the culture of the common people, whether rural or industrial workers (McCann 1995:70).

Although the two Manx sources had derived from the one collection, they were seen as representing two separate and clearly defined social groups. While the *Clague Collection* was perceived as being associated with a rural, and therefore a 'grass roots' social group, *Manx National Songs* was representative of genteel drawing-room performances; its authors having "bowdlerized" the original melodies (Jerry 1983:289. See Harker 1980:147):

... people came up... they'd found this 'Manx National Song Book' [*Manx National Songs*] and they'd copied some of the songs out of it, and they were saying there was this Manx traditional music. We said, "well yes, it is sort of,

but the source material for it is in this *Clague Collection*". So, we were drawing a distinction there and drawing a distinction between what was in the *Clague Collection* and as source material, and what was in the songbook as arranged material... I mean, the words [in *Manx National Songs*] you can forget as a source for traditional material anyway. The melodies, yes, they sometimes ran two or three together into one, and made an arrangement out of, say, two tunes, three tunes perhaps. Or, they slightly changed them around to be more harmonious or something. The tunes, yeah, even something like the most popular Manx song was "The Sheep Under the Snow" [Ny Kirree Fo Niaghtey], and yet you look at the Manx National Song Book's three verses where it gets worse and worse, and they find the sheep, but the sheep are all dead... I'm not saying it's not a sad story in the Manx, but at least he does have some sheep left! ... so yeah, there were songs suitable for the Victorian sentiment... polite songs for the drawing room (Bob Carswell 20/05/1999).

Furthermore, *Manx National Songs* also had negative associations for the revivalists because of its use in the Manx Music Festival, the 'Guild', a classical music festival held annually in the Island:

Manx National Song Book [*Manx National Songs*]... the majority of the songs in that one are not what you would call folk songs. They are either poetical translations of songs in Manx, or they are brand new songs. Victorian songs which are set to... Manx tunes, this sort of thing. And they are now used for performances at the Guild, things like that. They are for concert singers (John Kaneen 18/03/1999).

According to Ronström (1996:9) this resistance to classical art forms was archetypal of 1960s and 1970s Western cultural revivalism:

This was a struggle against both commercialism and "high culture" forms (such as opera) and therefore also a struggle for the old forms of revived folk music, especially the nationalistic forms from the turn of the century.

The unwelcome connotations of certain types of music also manifested itself through the rejection of many carvals; an old singing tradition previously found in churches all over the Island (see Bazin 1997:20-22 and Gilchrist 1924-6:225). Carvals were traditionally sung solo and unaccompanied by a male singer on the Oie'll Verrey (Christmas Eve) after the evening service, and the duration of the song was determined

by the length of time taken to walk and sing from the back of the Church to the altar with a lit taper. The singer usually wrote his own lyrics around a Biblical theme, and the words were often set to the melody of a well-known ballad or hymn tune of the time. The tradition had died out over a century before the recent revival,¹⁵³ but the *Clague Collection* contained many of the melodies, and Moore too had compiled a vast amount of the Gaelic lyrics for *Carvalyn Gailckagh* (1891).¹⁵⁴ Even though it was an authentic Manx tradition with plenty of documentation available on its history, the revivalists chose not to include the material in their session repertoire, with the exception of a few melodies that were extracted and converted into instrumental airs and dance tunes. For instance, “Carval Joseph” (Jerry 1978:35) and “Carval ny Drogh Vraane” (Jerry 1978:36 and 39). Also, Anne Gilchrist (*Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 1924-6) was the first person to print carvals with their corresponding tunes, as she reunited Moore’s Gaelic lyrics with Clague’s melodies of the same title, or first line; a source that the revivalists were aware of but perhaps did not consult fully.

Although the omission of these songs is unlikely to have been due to any religious aversions within the movement, the revivalists were probably discouraged by the sacred connotations of the carvals, preferring to affiliate traditional music with secular practices. Additionally, most of the carvals possessed similar melodic properties to typical hymns; a characteristic and association which did not fit into the revivalists’ conception of ‘folk’ music, and in general, the songs tended to be incredibly long in duration; a quality which would not appeal within the session milieu.¹⁵⁵

The same theorem applied to the dismissal of popular songs based around Manx themes. Well-known songs associated with the hey-day of tourism on the Island were treated with disdain by the revivalists:

“Ramsey Town” gets an airing now and again. It’s in a jokey way... They do it

153 The last known carval to be composed was 1836 according to Gilchrist 1924-6, or 1925 according to See Stowell and Ó Bréasláin 1996:9.

154 *Carvalyn Gailckagh*, a collection of 86 songs was compiled by A.W. Moore, Mr. J.C. Faragher and ‘loosely’ translated by Captain Christian.

155 Although carvals were to be used later by the Manx Gaelic choirs, Cliogaree Twoaie and Caarjyn Cooijagh. Bazin (1997:22) states that some carvals were as long as 320 lines.

for a laugh. But in the past, if they ever did it, it'd be condescending and they'd throw in a few bum notes in as well (David Fisher 23/12/1998).¹⁵⁶

These popular Manx songs were favoured by contemporary group, 'Mannin Folk' (see Chapter Three). While their performances of modern songs such as "The Laxey Wheel" (by Stuart Slack, in Guard 1980:122) and early 20th century music-hall songs such as "The Pride of Port-le-Murra" and "I'm a Native of Peel" (by Harry Wood, in *ibid*:27 and 30) will have fitted into conception of 'folk' for many enthusiasts, songs of this kind did not conform with Bwoie Doal's Celtic image:

... you get onto sticky ground trying to... define a folk song... Things like "Kelly from the Isle of Man"... "Hi Kelly"... "The Wreck of the Ellan Vannin"... that Hughie Jones of 'The Spinners' wrote, that was something that was taken up by many people in the Isle of Man as a folk song. It's a contemporary song on a traditional subject (John Kaneen 18/03/1999).

This genre of song may have been welcome in the folk-clubs and pubs around the Island, but it portrayed a completely different realm of folk music to that performed by Bwoie Doal. Perhaps an example of the unyielding rules and ideological boundaries adopted by the revivalists can be illustrated by the following anecdote:

A Manx-born woman who lived in London was visiting the Island and was taken to the Bwoie Doal session in her home town of Peel. Understanding that the practice was to take a turn at singing or playing a Manx tune, she attempted to join in with a rendition of "I'm a Native of Peel", a song that she had learnt as a child and considered to be a folk song. At the end of her performance, she was greeted with a stony silence and looks of disgust! Her choice of song was obviously inappropriate to what they regarded as traditional, but my informant (who was also born in the Island) speculated that the revivalists perhaps saw her song more as an act of mockery, publicizing the fact that

156 This instance is a little ironic, as the melody of "Ramsey Town" was actually in the Clague Collection under the title, "Twas Once I loved a Lass" (Clague Collection A:21 and Jerry 1991:no. 68). When it appeared in *Manx National Songs* with a new title and words written by E. Crabb (Gill 1896:93-95), it became immensely popular in the Island, and consequently the melody has become (negatively) associated with the music-hall and 1960s folk-club scene where it was repopularized. Jerry, though, did include the melody to "Ramsey Town" in his children's music book, *Cur Cheb (Have a Try)* (1982:22).

she was actually a 'native of Peel', whereas the majority of them were not!

Another cause for the omission of some material lay in the individual tunes themselves, and their natural selection within the movement:

... difficulty arises because a large number of tunes are in musical modes unfamiliar to contemporary musicians... Contemporary musicians here and elsewhere tend to choose those tunes which are nearest to their own experience as it exists, and most of us only feel really comfortable in one mode, the Doh mode... The harmonies appropriate to these tunes in other modes are also open to debate and present problems to some instrumentalists, again mainly because of a lack of familiarity (Jerry 1993:38/9).

Jerry (*ibid.*) speculated that the origin of such unfamiliar modes may be due to the fact that they were collected almost exclusively from singers, although some unusual accidentals may simply be discrepancies that took place between collector and informant. The exclusion of these melodies has had long-term consequences for the aesthetic side of the revival. It has led to a shared perception of the 'typical' idiom and harmonic framework of Manx traditional music among performers and audience members, which is not based on any authentic truths.

From the inception of the revival, a selection process was created that was essential to set symbolic boundaries between themselves and both the new residents in the Isle of Man and the other Celtic cultures. To codify the repertoire, unwritten rules were installed by the core revivalists during the Bwoie Doal sessions, thus forming an ideology which all of the musicians had to abide to. Songs had to be in Manx Gaelic and not in the English language, and tunes had to be exclusively from particular Manx sources:

Don't play anything that's not Manx. Don't play it in a style that's not Manx, whatever that might be. They're the main ones. And that sort of moulded the thinking for the next fifteen years (David Speers 23/05/1999).

By publishing *Kiaull yn Theay*, Colin Jerry had prescribed a source book that both represented and constrained the standard repertoire according to the revivalist ideology.

In addition, he redesigned the musical arrangement of the melodies for particular types of instruments which reflected contemporary expectations and fashions, but also ensured that a certain set of rules were adhered to:

... by the mid to late 1970s, musical education was more diverse; piano playing was not such a general accomplishment as it had been; and the trained style of voice projection was less in favour. Colin Jerry added guitar chords, and the tunes were written out to suit tin whistles, so this shows a difference of approach and different sorts of instruments which had become available and popular (Carswell 2001a).

3. Instrumentation

The selection of instrumentation for the new Manx music tradition was predominantly influenced by its links to the dance movement, fashions in Celtic music, accessibility and the impetus to cultivate an informal and communal session environment. Although there were obvious preferences to the type of instrumentation, it seems that there was a general consensus over which were suitable for the revival, and it is unlikely that any controversy occurred over individual choices. There was no evidence of dictatorship within the group, where one member may have been told to select a particular instrument for the benefit of Bwoie Doal as a whole. And with limited historical reference to any traditional instrumentation of the past, the revivalists were given free rein to select the appropriate musical instruments for accompanying the dances and performing within the session.

3.1 The Search for a National Musical Instrument

Historical accounts referring to the musical source material gave few clues for the revivalists as to which instruments were used at the time of collection. Furthermore, the majority of melodies gathered by the Victorians were taken from singers, implying that there was not a strong tradition of instrumental music-making in 1890s. However, while it was not the intention of the collectors to obtain dance tunes, Gill (1898:viii) had actually commented on the virtual absence of instruments in the Island during the time of collection:

Unlike Ireland and the other surrounding countries, the Isle of Man cannot boast of any distinctively national musical instrument... Here, as elsewhere, the violin has always been, and is still, a favourite instrument; but its use in the past has been chiefly associated with dance music... But even for dancing purposes the voice was, in days gone by, employed; and if no set words were available, a nonsense verse was extemporized... Even to-day it is very noticeable that all through the singing of a song the words rule while the music merely follows. It is chanting rather than singing... Hence we may truly say of Manx music that, having been born of the voice, it is essentially vocal.

Gaelic singer and companion of Mona Douglas, Claire Clennell (1973:33-7) also believed that the instrumental background of Manx traditional music was limited to the violin:

... the only musical instrument known in the Island, from early times, until maybe the middle of the 19th century, was the fiddle... Manx singing, however, unlike that of other Celtic countries, was never accompanied by any musical instrument.

With the voice seemingly acting as the Manx 'national' instrument during the collecting of Clague, Gill and Douglas, the 1970s revivalists were left with few choices regarding an authentic interpretation. As a group of primarily instrumental players, singing or chanting the melodies as in the manner described by Gill was not part of their ideology, and was consequently ignored. Since *Mona Melodies* (1820) through to the Douglas/Foster books, the piano had been associated with arrangements of Manx Gaelic song, but again, this instrument did not fit into the revivalists' concept of 'traditional'. When the revivalists introduced an ensemble of the many instruments associated with contemporary folk, they were presenting the Manx source material in a context never tried before:

... instrumental music was new as well, because certainly in my day, the only instrument that was really used was piano. To accompany the singing and even... some of the singing was unaccompanied (Fenella Bazin, interviewed 26/05/1999).

Instruments cited as having been used in the past on the Island, such as the piano,

harmonium, organ and 'cello, did not convey the grass roots image that was required by the revivalists, although incidentally, other examples, such as flute and violin, did fit into the modern concept of folk instrumentation.¹⁵⁷ The harp was not prevalent in the Victorian period of collecting, but was to be seen on a stone carving on the Isle of Man (see Bazin 1997:6)¹⁵⁸ dating from circa 1000 AD, and its use as a traditional instrument was relaunched primarily by Charles Guard, but was also used by the revivalists. Classical instruments were also inevitably found in the Island in more recent times and were very probably used to accompany dances in the past, but the revivalists did not associate them with the folk tradition, and therefore, apart from the flute and violin, instruments such as the clarinet and 'cello were not employed by the 1970s revivalists.

Ultimately, the revivalists had a shared, but preconceived view of which instruments would be suitable for the new tradition, and as George Broderick (interviewed 23/03/1999) explained, the revivalists' concern was primarily to start playing the music again, and not with the historical authenticity of the instruments:

... there was some research done on that. We knew that there was a type of wooden flute that was used. But you see, we were dealing with the situation now... I mean, the banjo is not a traditional Manx instrument, a guitar is not. A squeeze box is not. A mouth organ is not... Okay, a tin whistle might be... Or some sort of whistle, or a flute might be. Or a fiddle might be. But... you couldn't restrict it, the main thing was to get this Manx music going... provided it sounded all right, what the hell?

157 Douglas 1957:54 and 1966:61-63 cites the use of the 'cello, which was also referred to as a 'fiddle'. It was not until the early 1990s that "a fresh look at the material was made" (Broderick 1999b:22). David Speers (1996-7) assembled a chronology of historical references to music in the Isle of Man, which cited the following instruments: The violin or fiddle [which may have meant 'cello in some instances] (1656, 1726, 1775, 1793, 1812, c. 1849, 1911), base-viol (1726), bass fiddle (1897), flute (1722, 1726) and clarionet [sic.] (1897). However, these instruments are mentioned in a variety of different musical genres and contexts, and are not specifically associated with the oral tradition. Bazin (1997:28) also mentions instruments that were used for West Gallery music, a tradition affiliated to churches in rural areas of Britain. It is very likely that these instruments were also used to accompany secular dances.

158 The Bronze Age horn, the Lur from Scandanavia, was also found on a stone carving in the Isle of Man, but has not been reconstructed. See *Musical Instruments of the World* 1976:69 for an illustration.

3.2 *'Tools of the Day': Selecting Appropriate Instrumentation*

For the principal activists in the music revival, shifting their previous knowledge of an instrument, or transferring to a similar instrument was the easiest way to rehearse the source material. Some musicians had played Irish traditional music preceding their involvement in Manx music and merely switched from one repertoire to another on the same instrument. Others had previously played popular types of music and adjusted their knowledge of an instrument to the folk style, or in some cases, adopted a similar instrument:

There were at this period plenty of guitar players, some of them ready to try something a bit more stimulating, like mandoline [*sic.*] or banjo... Others who started on whistles made the transfer to the flute or uilleann pipes (Jerry 1983:291).

Generally, the instruments chosen by the revivalists were those recognized as being integral to the current British and Irish folk scene, and tended to be readily available.¹⁵⁹

You use the tools... of the day... What's cheaply available. What you can get your hands on... You can pick up fiddles, things like that, cheap enough. Seemed to be a glut of fiddles on the Isle of Man, but flutes were so rare. Wooden flutes, anyway... Whistles were a big thing. Bodhrans, they're cheap, you can knock a tune out on them... (Peter Cubberley 29/07/1999).

The interpretation and context of the proposed Manx traditional music significantly determined which instruments were chosen by the revivalists, with musical developments in the neighbouring countries playing a major part by influencing those choices. Rather than imitating the distinctive ensemble of instruments found, for instance, in Scottish dance bands, they chose the style and instrumentation that reflected their youthful counterparts across the water: "... people looked at what other traditions were using to play their music, and those sort of things were readily available" (David Speers 23/05/1999). Recordings of contemporary folk groups also

159 This also applied to other contemporary Manx groups, such as Mannin Folk, Treadmill and Pocheen who performed popular folk music. Mona Douglas (1978:30) reported that "all of them incorporate the main traditional instrument of the old Manx shennaghie, the fiddle, but often with support from guitar, flute and banjo, concertina, harmonica and whistle".

inspired the Manx musicians to replicate the components of the modern folk sound, which in turn fulfilled the expectations of the Bwoie Doal audience. While they may not have been authentically Manx, the choice of instruments taken from more established traditions in Britain and Ireland added an element of legitimacy. Bob Carswell (20/05/1999) described the initial instrumentation assumed by the revivalists:

... a lot of the input that is given by Boys of the Lough and Chieftains and so on, that style, a simple melody taken and playing on comparatively simple instruments... Two whistles particularly. And Colin [Jerry], at that time was playing his guitar, just chordal accompaniment and so on... At that time, not a lot of range of instruments... Bernard Caine used to play his whistle down at... the Central [Hotel] as it was then in the '70s. Colin used to play his guitar, Cristl [Jerry], whistle or recorder. There was 'Tom the Fiddle', Tom Spencer played his fiddle, Phil Gorry played mandolin or guitar and sang. Sometimes Ross [Trench] Jellicoe would come down and play his... concertina or then he got a melodeon. It was a fuller sound. I used to play whistle.

However, not all of the revivalists were accomplished musicians, and the movement attracted a number of non-musicians longing to join in the session. Eydmann (1995:47) commented on the excitement of joining such a scene:

The rediscovery of old instruments from dusty cupboards was an important process in itself as musicians (or would-be musicians) entered into the same spirit of 'rescue' or 'collecting' which drove the gatherers of songs, texts and tunes.

Additionally, the Manx movement held an element of urgency: The revivalists needed to interpret, disseminate and establish the source material as swiftly as possible. Consequently, while the more experienced musicians commenced with mastering the repertoire, many of the followers or "would-be musicians" (*ibid.*) struggled to keep up. Synchronous to learning a new instrument from scratch, these individuals also had to learn the new repertoire; an impediment for a movement in a hurry:

... you get the impression that a lot of people were learning both the material and their instrument at the same time, with no ability of folk music anyway... [if they] didn't have an instrument before, they chose the whistle... Something that fits into the pocket and looks easy to play. Or the bodhran! (David Speers

23/05/1999).¹⁶⁰

From a historical viewpoint, the violin was the most ‘authentic’ instrument that could have been employed by the revivalists, but it was fairly unpopular at the beginning of the revival: “... the technique is harder to learn than, for example the whistle, and many of the early learners were complete beginners” (Jerry 1983:291).¹⁶¹ Instead, instruments associated with the Irish traditional music scene (the whistle and bodhran in particular) were selected by newcomers due to their familiar sound, and because they appeared to be simple to learn. Anne Kissack (28/07/1999) commented on the preference for these instruments:

... because the instruments are accessible and quite a few people came late to playing instruments, and would go for what they’d heard rather than what they’d learnt at school, ‘cause they wouldn’t have those opportunities.

Despite the rediscovery of an indigenous Manx music tradition, the instrumentation changed little from the days of ‘Celtic Tradition’ and remained as the usual combination of instruments that were fashionable and easily obtainable; fiddles, whistles and guitars.¹⁶² Newcomers to music-making chose instruments that were considered easy and quick to learn in order to join the growing movement, and historical authenticity was not a major influence over the selection at any point. Instead, the revivalists created their own aesthetic authenticity which was reinforced by the context of their music-making and advocated further through Colin Jerry’s *Kiaull yn Theay*. Those who were learning an instrument from scratch, or relearning an instrument in adulthood, were burdened with the additional problem of learning an

160 These characteristic instruments have also been detected in other revival movements. For instance, Llewellyn (1999) observed “That this freer, more informal approach to music-making is part of a revival of interest in Welsh music seems to be uncontested, and the associated attraction of many new participants into performance ‘sessions’ has resulted in a greater prominence for two distinctly Irish instruments, the penny whistle and the bodhran. These are both relatively accessible instruments to beginners, and it is rare to see a group playing around a pub table in Wales which does not feature one or both”.

161 By the time of this revival, the solo fiddle had been in use as an accompaniment for the ‘Manx Folk Dance Society’ for almost thirty years. Fiddle players included Sheila Corkill (interviewed 09/03/2001) and Bernard Osborne.

162 After a few years, the revivalists introduced the uilleann pipes and bouzouki to the session scene.

unfamiliar repertoire. Inevitably, the ability of these musicians contributed to the gradual moulding of a style of Manx music, an element which often caused frustration for the more experienced members, who found that inept players considerably encumbered the progress of the group.

It should also be noted that in their choice of instruments, the Manx revivalists have unconsciously mirrored a tendency found amongst most revival movements; the rejection of technological advances.

Although many musical revivals take an ‘anti-technological’ stance in their widespread exclusion of electric instruments and sound distortion devices from the movement, they also depend upon technology for the dissemination and propagation of the revival in the form of microphones, recordings, etc. In these cases it is especially important not to confuse revivalist ideology with revivalist practice because the two may differ greatly (Livingston 1999:80).

This “‘anti-technological’ stance” is usually a deliberate decision made by the core revivalists, but it would seem that in this case, the Manx musicians avoided electric instruments and amplification in the initial stages only because of the context of their performance; the informal session based in a pub. When the context was later transformed to accommodate public performance at larger venues, there was no resistance to the use of amplification, electric keyboards and guitars.

4. Interpretation and Style in the Treatment of Source Material

With the repertoire chosen and the appropriate instrumentation selected, the revivalists were faced with the challenge of interpreting the source material in a ‘convincing’ style. In regard to authentic interpretation, there were no audio recordings of source bearers, and little information was to be found; “only descriptions in 17-19th century commentaries”,¹⁶³ and therefore, the revivalists felt that they were left with relative freedom over the execution of the material. Colin Jerry recalled their predicament:

163 Broderick 1999b:22. See Speers 1996-7:247-277 for a chronology of music-related accounts dating from 17th century.

In the case of our music evidence was almost completely absent concerning style, making the creation of a new tradition very difficult. There were plenty of examples which could be followed from the surrounding countries, but which of them were appropriate? The only definitive evidence was to be found in the tunes themselves. So far, the recreation of a style has proceeded without any kind of analysis of how it could be achieved (Jerry 1993:38).

Bob Carswell also explained the difficulties of reinterpreting a tradition solely from musical transcriptions:

I think the pursuit of authenticity is in vain... For music in Mann, our starting point has to be the repertoire as found in skeletal form. We can try to be informed by odd comments about performance, but without recordings, we can't be sure exactly what is meant.¹⁶⁴

Preconceptions and conflicting ideas inevitably led to disagreement within the group, as did the varying abilities of its members, and this section will examine the processes that led to the perceived establishment of a Manx folk style. It would seem that out of all the elements of the revivalist ideology and discourse, stylistic interpretation was the area that led to the most controversy within the development of the movement. Livingston (1999:71) commented on the process of interpretation usually found in music revivals:

Revivalist stylistic parameters and aesthetics are based on what is believed to be the stylistic common denominator of individual informants and/or source recordings; this is transformed into the "essence" of the style which is then used to judge subsequent revivalist performances.

But with no source recordings or tradition bearers for them to consult, the Manx music revivalists attempted to create a style based upon the 'stylistic common denominator' of their own playing.

4.1 Interpretation of Source Material

In addition to the infinite problems of interpreting the source material without any

164 Taken from a letter from Bob Carswell (27/05/1999), in which he reflected on our interview (20/05/1999).

historical guidance, the prospect of co-operating and agreeing with each other on this matter was equally as challenging to the group. In theory, the revivalists had intended to make mutual decisions over the interpretation of the Manx source material, by allowing natural selection to take its course over time:

... no interpretation is valid until it finds general support. In traditional terms, it is the group, both musical and social, that accepts or discards, not the individual, the group being those who play, and also those who listen (Jerry 1993:41).

Although this may have been the most tangible method of filtering the individual melodies and styles into a true-to-life tradition, in reality, it was a rather idealistic model that downplayed any real decision-making processes. The Manx revival could not spare the time for such a gradual, natural development, and instead, the dissemination of interpretation and style was dictated by the more dominant core revivalists:

... there was never any discussion over that... it was ad hoc completely. It's not as if you can go to a tradition bearer... then you could hear him and imitate him... there was no discussion... Colin and Cristl [Jerry] had a fixed idea in their minds. One, of the speed of the things... and the interpretation. Others had different ideas and these lead to splits (George Broderick 23/03/1999).

Disagreements over interpretation were based around the two conflicting issues prevalent in most revivalist movements: The “purist” or “traditionalist” approach versus “syncretist” or “modern” innovations (see Blacking 1995:155, Baumann 1996:80-1, Klusen 1957:29 and Ronström 1996:11). The balance between preservation and innovation is difficult to maintain, and often leads to “a dialectical struggle between these two positions” (Rosenberg 1993:197). As Blaustein (1993:264) explains, these approaches are “rarely separable”, and ultimately have to amalgamate for the revival to survive. Because, in this case, the interpretation of the music was “a matter of guesswork because nobody living can be consulted” (Jerry 1993:38), the dominant personalities in the Manx traditional music revival took the actual melodies as a starting point for their interpretation, being the only evident and ‘authentic’ link to the past:

[Tunes were played]... very much as they were written, with no preconceptions

or any musical slant on them, I would've said. In other words, fairly stilted, fairly straight from the page (David Speers 23/05/1999).

Yet, as illustrated by other revival movements (see Livingston 1999:80), the revivalist practice often contradicts the ideology. While the leading revivalists hoped that the melodies themselves would lead the way, naturally developing into their original style, no one could deny that this was a very limiting experience which involved little personal creativity. So, in a move perhaps contrary to their ideology, 'improvements' were added; the structures of tunes were altered, composed sections were added where tunes were considered to be too short, and melodies were transposed to suit certain instruments.¹⁶⁵ This contradiction in ideology also applied to the context transformation of particular tunes and customs:

... the 'folk' performance of the music has tended to develop... in a way that ignores the context in which the different types of music existed. Thus, it is not seen as being in the least incongruous to play church music, band music, traditional dance music and ballad tunes instrumentally in the same social context and describe it as being 'Manx folk music' (Speers 1996-7:246).

In contrast, where the traditions were well documented, they were reconstructed precisely according to their accompanying sources. Calendar customs such as 'Hunt the Wren' and 'Hop-tu-Naa' were adhered to as far as possible, and rather than re-enacting a tradition purely for public performance, its whole significance and associated customs were employed.¹⁶⁶ However, while observing the original context of a performance, the components of the finished product were quite often a combination of miscellaneous sources, referring to regional variants of lyrics and customs, which essentially created a "stylized reconstruction of original ceremonies" (Vazanová-Horáková 1996:44).

Therefore, where historical validation existed, Manx traditional music was

165 The following examples from Jerry 1991 were reconstructed by various revivalists: "Moghrey Laa Boa[y]ldyn" (Jerry 1991:no. 42) "Ta'n Grein Veg Oarn" (109) and "My [S]henn Ayr (203)".

166 For example, 'Hunt the Wren' was and is still performed only on St. Stephen's Day, observing the dance collected by Douglas and the lyrics collected by Moore (which are virtually identical to those collected in Cork and published in Hall's Ireland in 1841:23-5). The re-enactment adheres to the curfew of midday, and the wren pole is reconstructed according to historical records and illustrations (Manx National Heritage Library).

reconstructed in an ‘authentic’ manner, but music that did not possess instruction presented the revivalists with complex decisions. The syncretist viewpoint was to perform the music in any style that suited it musically, whether it was conceivably authentic to the Island or not. For instance, Brian Stowell released a record of thirteen Manx Gaelic songs called *Arraneyn Beeal-Arrish Vannin* in 1973.¹⁶⁷ Although he had learnt some of the songs from Gaelic speaker Joe Woods (see Kennedy’s recording 1975), his influence has not been mentioned, and Brian (interviewed 22/12/2000) stated that he interpreted the songs in the way “... they might’ve sounded like in the traditional world originally”, namely in the Irish style of sean-nós. His record caused a little controversy at the time with those that believed the style he had chosen was historically inaccurate:

I think that Mona [Douglas] was quite upset when Brian Stowell brought out his record of unaccompanied songs because he began to use forms of ornamentation that come into Irish singing and she didn’t think it had a place... (Colin Jerry, interviewed 10/03/1999).

Other purist attitudes concerned the speed of the tunes. Clague had given no indication of the tempo of his collected melodies, so the revivalists looked for clues within the type of melody; for instance, whether it was originally a song (typically slow) or a dance tune (quick):

We know that the great majority of tunes came to us from singers and that should make us suspect that only a few of them were dance tunes. This should make us very suspicious of tunes noted in 6/8. Although some of them may well be jigs it cannot be taken for certain that they are not quick waltzes... Some of these quick waltzes have been played as if they were jigs and the result has rarely been successful... (Jerry 1993:39).

Another element determining the tempo of the tunes was the musical ability of the players. Colin Jerry again believed that a communal stance should be taken; therefore, reaching an ‘average’ speed between the group of players:

... it seems to me there is an ideal speed for each tune, and that the best way to

167 Recorded in collaboration with George Broderick. See review by Breandan Breathnach 1973:80-81.

find it is to look at the speed at which each member of the group playing it feels the most comfortable, and then reaching a consensus (*ibid.*).

Predictably, this view was not shared by the more proficient (or perhaps impatient) players who wished to produce a lively session similar to those taking place in Ireland:

The performance at the Central was felt by some to be lacklustre, at times ‘funereal’ [*sic.*] in delivery, with almost each tune being thrashed out *ad nauseam*, with a pause for a smoke in between. There was little or no session etiquette... and anyone playing tunes not in house style would be overplayed (Broderick 1999b:22, his italics).¹⁶⁸

With no real historical reference to guide the musicians, it ultimately came down to the more dominant characters in the revival to direct the style and practice of Manx traditional music, and particularly to those who could read music. Without accusing the leaders of Bwoie Doal of dictating the direction of Manx traditional music, it is noticeable that while giving “the impression... that everybody could do what they wanted...” (George Broderick interviewed 23/03/1999), under the pretenses of a free-for-all session, certain members had fixed ideas on how Manx music should sound and made their feelings clear to the other members accordingly.

4.2 “*the uncritical adopting of styles*”

Although the actual source material bore little resemblance to the Irish collections, there was a general tendency to interpret the Manx tunes in a similar style. Irish instrumental music was extremely popular at this time, with countless modern recordings of virtuosic musicians available, so it may have been a subconscious approach taken by most of the musicians. The Manx revivalists had also chosen instruments that were associated with Ireland, or had previously played Irish music themselves, so it was inevitable that the sound they mimicked was that of the

168 Listening to a recording of a Sleih Gyn Thie session at the Prince of Wales Pub, Ramsey in 1983 (recorded by Ronnie Caine), it is clear that certain members are leading the session. There is one incident when a lone guitarist takes the opportunity to start a tune between the communal numbers. He begins playing a gentle air but after a few bars is interrupted by a piper playing a different tune over the top!

contemporary Irish music scene. Of course, this contradicted the revivalist ideology that wished to stamp out any traces of the dominant musical force, and Colin Jerry (1993:39) commented on the dependency on other styles:

... the uncritical adopting of styles from the surrounding countries. They apply to the music as played there, and to transfer them to our body of music is likely to dilute it, reduce the range and scope of it, and at worst, to change it out of all recognition.

Colin Jerry (interviewed 10/03/1999) not only believed that the “aping” of the Irish style was detrimental to the establishment of a Manx musical identity, but that it was also inauthentic, as he stated that “I don’t honestly think there are many more than about a dozen Manx tunes that resemble Irish tunes...”

The prominent leaning towards the Irish instrumental style was especially manifest through the ornamentation of the melodies, an element that again may not have been deliberate. Previous experience and personal preferences in listening material encouraged the addition of ‘cuts and rolls’, and some of the musicians found it difficult to hold back from ornamenting:

... people looked at what [instruments] other traditions were using to play their music, and those sort of things were readily available, so they cracked in. But in terms of actually playing them, and stylistically, it was certainly not [allowed to be]... Irish... and it was discouraged. If somebody tried to put ‘twiddledy’ bits in... tut-tutting and that sort of thing! (David Speers 23/05/1999).

While agreeing that they wanted to avoid ‘Irishizing’ the music and that they needed to completely eliminate Irish tunes from the session, the revivalists also acceded that some melodic embellishment was needed to enhance the tunes themselves: “You’ve got the bare tune. Now what do you do with it?... how do you ornament it without sounding particularly Irish?” (Interview with Bob Carswell 20/05/1999). David Fisher (23/12/1998) agreed that playing the tunes straight from the page was not a satisfactory experience:

They’re just basic notes and they... leave it entirely open to you. And a lot of

these tunes looked a bit boring, a... bit strange and it wasn't until you put cuts and rolls into them and some ornamentation, that they started to make a little bit of sense. And so we borrowed, not the tunes from Ireland, but the ornamentation of the tunes from Ireland. And I think there's a move towards getting away from that now. To look for our own ornamentation. A difficult area.

Clague had made references to the odd few grace notes, but like most of his contemporaries probably chose to ignore the majority of incidental notes. In a review of Brian Stowell's recording of Manx Gaelic songs (1973), Irish folk song scholar, Brendan Breathnach (1976:81), forewarned that it would be unwise for Manx revivalists to interpret the Clague/Gill collection too literally:

In Ireland where the language and traditional singing still live (or linger on) one can see how inadequate are the transcriptions by the nineteenth-century collectors of Irish traditional songs; the music is compressed between rigid bar lines, the ornamentation is largely ignored. That the playing of such settings should approach in any way closely the original rendition would be largely a matter of chance.

However, the issue for some of the Manx revivalists was not that ornamentation was particularly inauthentic in Manx music; the problem was that its perpetrators "were all ornamenting the tune out of existence" (Colin Jerry 10/03/1999), before the repertoire was even established.

Bwoie Doal was divided by two approaches regarding the interpretation. The purist element took the rational stance of believing the tunes needed to be established first and foremost, playing the notes exactly as written and letting the style develop of its own accord through regular practise. Others found this method rather boring, preferring to liven up the whole experience: "The whole stuff sounded like dirges..." (Brian Stowell 22/12/2000). In opposition, the syncretist ideal was to have fun with the music, improve individual playing and get the repertoire up and running in a style equaling their British and Irish counterparts; a reaction which is a commonplace within music revivalism: "Although there is a core ideology that revivalists are aware of, many choose to ignore it... [or] modify it to suit their own needs and desires" (Livingston 1999:73).

Another “point of tension” (*ibid*:71) within the revivalist ideology and discourse was the structures of the melodies, although this dispute emerged later in the development of the revival. In many respects, the Manx session style had grown out of the use of Manx melodies for the dance groups, (most of the session musicians also played for the dance group, Bock Yuan Fannee), so the immediate instinct when approaching the instrumental session was to play one melody repetitively, the musicians possibly imagining the dance as they played.¹⁶⁹ This element of the session caused frustration with some members, who felt that the group needed to modify their approach to suit the new environment. Others disagreed, and adhered rigorously to the written source material:

... the tunes had to be played in a particular way, and if you didn't play them in a particular way, they were wrong... consequently, “Fathaby Jig” gets played in two A-s and one B, as per Mona Douglas (George Broderick 23/03/1999).

Disputes over the correct structures of tunes came to a head in the 1990s, when the already litigious group split into two. Believing that Bwoie Doal had become “repetitive and boring”, musician, David Speers (interviewed 23/05/1999) returned to the source material and associated historical records, and tried to prove that the music had been misinterpreted:

... [David Speers] asked [the core revivalists] about certain aspects of Manx music... and he suddenly found that he wasn't getting satisfactory answers... so he had to dig up things for himself. He found that there was a charade... It was their interpretation, but it wasn't the whole picture and ... the image that was... being put across was this was [the] way that traditional music had to be played as they saw it (George Broderick, interviewed 23/03/1999).

His claims were inevitably met with indignation by the stalwarts of the revival, and “the notion of playing tunes in sets... had to wait until the early 1990s” (Broderick 1999b:22).

4.3 *Development in Style and Ideology*

169 An example of this was recorded by Ronnie Caine at a Sleih Gyn Thie session at the Prince of Wales Pub, Ramsey in 1983. The tune Arrane ny Guilley Hesheree was repeated over thirty times! However, it is possible that people were also dancing at this session.

The interpretation of Manx source material has never been an easy issue within the music revival. The construction of a repertoire and musical style were hastily established without any historical authentication, meaning that ideological contradictions were made, arguments occurred within the revivalist core, and more often than not, the stronger personalities of the group had the final word on interpretation. However, from the mid 1980s, David Speers ran a long-running campaign to play Manx traditional music in what he claimed was the ‘authentic’ manner.¹⁷⁰

... documentary material was once again reviewed, which led to fresh interpretation and to the introduction of playing tunes of like structure (i.e. jigs, reels, hornpipes, etc) in sets at a more robust speed, thus enhancing the whole performance. This approach, however, found little favour with some of the old guard, which led once more to disagreement and the springing up for a while of new sessions at other venues (Broderick 1999b:22).

After extensive research into historical material, Speers exposed what was, effectively, the misinterpretation of the source material played at the Bwoie Doal sessions, claiming that the revivalists had “accepted what they have found at face value” (Speers 1996-7:225), and that their deliberate avoidance of ‘alien’ stylistic practices was unrealistic in regard to the original repertoire. Speers “began collecting comparative and historical material in 1986” (*ibid*:225n) with the intention of discovering the true context and interpretation of Manx traditional music, and discovered, what he believed to be evidence to support a new ideology. Where the core revivalists had stated that there was no historical documentation to validate their interpretation of musical source material, Speers claimed that evidence related to the time of its collection was to be found, but had been overlooked. By studying the background and context behind the collecting of Clague, Gill and Douglas, he concluded that the revivalists had taken the source material at face value and its interpretation need not have been a “matter of guesswork” (Jerry 1993:38). Speers has stated that to achieve a more authentic interpretation, revivalists should have realized the intentions of the collectors, and dance tunes should

170 David Speers joined the revival a few years after its inception.

have been compared to their Irish and Scottish counterparts for advice on their original structure and interpretation. He notes that while the evidence suggested that dance tunes found in the Isle of Man were of Irish or Scottish origin, the revivalists deliberately ignored these associations:

... fear of the strength of the current [Irish music] revival, may have had a part to play in generating a certain anti-Irish attitude in the context of music and dance (Speers 1996-7:229).

While Speers may have seen this research as a well-overdue analysis of source material, this fresh angle did not go down very well with the other revivalists, and especially with those of a nationalistic leaning. By making associations to Irish music in particular, other revivalists saw Speers as betraying their principal objective; to form a secure Manx identity.

After several years of debate, the unofficial leader of the revival, Colin Jerry, obviously felt compelled to rationalize the original revivalist ideology in an article titled “Manks Music - The Search for a Contemporary Style...” (1993:41):

All we do have is what we have done so far. Of course, we could throw it all away and start again, but all of our experience so far, mistakes and all, has a value, and should be respected... I believe that we now have a new living tradition and as such it will continue to evolve. However I don't think that any change should be accepted uncritically, or without it having been tested by the community as a whole. The tunes which we have will have been originated by individual people, but it is the community which decides which are of value, and worth remembering, and passing on to the future. Any person initiating change should be aware that this critical process has to be allowed to work and changes must be subject to peer pressure.

This is what has happened in the past, is happening now, and will continue to happen.

Therefore, the other revivalists could not disprove David Speers' claims, but they could veto them. In a letter to *Carn*, the Celtic League magazine (1994/5: 21), David Speers described the reaction provoked by his claims as “new conservatism”. He concluded that;

The very fact that this opposition has taken extreme and personal forms... [is] very clear. Only fear produces such actions. In this case, fear of the truth and the exposition of inadequacy and mediocrity. There is no excuse for violence and intimidation in a situation which is neither *violent*, nor *intimidating*... I hope that these attitudes do not inhibit those who want to develop [sic.] their knowledge of what we (loosely) describe as being 'Manx music' (*ibid.*, his italics).

At this stage of the revival, it could be said that the Manx traditional music movement has followed the general tendency to divide into 'purist' and 'syncretist' stances. However, this movement cannot be easily separated into these two categories. Although the Bwoie Doal sessions have been (and still are) associated with rigid, unwritten rules, some aspects of their ideology, perhaps ironically, represent a 'syncretist' stance. Baumann (1996:81) explained the tendencies of the syncretist approach in music revivals:

... its main tendency is to recreate or revive folklore with reference to modern musical expression... One uses the local metaphor (through old musical manuscripts or recordings) and then begins to integrate new dimensions...

From a certain angle, this was the approach taken by the core revivalists, as they were not concerned with authenticity in their initial interpretation, but their subsequent ideology could be said to be purist or at least 'conservative', because they had now invented their own parameters of authenticity through their 'repackaged' tradition.

Speers and his supporters also fit into the 'purist' position, although again, not comfortably. Historical research in a quest for authenticity reflects the purist approach, but as Baumann (*ibid*:80) added, this research can be conducted from a particular angle if desired. He states that one type of purist is "the researcher who reconstructs certain sources to produce something as it is thought to have been practised at a particular time in the past". Therefore, if an individual wanted the musical repertoire of the Isle of Man to appear to be of Irish descent, then selecting particular historical evidence can point in this direction. Hence, if a person required the musical material to appear predominantly English in origin, then a selection of historical evidence could also verify this.

Regardless of which approach was right or wrong, this incident reflected a change in thought within the revivalist movement. As has been confirmed through other revival movements, purist and syncretist approaches can run together simultaneously in a complimentary manner, but what ultimately divided the Manx folk community at this time was the fact that the issue had become personal. The core revivalists could not deny that their initial interpretation of Manx source material was selective and had overt motives behind it, but by publicly declaring that modern Manx traditional music was, in effect, fraudulent, was seen as an act of betrayal. No doubt insult was added to injury when Speers published his argument in the Irish academic folklore journal *Béaloides* (1996-7), causing an added embarrassment for the community. In this article, Speers (*ibid*:231) also queried the validity of Mona Douglas' collected tunes and dances, and for the first time (in print), evidence was presented that questioned the legitimacy of her collection, an area that had been (perhaps intentionally) overlooked by the preceding revivalists.

The intervention of academic research within a revivalist movement usually acts as a legitimator, producing and controlling knowledge about the revived tradition (see Ronström 1996:10), but as Livingston (1999:78) pointed out, "The defensive attitude taken by revivalists when "their" history is being questioned or attacked by outsiders in [*sic.*] not uncommon". However, the theories of Ronström and Livingston apply to outsiders of the revival, and not to academic research within the revivalist community. So, instead of legitimizing the ideology of the Manx traditional music revival through academic research, the work of Speers, and others since,¹⁷¹ has had an opposite effect, and to a certain degree has attracted a negative form of visibility.

4.4 The Grass Roots Ethos - 'Keeping it Real'

From the beginning of the movement the general consensus between the revivalists was that they wanted to recreate a grass roots tradition; spontaneous and 'real' music-

171 The research of Speers, Broderick, Miller (and perhaps myself), has caused some concern within the revivalist community. At a conference (Manx Museum, Douglas, Isle of Man 2000) that discussed the collecting techniques of Mona Douglas and its subsequent interpretation by this movement, the speakers were accused of "navel-gazing" by one angry traditional musician.

making in a natural environment. This notion in itself bore many drawbacks, as each member had their own preconception of what this would entail. The impression of freedom within the music-making was impossible to sustain; individual ideas were too fragmentary and required constraint by leading members, and consequently, the session did not give equal status to each musician as may have been promised, but was dictated by the principal revivalists.

The prime misconception (or non-beneficial conception) concerning 'grass roots' folk music was that the standard of playing did not have to be very good. It seemed that some Manx musicians saw mediocre playing as more 'pure' and 'authentic':

... if it's somebody learning a new instrument and a new tune, then I think they're gonna play it fairly basically, you know. And it's gonna be quite a lot of them in it [Manx traditional music revival], and maybe that's what folk music was. Remember it's music of the people, the peasantry... not that I'm implying that they weren't good musicians, there's no reason why they weren't apt and skilful musicians, but there's something more pure about that I think (Peter Cubberley, interviewed 29/07/1999).

Practicing at home in-between sessions signified a premeditated effort which did not conform to the desired image, and this element irritated some of the more competent musicians: "... they'll go for one week to the next without practicing" (David Speers 23/05/1999). The majority of the revivalists did not wish to be professional musicians, but wanted to recreate the informal pastime of their predecessors. To further this perception, many of the musicians were also resigned to the belief that they would never be as good as those brought up in a continuous tradition:

... people played what they could play, or what they fancied themselves as playing, and probably technically we're never going to be as good as people brought up playing the fiddle from the age of one or two, like in some of these countries. You accept that (Anne Kissack, interviewed 28/07/1999).

The revival's alliance with working class culture also fostered this wish to resist all of the implications of commercialism and upper-class art music. Ling (1986:3) commented on this element of revivalism through the study of the Swedish Lilla Edet Fiddle Club;

an annotation that similarly reflected the ideology of the Manx revivalists:

The fiddlers reacted against the “professionalism” of music generally and have tried to reestablish a “happy playing”, where it is more important to have fun than play correctly.

The Bwoie Doal session was never intended to be a platform for public performance and this obviously influenced the belief that the music did not have to be of a skilful quality:

... they're never gonna be brilliant because I don't think they're really bothered whether they are or not. And if they're happy doing what they're doing, that's fine, 'cause it's personal at the end of the day. But if they... want to get up and play in front of people, and give concerts and want to be appreciated, then maybe they sort of have to reassess why they're doing it, and how good are you gonna be when you do it (Peter Cubberley 29/07/1999).

However, there were a few musicians that did wish to improve the calibre of performance, but found that the Bwoie Doal session was not the location for flaunting their abilities:

I could tell you certainly that in the '80s, if people went to the 'White House' [subsequent home of Bwoie Doal]... who are quite virtuoso players really, and did their own thing, there'd be ... perhaps unspoken, but hostile reaction to that. “Oh, they're showing off”... and “too good for us”... Which sort of one way or another keeps things at a mediocre level (David Speers 23/05/1999).

To a significant degree, the way in which the source material was chosen and interpreted was also determined by musical ability (see Broderick 1999b). This element affected the chosen tempo of tunes in particular. Under the pretenses of following the ‘authentic’ way of playing and disseminating the source material, it appears that some of the musicians were in fact disguising their own abilities:

... people who were more naturally gifted with their instruments would play things more quickly than others, and were perhaps held back because... “that's too fast”... “How can you dance to that?” and that sort of thing. Even when we weren't playing for dances (David Speers 23/05/1999).

This scenario presents a stark contrast to Livingston's conclusions concerning revivalist ideology. She surmised that because revivals are invariably a middle class phenomena, members try to attain high standards in their work. She claims that the middle class share particular experiences and predilections which ultimately affect the interpretation and re-enactment of source material:

Certain aesthetic preferences are also predominant: precision in playing and of tone production, tight arrangements, privileging of contrast over continuity, all of which are geared towards performance for an audience and for recording (Livingston 1999:77).

Furthermore, based on her own experience of the 'choro' revival in Brazil, Livingston found that revivalist groups consisted of the most accomplished players and rehearsed on a regular basis.

The obverse philosophies of the Manx traditional musicians may be explained by the egalitarian nature of this revival, and by the generally indistinct class system in the Isle of Man:

The Isle of Man has a more fluid social structure than the class system in England, which allows greater contact between economic and social classes, and greater social mobility (Maddrell 2002b).

Admittedly there was the presence of those who would fit into the 'middle class' category, but the revival actually consisted of individuals from all walks of life, from university lecturers to builders' labourers. To a certain degree, its members consciously downplayed their social status when participating in the revival, and this has been transmitted through their ideology. The movement was more concerned with gathering committed people who were sympathetic to the political situation, than of the musical ability of its members.

The context of the music-making has also produced a contrary approach to that quoted by Livingston. While it would appear that most revivals aim towards public performance, this informal, session-based revival was a oppositional reaction to the

formal performances of the previous generation of music revivalists, as instigated by Mona Douglas, and certainly to the elitist associations of the Guild music festival. Ultimately, the establishment of a strong and distinct identity was of much more importance to the Manx revivalists than the aesthetic qualities of the music, and this has been transmitted through their ideology.

Conclusions

The Manx traditional music revival was essentially a socio-political movement, which has used the music as a vehicle for their aspirations. As a manifestation of a larger cultural revival provoked by the nationalist protests during the 1960s and '70s, the music was just one facet of a movement that was attempting to reinforce the Manx identity. Although it inevitably attracted amateur musicians and was stylistically influenced by the wider folk scene, the roots of the music were obligated to the nationalist movement, and this has materialized through the revivalists' objectives.

Because of this motivation, more significance has been placed upon the symbolism and meaning behind the music, rather than to its aesthetic qualities, and this perhaps explains why elements of the Manx music revival do not always correspond to Livingston's model. While it displays many similarities with the 'typical' music revival, most academic studies of revivalism have been based upon movements where historical evidence or source bearers are available, and therefore, authenticity or the aesthetic qualities of the music are of prime importance. However, as one Manx revivalist pointed out: "[academic theories are] ... not really appropriate to the Isle of Man, because they always try and force the Isle of Man into some mould which doesn't fit it" (Brian Stowell 22/12/2000).

Although all revivals are said to contain an element of political behaviour, I would venture to state that the intensity of that influence can considerably effect the artistic interpretation. Where a revival is primarily a social movement, concerned with 'communal identity', it inevitably practices an egalitarian philosophy, which in turn can

restrict the creative development of the music. From an artistic viewpoint, a negative effect of this egalitarian approach is that the music can become stifled because individual development and improvement are discouraged within that context. However, music can not be bound by these restrictive ideologies. Unlike language, and even dance, music is fluid enough to allow change over time:

Because it is the bearer of many traditions, the images and symbols music give rise to are open-ended, not closed and determinant. This is something which distinguishes music and song from ideology... Music suggests interpretation, ideology commands it (Eyerman and Jamison 1998:46).

Therefore, as political angst has lessened since the 1970s, revivalist ideologies have adapted, sometimes unwillingly, to allow for aesthetic developments within Manx traditional music.

Restrictions concerning personal and individual innovation seem to have been a result of the revivalist ideology, rather than an original motive: Hypothetically, a successful solo artist has the potential to raise the visibility of that tradition. But at some point in the Manx revival, the core revivalists arrived at a consensus of opinion as to how Manx music should be performed, and anyone, even unintentionally, deviating from that unwritten code could have been perceived as a threat. Livingston (1999:78) found that “the defensive attitude taken by revivalists when they feel that ‘their’ history is being questioned or attacked by outsiders is not uncommon”, and I would add that this statement could also apply to insiders of a revival.

Through the auspices of a communal movement, decisions over the development and future of Manx traditional music have been dictated by a small number of core revivalists. The music itself has not ‘naturally’ led the way as may have been hoped in the initial stages of the revival, but has been moulded by the more dominant personalities. This reinforces Livingston’s conclusion that “one of the most important features of music revivals is the central role played by a few individuals” (*ibid*:70).

The final issue to consider here is whether the music revival has achieved its purpose:

To establish a distinctive and unique musical genre and style. Through a discriminatory selection of melodies from various sources, and their subsequent dissemination through publications and public forums such as Yn Chruinnaght, the Manx traditional music revival has established a limited repertoire of songs and tunes that are now recognized within the folk scene in the Isle of Man:

There is now at least one generation in the Isle of Man which knows little or nothing of *Manx National Songs*, but is far more likely to recognise a tune from, or by, its title in the Manx language... The two books largely responsible for initiating this change are *Kiaull yn Theay* (1978) and *Kiaull yn Theay 2* (1979), both prepared by C.W.P. Jerry (Carswell 2001b:11).

However, the revivalists' indecisiveness over the interpretation of this repertoire has meant that a distinctive Manx style has not been identified. The *Clague Collection* offered many melodies for the new instrumental tradition, but did not offer any clues to the original style. So, regardless of criticism by the leading members, the Manx musicians have continued to gravitate towards an imitation of the Irish instrumental style. The same applies to musical genre. As discussed earlier, the other Celtic countries had established musical traditions that were immediately identifiable with each nation, but this has not been achieved in the Isle of Man. Consequently, the Manx musicians have taken the more popular and well-known elements of the other Celtic music traditions, and through a selection process of local material, have invented a multi-faceted tradition that appears genuine to the outsider, and even feels genuine to its followers.¹⁷² Over time, the impetus to create something unique and different has lessened, and therefore participants have been content to continue within the prescribed boundaries: "The desire to establish an authentic repertory has subsequently been accepted almost as a guarantee that this was achieved" (Maddrell 1995:41). This change of attitude could potentially signify the end of the revival; the stage when its purpose loses its oppositional character, and becomes less concerned with authenticity.

Ultimately the only 'authentic' feature of Manx traditional culture that could have been

172 Through my research it became apparent that much of the younger generation or "apprentices" (Rosenberg 1993:196) of the folk scene have no idea that their traditional music was revived in recent history.

employed to legitimize their actions and raise the visibility of Manx traditional music was the Gaelic language. But, sidetracked by the fashion for instrumental music and the communal session atmosphere, the Manx music revival has not yet exploited this ingredient to its full potential.

Regardless of the criticisms and disagreements that flowed during its development, Bwoie Doal were nonetheless creating something brand-new and certainly different to the nature of traditional music heard on the Island before. To many, the session signified the re-arrival of the true and authentic tradition. By extracting the repertoire from the stage and music book, the revivalists were bringing the traditional music back to 'everyday' life. Sheila Corkill (interviewed 09/03/2001), fiddler for the 'Manx Folk Dance Society' since the 1950s commented on the change of approach:

... couldn't play like they do... we played straight... I do admire them, the way they can do all these other bits to them now. I think, "oh aren't they clever?"
It's really folky now.

Within a short period of time, public demand meant that Bwoie Doal had to change its initial context from an informal session to a performing group. As interest grew from outside, the group found it could not remain as exclusive as some may have wished, and as invitations to play became more frequent and as fewer members were required to represent Bwoie Doal in public, several off-shoot bands were formed. Apart from continuing to accompany the dance performances of Bock Yuan Fannee, Bwoie Doal were required to play at local concerts, Yn Chruinnaght and festivals abroad representing the Island, and in accordance, performance practices had to be improved and standardized. The interest generated by the group in the late 1970s brought many followers to the movement in the form of new members, enthusiastic audiences and other musical groups; the Revivalist Community.

Chapter Five

The Revivalist Community

Introduction

The fourth ingredient of Livingston's model of music revivalism is the assembling of "a group of followers which form the basis of a revivalist community" (Livingston 1999:69). She claims that it is the role of the core revivalists to "communicate their vision to, and organize, a select group of converts" (*ibid*:70) through the medium of specially organized events. Livingston's fifth ingredient, "Revivalist Activities" is therefore also addressed in this chapter, where social events and rituals are used to build a community spirit and shared identity among its participants. By exploring these revivalist theories through sociological concepts of the term 'community', this chapter will examine whether a sense of community has evolved from the Manx traditional music revival in the 1970s. Through an analysis of individual and collective backgrounds and motivations, the common patterns of entry into the movement, and the processes behind the construction of a shared identity, this chapter considers the Manx folk scene both as a distinct community which exists within the broader Manx population, and as a subdivision of the Celtic community.

In contrast to the many documented examples of revivals that have concentrated exclusively on music, the Manx traditional music revival perhaps presents a more complex set of issues. Because the community incorporates people who are involved in all elements of the traditional culture, music cannot be extracted from its counterparts; the Gaelic language and Manx traditional dance. Over the past thirty years, the 'Manx folk scene'¹⁷³ has attracted a diverse range of supporters who have each offered varying levels of commitment to at least one of the above disciplines. This chapter aims to identify the common bond between these individuals, but will acknowledge that while

173 In this chapter, the community under study is termed the 'folk scene' because informants have referred to it as such. However, the specific genres of music and dance are called 'traditional' for the same reason. As styles, it has become unfashionable to use the term 'folk' in this circle.

its members “typically stand on at least some common ground, they likely also retain multiple differences of identity, interest and commitment” (Mattern 1998:34). To understand who the followers of Manx traditional culture were - and still are - individual and communal characteristics will be located through the interviews and through a qualitative survey.

A questionnaire was circulated during Yn Chruinnaght which was held in Ramsey in July 2002; an annual inter-Celtic festival that is, arguably, the highlight of the year for the Manx folk community. It was aimed specifically at Manx residents, but also included university students who were home during the summer, and it was hoped that both performers and audience members would take part in the survey. Questionnaires were distributed over the week-long festival, and sixty-four were anonymously completed and returned. Inspired by Niall MacKinnon’s folk club survey in *The British Folk Scene - Music Performance and Social Identity* (1994) where he examined the social background of folk club participants, the Yn Chruinnaght survey questions were comprehensive and gave a choice of answers, with the aim of gathering information about all of the generations involved in the contemporary Manx folk scene and their interest in traditional music [Appendices 17 and 18]. However, due to the context of the questionnaire, the gathered data can only be considered as contemporary responses, and because the forms were completed by an indeterminate percentage of the folk scene during this festival, ultimately, the calculated results must be interpreted in a qualitative, rather than quantitative, manner.

Forming a Community

A ‘community’ is generally perceived to be different from other “systems of social relations” such as specialized organizations, groups and institutions, yet the term itself can also “evoke such varied images” (Worsley 1970:332). The general definition is of “an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence” (Finnegan 1994:210), but when broken down into the various associations of the term, members of any society are always involved in more than one community:

Each individual always belongs to several social units: a nation, a profession, a family, a political party, an ethnic group, a religious organization, and so on, and belongs to all of them at the same time (Roosens 1989:16).

Ruth Finnegan (1994:210) suggests that there are several meanings of ‘community’ that can overlap within an individual’s social background, and furthermore, a group may derive from more than one of these senses:

1. A locality (perhaps the most common meaning).
2. Some grouping sharing common interests, not necessarily localized.
3. A locality or grouping bound by close ties, such as kinship or neighbourliness.
4. A sense of belonging together.
5. A claim or invitation to observe common ties or interests.

‘Locality’ suggests a demographic belonging whether it be a town, area or street, and some communities take this meaning as their identity, yet her second point can contradict that relationship. By sharing common interests, communities which are based upon occupational, religious or cultural factors “do not necessarily entail spacial closeness” (*ibid.*). The third meaning discusses the more personal relationship between individuals, where mutual interests, family ties and friendships can form a community distinct from others. Her fourth example (1994:211) indicates that a “sense of belonging” and feelings of “well-being, harmony and closeness” develop when subjective perceptions and symbolism are shared amongst individuals, although she adds that the level of each individual’s sense of belonging can vary within one movement. Particular experiences often evoke feelings of belonging to certain groups, and Finnegan’s fifth point implies that an awareness of relative and subjective links can draw individuals together, such as political beliefs or a particular meaningful experience which others can empathize with.

What is suggested by all of these ‘types’ of community is that the sense of belonging and communal identity felt between their members entirely depends on individual perceptions of themselves and others.

... for some scholars, what makes 'community' is not physical contiguity or even shared interests, but the perceptions and symbols people share... a community is born when it reaches a state of 'self-consciousness'.¹⁷⁴

And because these groups create their own identities and histories, they "prove neither the prior or permanent existence of an explicit community, nor the total agreement among its members" (Finnegan 1994:211). In Benedict Anderson's influential book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, he claims that;

... all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined... members... will never know most of their fellow members... yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (1983 [1991:6]).

Therefore, while members of any community experience a sense of belonging, their ties to other people are not necessarily predetermined or physically bound, but are individually perceived.

1. Individual Identities in the Manx Folk Community

It was established earlier in the thesis that the 'core revivalists' of the Manx traditional music revival came from various backgrounds and standpoints, and attempts were made to highlight the most common characteristics. The socio-political climate of the 1970s evidently had a profound effect on members of this scene, with nationalism acting both as a stimulant for the cultural revivals and as an ideological tool. However, the context of the initial revival has altered over its thirty year history; ideologies have developed, political tensions have weakened, and the geographical boundaries of the revival following have broadened.

... the community identity of a particular locality or group will vary over time. Active social ties or a sense of belonging may become weaker (or stronger) over the generations... That which is a community at one time may not be so at another (Finnegan 1994:212).

174 Poet, Iqbal quoted in Finnegan and Pryce 1994:211.

Finnegan also proposes that communities are always in the process of “becoming” rather than “being” (*ibid*:211), which suggests that a shared objective is needed to foster and develop the community identity. When the common bond or goal loses its significance, a community will cease to exist. Gellner (1999:35) addresses this in relation to the cultural assertiveness of nations: “... very small cultural groups tend to give up... Size, continuity, and the existence of symbolism are important...”

However, the community spirit of the Manx folk scene appears stronger than ever, and as demonstrated by the survey, most members do perceive themselves as being part of a community. Participants in the Yn Chruinnaght survey were asked how they perceived their involvement in the Manx folk scene, and results revealed that over half (25 out of 64) saw traditional culture as part of their lifestyle, with a lesser number (12 out of 64) feeling that playing music and dancing was merely a hobby or pastime. The rest of the surveyed individuals stated that they supported the scene, but did not actively participate.

The issue of community was approached more directly in an interview with Greg Joughin (24/07/2000), leader of dance group, Perree Bane: Does participating in the folk scene make you “part of a community, a lifestyle, more than just a hobby?”

Oh yeah! Yeah. Oh aye, there’s a lot of people... that have given themselves quite a lot indeed. And we went to... one of the girl’s eighteenth birthdays and apart from a few of her friends, the majority of people there were the people from the dance group.

Hazel Hannan (23/12/2002) agreed that members of the folk scene perceived themselves to be part of a distinct community:

I do think that sometimes people with an interest in traditional music, dance and language, do perceive themselves as being a specific community, but then different people with different interests have that perception of themselves too... because of the time that people give to music, dance and the language, I think it is a different community, but they are not isolationists.

In a case such as the Manx folk scene, where a community has apparently grown out of a minority interest thirty years ago, we must question why people still pursue a movement in which the initial ideology and context has inevitably changed, an area that will be discussed in more detail in the final chapter. To identify the purpose and attraction of the movement today involves identifying the individual characteristics and motivations of members of the contemporary community:

The multiplicity of motivations that draws people to revivals cannot possibly be categorized in any definitive way. Issues of generation, class, gender, level of education, ethnicity and national or political sentiments are all variables in the decision and extent of participation in any given revival (Livingston 1999:73).

Taking Livingston's 'variables' as an outline, and based upon the survey and recurrent factors extracted from the interviews, this section will identify the main characteristics of the individuals in the Manx folk community, with a view to deciphering the common purpose that acts as a continuum for the movement.

1.1 Individual Dispositions

Generation

The folk scene today encompasses the whole generational spectrum, but this has not always been the case. According to the interviews and the survey, the original instigators of the revival in the 1970s were mainly in the 20 to 30 age group (and are therefore now in their 40s and 50s). The music and ideology of the folk revival in the USA and Britain was primarily aimed at and embraced by the youth market, and this inevitably reflected upon the Manx traditional music revival. Over half of those who joined in the 1970s had recently attended university in the UK before their involvement in Manx culture, and had therefore come into contact with the widespread fashion for folk music. For those who were more concerned with the nationalist slant of the Manx cultural revival, the Gaelic language, in particular, also attracted the younger generation:

It attracted young Manx people, because of course with older Manx people

there was often a reaction because they hadn't learned Manx, they were a bit suspicious of it, and there was a lot of reaction against it and its use in public in the '70s (Interview with Fiona McArdle 19/05/1999).

This inevitably reflected upon participants of music and dance, as they were often the same people, which signifies that the cultural revival of the 1970s was predominantly a youth movement.

Age profiles have varied over the past thirty years, and have both determined and have been determinant by the progress of the movement. The survey implies that the 20-29 age group currently dominate the scene (18 of 64); many of the individuals in this age-group being 'revivalist children', or those who had joined during the period when Manx traditional music and dance were introduced into the schools by teachers such as Mike Boulton, Fenella Bazin and Cristl Jerry.¹⁷⁵ Nowadays in the folk scene, age groups have tended to dictate the type of art-form that an individual will involve themselves in, and these generational distinctions have created various subgroups within the community. Where the original focus for all of the revivalist musicians was a communal and informal music session based in the pub, generational differences have expanded the context of Manx traditional music-making. The fusion of electric instruments with the Manx traditional music repertoire, for instance, has been instigated mainly by the younger generation over the past decade, whereas the Gaelic choir, Cliogaree Twoie tends to involve women of a similar age; individual decisions that presumably reflect aesthetic preferences and the social networks of different generations. Therefore, certain music or dance groups either purposefully, or unconsciously consist of people of the same age. Dance group Perree T, for instance, was an offshoot of Perree Bane, formed by girls in their late teens. While generational factors have created ideological differences that may not have been apparent in the 1970s, it has allowed the movement to extend its boundaries, and consequently new members are drawn in from differing backgrounds and social networks.

175 Mike Boulton has formed and led various traditional music groups in Ramsey, including Mooinjey Veggey and Share na Veg. Fenella Bazin advised the original school groups, Ny Fennee and Crosh Vollan, and Cristl Jerry tutored King Chiaullee at St. Ninian's High School in Douglas.

Class and Level of Education

Livingston (1999:77) states that class is a variable in the extent of a participant's involvement in a revival movement, and in agreement with Ronström (1996:10), Blaustein (1993) and others, she has particularly emphasized the involvement of middle class participants. Although sociologists and statisticians have admitted that the classification of social status is an ambiguous area that regularly needs revision, categories of class are still directly equated with occupation and income, which is supposed to imply an individual's level of education, cultural preferences, and their perceptions of themselves and others (Worsley 1977:420).¹⁷⁶ However, class distinctions are not so obvious in the Isle of Man and this is especially apparent when compared to the socio-economic situation in Brazil, where Livingston conducted her study. Academics concerned with the British folk revival of the 1960s have also emphasized the involvement of middle class citizens (cf. Brocken 2000 and MacKinnon 1994), but again, in comparison, the Isle of Man has a much more fluid social structure:

The 'class system' as it is known in the South of England does not exist [in the Isle of Man]. That does not mean that there are not social classes. It rather means that, amongst Manx people, there is an easy and friendly relationship irrespective of wealth or birth which reflects the fact that most Manx people feel in some way related to each other. Immigrants who attempt to live by a socially defined system, and thus hold themselves aloof from the Manx people, are the poorer for it (Cain [undated]).

To investigate Livingston's point in reference to the Manx folk scene, participants in the survey were asked their occupation. Categories were not suggested in the questionnaire, but the individual answers were subsequently organized to correspond with the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2000), a system which was employed by the Isle of Man Census 2001.

The majority (19 out of 64) of current members of the folk scene have what has been labelled a "professional occupation" (SOC 2000). The prominence of these people

176 See the recommendations of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classifications - NS-SEC, which attempted to resolve the inadequacies of the Registrar General's Social Scale.

within the Manx folk scene presents an interesting comparison to the figures taken from the national census of 2001. The Isle of Man census recorded 39,050 residents in full-time employment, but only a small percentage had ‘professional occupations’. In contrast, almost a third of the folk scene consists of people from this category, so it can be surmised that the folk scene has attracted a particular type of individual, who generally has a higher level of education and income than other members of the Manx population. If this is (reluctantly) translated into terms of class, then this section of society conforms with the ‘middle class’ category, and therefore adheres to the theories of Livingston and others.

Although the folk community involves individuals from other categories of employment, the extent of an individual’s participation could also be said to be reflected by their occupation. With further reference to the individual interviews, those with ‘professional occupations’ appear to be the main protagonists in the folk scene, (for instance, the core revivalists, leaders of dance groups and festival organizers), whereas those with other vocations tend to constitute the folk scene following, and have less influence over the direction of the movement. In addition, some of these professional occupations have a direct relationship with the folk scene. Full-time positions can include Manx Gaelic language teachers who are now employed by the Isle of Man Government, Manx Heritage Foundation and Manx National Heritage workers, stonewallers, artists, and lecturers at the Centre for Manx Studies; part-time positions consist of dance and music group leaders, authors, ceili band musicians, and radio presenters on the folk music and Gaelic language programmes; auxiliary roles can include festival committee members and voluntary stewards at events such as Yn Chruinnaght. Other careers that can act on the behalf of the Manx folk community include individuals with positions on outside committees; for example, MHKs or members of the Celtic League.

As discussed in Chapter Three, academic writing on revivalism has recognized the prominent participation of those from educational professions. As evidenced by the survey, a fifth of those currently involved in the Manx folk scene are (or were formerly)

teachers or lecturers. Greg Joughin (24/07/2000) commented on this trait, referring to his dance group, 'Perree Bane':

Seems to attract a lot of schoolteachers for some reason, and I think that's universal... I mean sometimes we've had virtually a whole side of schoolteachers. Strange.

Throughout history, music (and other cultural) revivalism has attracted a significant involvement of teachers and those with other educational occupations. This was also exhibited through the core revivalists of the Manx music and dance revivals in the 1970s, and evidently the movement still appeals to a similar following.

Livingston also mentioned 'level of education' as a variable in each individual's involvement. Over half of the informants (above the applicable age) at Yn Chruinnaght 2002 stated that they had attended university in Britain. However, a considerable amount of those answers were from students who were currently studying and this may reflect their attendance at a particular event, where perhaps a young band were playing at the festival. But by taking into consideration the substantial number of those with 'professional occupations', it can be assumed that the majority of these individuals are educated to degree level or have at least had formal training through higher education.¹⁷⁷

Gender

Through both the survey and individual interviews it is clear that the core revivalists of Manx traditional music were invariably male. While most other examples of musical revivalism have also cited men as the main protagonists, authors seldom comment on this element, and hitherto, gender in revivalism remains an unexplored issue. One explanation for this phenomenon may be the social context of friendships between those

177 The Isle of Man census report 2001 does not comment on levels of higher education amongst the Island's population. However, it is generally known that there are greater opportunities for Manx residents to study than those from other parts of the British Isles. The Isle of Man government will pay educational fees, and, subject to a means test, will also pay maintenance grants.

of the same gender. Psychologists recognize that the interaction between men differs quite considerably to women, and for our purposes, this may explain why ideas are physically put into action when a dominantly male group confer on a subject such as the ‘revival of Manx traditional music’:

There is a well-documented pattern of differences in women’s and men’s activities with friends. Simply put, “talk is the substance of women’s friendship”... whereas men prefer to engage in activities (Fehr 1996:115).¹⁷⁸

Female revivalists of an earlier generation appear to present an incongruity to this argument. However, Sophia Morrison and Mona Douglas worked within a male dominated environment (folkloristics at the turn of the century), and in contrast, these individuals pursued their own solo missions, whereas the more recent revival has been a communal effort instigated by male friends. Initially Bwoie Doal consisted almost entirely of men (with the exception of Cristl Jerry), as did the dance group Bock Yuan Fannee. While it was essentially men that directed both revivals, that predominance appears to have been short-lived: “... the girlfriends had started saying, “well, you know, we want to dance as well”” (Colin Jerry, interviewed 10/03/1999). A by-product of Bock Yuan Fannee was Cliogaree Twoaie (Croakers of the North), a Gaelic choir which formed in the 1980s. Although there were (and are) no restrictions on gender within its membership, the predominance of women in Cliogaree Twoaie may simply reflect aesthetic preferences: “I don’t think any men... were particularly interested in the singing part of it” (Conductor, Clare Kilgallon 19/04/2000). However, apart from these instances, most traditional music and dance groups today involve both men and women.

Ethnicity

The participation of ‘outsiders’ is a common characteristic of revivalist movements (see Livingston 1999, Nusbaum 1993, Ronström 1996 and Blaustein 1993), and in Chapter

178 Fehr quotes from an anecdote that describes a couple of male garage attendants who were bored at work one winter. The author states that whereas a couple of women might have passed the time talking intimately and analyzing their lives, “Mark and Bob are guys and what they did is invent snowplow hockey” (Dave Barry, in Fehr 1996:113).

Three, it was confirmed that almost half of the core revivalists were not born in the Isle of Man. Fiona McArdle (19/05/1999), originally from Scotland, commented on the prevalence of incomers to the Island at this time:

... there were also a lot of the immigrants... who felt the Isle of Man was different and wanted it to be that way, and wanted to join in... And you also had the other reaction that there were a lot of immigrants who didn't want to be part of it at all, and I think there was quite a pulverization in the '70s between these two attitudes, which probably isn't so noticeable now.

To understand the ease of acceptance found by some incomers in a period of nationalist unrest, the root of the Manx folk movement must be contemplated. The music revival, in particular, was predominantly directed by outsiders (English, in particular), although it gave the appearance that it was primarily for the benefit of the Isle of Man and its population. When it came to cultural reinforcement of the nationalist cause, it appeared that there was no resentment between the two nationalities, and many incomers actually joined the Manx Nationalist Party, 'Mec Vannin', as a sign of their devotion to the Island. Kellas (1991:51) labels this approach 'social nationalism' where national identity is formed through social ties and a shared culture: "It is 'inclusive' in the sense that anyone can adopt that culture and join the nation, even if that person is not considered to be a member of the 'ethnic nation'." It seems that an 'adopted' Manx nationality, or at least an empathy towards the nation, counteracted any feelings of racism towards an individual's original nationality:

National identity is about whether we identify with a community, see it as ours, are attached to it and feel bonded to our fellow-members in a way in which we are not bonded to outsiders (Parekh 1999:68).

In fact, many of the Manx 'born and bred' informants have expressed appreciation for the intervention of those incomers. Manx-born Barry Pitts (interviewed 28/12/2000) added that the participation of outsiders was not only prevalent in cultural activities, but also within the local natural history and heritage societies:

... this wasn't only the case in music and dance and that kind of thing... I joined the Conservation Council who were fighting to save various bits of land and stuff like that. Most of the people in that, there were a few Manx people who

were prominent, but an awful lot of them were people that had moved here, only had been here about three to five years maybe.

The entire situation seems rather complex: The hardcore Manx nationalists were not necessarily Manx, and both insiders and outsiders shared a bitterness towards the continual arrival of incomers, (especially towards those who were indifferent to the Island's culture). Brian Stowell (22/12/2000) illustrated this with an anecdote:

... "the man who has arrived on the 11 am boat resents the man who has arrived on the 4 pm boat"! It's dead right, you see. It's sort of, "I've been here longer than you, so I'm more established"...

And all of the cultural and political activists expressed pity and resentment towards the rest of the Manx nation who had sat back and let their traditional values disappear in the first place:

... it's always been the true Manx way to sort of go with the flow... it's the same with the language. The Manx themselves threw the language away. It wasn't really taken off them, they just said, "oh, it's not worth it", and the old saying was, "it'll never earn you a penny, get rid of it"! (Stewart Bennett interviewed 19/03/1999).

To examine whether the substantial participation of 'outsiders' had continued throughout the revival's development, the 2002 survey approached the sensitive issue of ethnicity and nationality with its modern-day members. The participants of the Yn Chruinnaght survey were asked for their nationality, their place of birth and for the number of years that they had lived in the Isle of Man. The results confirmed that a significant amount of incomers or outsiders have continued to become involved in Manx traditional culture, as just over half of its current members were born in the Isle of Man. However, this was fairly equitable with the 2001 census figures on original place of birth, which reported that just 48% of the resident population were born in the Isle of Man (Volume 2, table 10, p. 26), and that 73.4% of the residents who were not born in the Island were from England.¹⁷⁹

179 Unfortunately I did not ask for a participant's country of birth, as the census had. This may have led to different results concerning the question of nationality. Conversely, the census did not ask residents to name their nationality. In my survey, most of the individuals who were not born in

According to the folk scene survey, all of the members born in the Isle of Man stated that they were 'Manx' ('Manks' or 'Manninagh'), although there were two examples of individuals who were born elsewhere and had lived in the Island for over ten years, who also stated that they were Manx. The majority of those who were not born in the Island however, called themselves 'British', whilst a few considered themselves to be English, Scottish, Cornish or Welsh.¹⁸⁰ The use of the term British appears to be a safe, but possibly defensive option when addressing the awkward issue of nationality: It is non-specific enough to avoid committing oneself to a particular country, yet it can also imply a vague relationship to the Isle of Man because it is part of the British Isles. If people are hesitant to admit that they were not born in the Island, then possibly it is due to the confidence that most indigenous Manx people have concerning their ethnicity:

... Manx born residents [are]... more inclined than immigrants to see the Manx identity as a little different from the British, and less inclined to see the two identities as the same (Prentice 1990:81).

The discomfort of this issue was also displayed by the fact that almost a quarter of the participants chose not to answer the question on nationality at all, as the following question on place of birth revealed that half of the 'no responses' came from people who were not born in the Isle of Man. As Nixon (1983:86) found when he visited the Island, "few non-Manx nationalist supporters will admit their United Kingdom ties". However, the remaining blank answers were from those who had already admitted to having been born in the Island, so no solid conclusions can be drawn about why those individuals chose to ignore the question. It could be speculated that some informants either found the issue of no importance, were perhaps undecided of their nationality, found the issue raised by the question too ambiguous, or had simply forgotten to answer the question. Roosens (1989:16) comments on the relationship between nationality and identity:

the Island stated that they were 'British', rather than English, etc. A few of these people had lived in the Isle of Man for over forty years.

180 It is noticeable that there were no Irish participants in this survey. Residents from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland together only constitute 4.5% of the Island's population (Census 2001), but in general, they possess their own social community and culture in the Island.

... individuals may, for their entire lives or very long periods, assign only limited value to, or may ignore altogether, what would theoretically be their ethnic allegiance, and their social environment can support them in this... one even encounters those who refuse to do so on principle because they see... [it] as a petty fuss... [Although] The fact is that many people do identify themselves in terms of ethnic identity.

Like Anderson (1984), Gellner (1983:7) regards nationality and the communal construction of a nation as an imagined concept which is founded upon individual identities and the perception of others:

1. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.
2. Two men are of the same nation if and only if they *recognize* each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, *nations maketh man*; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. A mere category of persons (say, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language, for example) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members.

On a macro-level, Gellner's concept can be applied to the common perceptions of belonging to the entire Manx nation, but on a micro-level it can be further applied to the Manx folk community within that nation, which promotes an alternative and essentially different vision of the Manx identity. It is still a minority within the Island's population that see traditional culture as the symbol of their national identity, and as Prentice's survey (1990:80) demonstrated; "many Islanders show a general lack of awareness of the Island's distinctive cultural traditions". On the whole, Manx-born citizens believe themselves to be very secure with their identity, although "the introduction of so many 'strangers' has tended to dilute the very powerful sense of community that most Manx people have..." (Cain [undated]), and it may be an awareness of this that prevents incomers from claiming a Manx identity: "... it should not be assumed that all immigrants are unaware of the effect they have collectively caused to the character of

the Island” (Prentice 1990:78). Belonging to the Manx folk scene does not directly bind an individual to the rest of the Manx nation, as some individuals may have expected, and this may explain why some of those surveyed found the issue of nationality difficult to define. While newcomers may be treated with respect by Manx-born residents, the size and geographical isolation of the Island means that there is definitely an awareness of who is local, and who is not. Miller (1993) found that;

My own fieldwork among elderly members of the Island’s farming and fishing communities and their families point to a very strong notion of who is a native and who is a stranger (it is no less different with the younger Manx).

Although the questionnaire did not raise the issue, members of the Manx folk scene tend to be predominantly white, but by considering the lack of racial diversity in the population of the Isle of Man, no conclusions can be made over whether the folk community has racial boundaries to its membership or not. A web-site introducing newcomers to the Isle of Man explains that “there is no legislation making religious, racial or sexual discrimination illegal. However, in practice, religious and racial discrimination is unknown” (Cain [undated]). But because there is little racial or ethnic diversity in the Island and consequently in the folk scene, potential issues of discrimination have not been broached, and therefore the boundaries of its membership are perceived as fluid. Although similarities between individuals have emerged from these results, the folk scene gives the impression that anyone was, and is, welcome to join, regardless of age, gender, class or nationality.

1.2 Individual Motivations

People have joined the Manx folk scene for various personal motives, and the 2002 survey aimed to identify the most common elements. Because of the sensitivity of the whole issue, I had expected members to be rather vague when asked; “what was your prime reason/s for joining or supporting the Manx folk scene?”, so suggested answers were supplied. The behaviour of a participant can often contradict their conscious reflection of topics such as this, and unconscious motivations may not always manifest themselves through an informal survey. Furthermore, over thirty years, previous

objectives may have lost their significance for some of the informants. The following choices were provided, of which most people chose more than one answer: For the social aspect; for political reasons; a search for a Manx identity; interested in general folk music; to revive Manx traditions; to contribute to the welfare of Manx culture; and for academic reasons.

Manx Traditional Culture as a Lifestyle

While individuals may have had differing motivations for choosing folk culture as their focus, it has to be assumed that everyone that continues to support the scene does so for the same reason; to belong: “Beyond the universal law of territoriality is a very human need of belonging to a distinct community or region, and of imbuing that community or region with symbolic power” (Steiner 1994:241). This is reflected in the significant number of people that joined for the social life, although most of the same people also chose another answer. MacKinnon (1994:52-3) found the same element in his survey of the British folk scene:

The social scene which evolves around folk music comprises a large element of the appeal, and this social entry facilitates entry into a subsequent role as a performer. The transition to folk music was not just musical but also social...

Due to the context of Yn Chruinnaght questionnaire, however, it is indeterminable whether the social aspect was a result of an individual joining the movement or an initial motivation, although individual interviewees were a little more precise. For example, Peter Cubberley (interviewed 29/07/1999) claimed that he did not have an ulterior motive for joining, but merely enjoyed the social element of the Manx folk scene:

... those early days... Bit heavy, political... I'm just doing it 'cause I like the music and I like drinking. I like the social parties sort of things and you go back to someone's house after, and it's just fabulous... that's how I got into Manx language as well, because there was a big revival in the language at the same time. These people were speaking it, like [David] Fisher, Phil Kelly, Colin Jerry and all these people. Bob Carswell. We were all speaking Manx. I learnt it just so I could join in. I didn't learn it out of some patriotic thing, “oh, it's

Manx, I must learn it"... It's an excuse to have a social, rather than playing pool or playing the jukebox or whatever, we played music and that was it.

Greg Joughin (interviewed 24/07/2000) agreed that not all of the members joined the scene for covert reasons. While referring to his dance team, Perree Bane, he suggested that many of their new recruits treated the dance lessons as a new hobby or pastime.¹⁸¹

... we've always a new intake around September when people are looking for some sort of night-class or whatever to go to, and there's a sort of keep-fit element in it. There's music, there's dancing, there's a social side of it, and that social side of it is quite wide really.

Ronström (1996:16) noted that; "Many seem to participate in revival movements without holding the revival itself to be particularly important, interesting or worthwhile" and this seems to apply to some of the Manx folk scene members. While some members may become involved primarily for the social aspect, or to become part of a community, they do not necessarily have an interest in the 'Manx' element of their pastime.

Many of the people involved in the survey stated that they joined the Manx folk scene because they were already interested in general folk music. This response came mainly from incomers, as displayed by one informant who wrote; "when we came over, Mum and Dad searched out the music 'cos they were involved in folk clubs across".¹⁸² Most of these answers came from people who had been involved in the British folk revival during the 1960s and '70s, and had regularly attended folk-clubs and concerts before settling in the Island.

But did newcomers to the scene merely enjoy the 'folk idiom', or did they identify with the associations of the music? Revivals like the Manx folk movement were prevalent in Britain during this time, and for many, playing or listening to folk music symbolized more than just an aesthetic taste in a particular genre of music. For some, it represented

181 In similar circumstances, Bröcker 1996:32 notes that revived folk dance in Germany has been "absorbed effortlessly into the domain of organized leisure" alongside adult education classes in handicrafts, cookery and porcelain painting.

182 "Across" is a Manx colloquial term for the United Kingdom. i.e. across the water.

a kind of lifestyle and a state of mind, with its connotations of the working class, the retrieval of a lost heritage, and an alternative to an overwhelming commercial culture. As a social experience, the symbolism of a particular genre of music can act as a medium of communication between people (Blacking 1995:35), and for many newcomers, the Manx folk scene offered the opportunity to mix with like-minded people: "... music is socially meaningful not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognise identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them" (Stokes 1994:5).

While listening to folk music could be interpreted to be simply a fashion of the time, the prospect of participating in a tradition 'indigenous' to the Isle of Man inspired many folk enthusiasts to become engrossed in the community. Peter Cubberley (29/07/1999) explained how he progressed from an interest in general folk music to the Manx folk scene:

And it's just like somebody pressed a button... "that's me, that's me! This is me, this is what I want to be"... one Saturday, by chance, we were gonna go to some folk do in Laxey, probably 'Pocheen'... for some reason we didn't go. Paul Lebiezinsky was with us. And he said, "well, I hear that there's... something on at Peel", we don't really know what it is, so we'll go. So we went to Peel, went to the Central, and it's like Colin Jerry and these guys, and... they were playing Manx stuff. Mike Boulton, Phil Kelly and Bob Carswell, big beards on them and all this! Probably dead rough actually, but that was it. When I heard that, it was like I'd come home, how I really felt. I said, "what's this? It's fabulous". "It's Manx music"... I was took. That was it. So I used to go every week... I would go and it was just... [I] fell in love with the whole social thing.

A considerable number of those surveyed saw their participation in the revival as being beneficial to the Island's future, and as indicated by this response, joining the folk scene was apparently a very conscious act for some. Nusbaum (1993:211) noted that in the Bluegrass and American folk revivals, "Participants idealistically believe themselves to be performing an important cultural service, while enjoying themselves." Through the returned questionnaires and the detailed interviews, it is apparent that the majority of individuals experience intense pride and patriotism by being involved in the revival and continual practices of Manx traditional culture.

The smallest response in the survey came from those who claimed that they joined the folk scene for academic reasons. Only two individuals chose this answer, which included a lecturer who had joined in the 1970s, and a student at the Centre for Manx Studies who joined in the 1990s and stated that her interest "... began as an academic study - through this I realized how important it is". However, this option in the survey does not represent the whole story. The prospect of reviving a dying tradition obviously offered intellectual stimulation for some of its key members, regardless of whether their interest was part of a study affiliated with an academic institution. As Feintuch (1993:183-93) declared in his study of revival movements, an essential element of its development is "the significant involvement of scholars and intellectuals, who develop and shape the revival". This applies to the Manx folk scene to a certain degree, but it would seem that this revival has produced scholars, rather than attracted them. Quite a few of those involved have published related articles in academic journals and magazines, and have given lectures at university conferences. Furthermore, since the establishment of the Centre for Manx Studies (University of Liverpool) based in Douglas, Isle of Man in 1997, a few of the core revivalists have chosen to study as mature students for the Masters in Manx Studies and Ph.D. in related topics.¹⁸³ Younger members of the Manx folk scene or 'revivalist apprentices' (see Rosenberg 1993:196), such as Cinzia Curtis and Katie Lawrence (University of Limerick), have also chosen to further their interest in traditional music through postgraduate study, a development that concurs with other examples of musical revivalism: "[The revivalist] community produces the young people who choose to become involved in the academic study of folk music" (*ibid*:19).

As discussed in Chapter Three, political action was a definite element of the Manx traditional music revival. While it was perhaps not a prime motivation amongst all of the musicians, as displayed by a small response in the survey, nationalism certainly lay within its background: "Manx nationalism is essentially equated on the Island with

183 Core revivalists George Broderick, Brian Stowell and Ross Jellicoe were all academics during the inception of the revival, although none of them were actually musicologists. Since (and because of) their involvement in the revival, David Speers and Bob Carswell have both completed the MA course with dissertations about Manx traditional music.

renewal nationalism, and in particular with an ideology of heritage recovery or rediscovery” (Prentice 1990:86). However, Baumann (1996:72) explains that although politics can be a major component in music revivals, the musicians themselves are often indifferent or unaware of its presence:

Musical-political behaviour becomes manifest on at least two levels: on the one hand for a very conscious purpose... and on the other hand on the rather unconscious level of musicians, who are used for higher purposes in such a way that they may not even realize it.

The context of the 2002 survey is most likely to reflect contemporary thought, and although the question asked for their initial motivations for joining, perhaps the ability to recall feelings after twenty or thirty years was not an easy task for some of the long-term members. From Barry Pitts’s own standpoint (interviewed 28/12/2000) he felt that the political angle was inseparable from the cultural movement during the 1970s, and that those with nationalist leanings saw the revivals of Manx traditional music and dance as nationalist statements: “We attached ourselves to them [the folk scene] ... somewhere to go at the end of the week where we knew we’d be safe!... Seemed to meet like-minded people.” In a period of uncertainty caused by the continuous immigration to the Island during the 1960s and ‘70s, the Manx Gaelic language was the ideal symbol for members with political motives, and as a result of their relationship, music and dance also served as an outlet for nationalist sentiment:

... you could join Mec Vannin to show... some political voice that would express themselves against what was happening. Or... you could join a dance group or something like that. Some way of expressing... what you felt about what was going on (Greg Joughin 24/07/2000).

However, while politics may have partly inspired the Manx cultural revival thirty years ago, it is evidently less important to contemporary members. As a nation, the Isle of Man already has an enviable political status as a Crown dependency with a devolved parliament, and it cannot realistically claim to be an oppressed nation, like some of the countries that have been associated with cultural revivalism (cf. Livingston 1999, Mattern 1998, Slobin 1983, and Smith 1981).

There has been no history of successive uprisings or resistance, apart from that led by Illiam Dhone [in the 17th century]. No dramatic and turbulent periods of history, such as those experienced by the Irish, Welsh or Scots, have marked a steady rise of nationalist fervour (*Carn* 1999:20).

Although most Manx nationalists desire full independence for the Island, the broader threat for most members of the cultural movement is the dilution of the Manx identity: “In relatively secure times, movements of self-assertion by the less powerful will include a combination of tactics, affirmations and negotiations around separation and interaction... Identity can be a basis for connection as well as disconnection” (Clifford 2000). Therefore, cultural symbolism has been employed to establish boundaries which both maintain the desired identity and exclude outsiders, measures that simultaneously harbours the nationalist cause. Because the cultural movement also involves many apolitical members, the nationalist associations are often downplayed, yet they inarguably remain on the periphery of the current Manx folk scene.

The Construction of a Manx Identity

Manx language, music and dance were all used as political weaponry against the onslaught of incomers to the Island, enticed by the New Resident Policy in the late 1960s and early '70s, because as indigenous symbols they displayed difference and a perceived Manx identity. The prospect of this new 'Manx identity' built around traditional values lured individuals from several standpoints; those who needed to use the culture as a political statement; newcomers to the Island who were tracing their roots, or newcomers who believed that they needed to adopt indigenous traits to legitimize their reasons for settling and to belong within their new home; and the Manx members who felt that their national identity was incomplete without traditional and native values. Hazel Hannan MHK (23/12/2002) noted that the use of Manx language and cultural symbols “... has given some people, even newcomers, an identity. Something to grasp and feel part of the Isle of Man”. However, only a minority of those who took part in the 2002 survey claimed that they had joined the folk scene in an attempt to find their Manx identity, although I would speculate that in reality, the issue of the Manx identity is important to the majority of the members because of the

national significance of the folk movement. But issues of identity, and therefore the associations of the term nationality, are extremely personal, and an individual may not always admit to or be conscious of underlying motivations.

In the survey, individuals were asked whether they had Manx ancestry. This was compared to their place of birth to see whether genealogical links to the Island were a deciding factor for some participants. Of all of those involved in the survey, over half stated that they did have Manx ancestry, and when compared to their nationality and place of birth, it emerged that a third of those who were not born on the Island had Manx roots. This indicates that while there was an element of ‘tracing their roots’ among some members as suggested by some of the interviewees (see Chapter Three), there were still those who had moved to the Island without any previous connection to the country, yet devoted themselves to its traditional culture.

Members that possessed Manx ancestry often joined the community to retrieve some lost link to their past. These individuals usually moved to the Island for the first time having perhaps Manx parentage, or in some cases, were actually born in the Island, but had moved away during childhood. When Nixon (1983:86) studied the nationalist situation during the 1980s, he found that “most [non-Manx supporters] in fact will claim some cultural or family connection to the Manx”. An ancestral link to the Island can therefore be used to legitimate or justify a member’s residence in the Island, and especially their involvement in Manx traditional culture or politics. Individuals from this approach correspond to what has been labelled the ‘third generation return’: “The first generation lives in the place, the second leaves, the third has a hankering to return (and perhaps does so)” (Macdonald 1997:xvii). Due to its size and its isolated location, the Isle of Man retains a mystical aura for many people who have links to it, and individuals who move back often have nostalgic and unrealistic feelings of “homesickness” (Baumann 1996:72), based upon ‘outside’ perceptions that ordinary Manx residents do not experience.

These outside perceptions also apply to the widespread phenomenon of Celtic consciousness, which through appropriate marketing and selective imagery have given

the Isle of Man a Celtic status that many newcomers yearn to be part of: A romantic image and perceived way of life that appeals to all those who feel the strains of modern civilization (see Davies 1999:81 and Berresford Ellis 1985:196). This perception has been perpetuated by outsiders through the internet, world music recordings and publications (see Taylor 1997), although this image has also been exploited by local authorities in the Isle of Man through the tourist industry.¹⁸⁴ Inevitably, the broad connotations of the 'Celtic identity' can promise an ancestral link in which many people can legitimately stake a claim:

A curious part of contemporary 'Celticity' lies in the fact that it often aims to recruit English people as much as anyone else. The English, who might otherwise be considered the butts of the phenomenon, are very definitely included... it only requires a simple switch of attitude to stress the non-English as opposed to the English elements in their make-up... Genealogy, therefore, occupies a central position (Davies 1999:84).

This is further transmitted through the perception of Celtic music. Although the historical aspect of the concept evokes boundaries of place and identity, the content of Celtic music remains diverse and relatively undefined. Therefore, the music appears accessible to all (see Stokes 1994:6). For newcomers to the Island, participation within the folk community accelerates their perceptions of belonging to a place. They develop strong feelings for the Isle of Man and want to preserve its attributes: "They come in and they just see what people who have lived here, just don't appreciate at all" (Brian Stowell, interviewed 22/12/2000). For these people, belonging to the Manx folk community creates feelings of pride towards the nation and its people:

I'd rather say I was Manx rather than I was from Essex... I've got more out of living in the Isle of Man than I would've done if I'd stayed in England. I don't feel threatened because I'm English or anything... quite a lot of the dancers are English (Adam Rhodes, interviewed 06/12/2000).

Then there are those who were born and bred in the Island, yet feel that part of their identity is missing. They resent their forefathers for not informing them of their

184 Llewellyn (1999) comments on the emphasis of Celtic history at the Welsh museum, 'Celtica' through the "heavily ideological slant of the displays".

heritage and for misplacing their Manx identity, and rebelliously seize the revived cultural traits and language. Many have blamed the introduction of the English language within schools in the 19th century, believing the Manx nation conceded too easily to the demands of a more dominant power:

We just were not aware that we were different from anywhere in England. And it wasn't until I left school and I understood there was a nationalist political party here, and I'd hear little influences of Manx language here and there. I wasn't really even aware that the place names in the Isle of Man were different from anywhere. It's strange, but we were never made to feel Manx, or even made to feel separate (David Fisher 23/12/1998).

Members of the Manx folk scene have joined for a variety of different personal reasons, but their communal participation and their desire to belong has produced a distinctive community which expresses itself through symbolism: "... ethnicity can only be manifested by means of cultural forms that give the impression that they are inherent to a particular category or a group of individuals" (Roosens 1989:19). Cultural symbolism has also manifested itself through avenues other than those discussed so far. For instance, members have pursued occupations based on traditional values, such as stonewalling and traditional crafts, and the use of Manx Gaelic forenames for 'revivalist children' has become prolific.¹⁸⁵

2. "Spreading the Word" - Network Formation

This section explores the discovery and the 'patterns of entry' (see MacKinnon 1994:51) that individuals have taken to join the Manx folk scene. Livingston (1999:72) states that revivals "... often bring together people whose paths might never have crossed outside of the revival", and as the previous sections have proved, the Manx folk scene consists of people with different histories, nationalities and backgrounds, yet a collective identity is formed when they come together:

185 Manx Gaelic names that have been brought back into fashion include Aalish, Breeshey, Kirree, Jole, Juan and Jamys. While the use of Manx forenames is not exclusive to the folk scene, the increased awareness amongst the general public is probably due to the revival of the Manx language since the 1960s, and certainly to the widespread Celtic consciousness (see Davies 1999:81).

... although “the people” are immensely diverse in many ways, it cannot be denied that the trends towards diversity are accompanied by processes that tend to bring people together to create broad collectives - especially in times of significant social movements (Josu Amezaga 1994:8, referring to Basque culture, in Llewellyn 1999).

This section will also determine whether suitable individuals were actually ‘selected’ and ‘converted’ by the core revivalists, as Livingston (1999:70) has suggested, or whether members have consciously chosen to join. The movement was apparently accessible to anyone as there were no official forms of recruitment or qualifications needed to join, but an individual would either have to be determined enough to seek it out independently, would be already involved in related circles, (such as the language movement), already played a similar type of music, or would be introduced by friends or family who had already discovered it for themselves.

2.1 *Friends and Family*

Most of those surveyed stated that they were introduced to the folk scene by friends (30 out of 64); the majority of this section having joined in the 1970s at the beginning of the revival. With further reference to the interviews, it would seem that most of the core revivalists in the 1970s were already friends or acquaintances, which indicates that the essence of the Manx folk community already existed: “[It was a] fairly close knit... musical community at the time” (John Kaneen, interviewed 18/03/1999). Some individuals had already met through an interest in general folk music, others had been friends long before the revival, some attended Manx language classes together or had met through Mec Vannin: “I got involved through politics... and the people I came into contact with and became friends” (Hazel Hannan, politician and former Manx dancer, 23/12/2002). It is only natural that over time, other friends, ‘friends of friends’ and relatives began to join the Manx folk scene, which has inevitably led to new friendships; a form of introduction that psychologists term “communication network proximity” (Parks and Eggert 1991, in Fehr 1996:49).

Nevertheless, the folk movement does not have such a magnetic appeal that everyone that has come into contact with it has continued to attend. Unlike communities founded upon kinship or locality, social movements and cultural revivals are differentiated “by their fluidity of membership, their impermanence and their ideological focus” (Winthrop 1991, in Livingston 1999:72). Similarly, some members of the Manx folk scene have remained loyal throughout its lifespan, while others have lost interest and have detached themselves from its community.¹⁸⁶ As Greg Joughin illustrated (24/07/2000), the fluidity of its boundaries has allowed members to come and go at their own will: “... some of them have stayed and inter-married with various members of the group and divorced, been and gone...”

As with any other social unit such as this, the initial ideological focus of its members often makes way for personal relationships. Dating between members of the Manx folk community is very common, and there are many instances of members marrying within the folk scene. Another element that inevitably determines the dissemination of the movement is of those who ‘marry into the community’; i.e. members marry (or date) outside of the folk scene, and bring their partner into the circle as a participant. Personal relationships within the movement can also cause an individual to sever ties with the folk community, where an argument between friends, for instance, can cause a member to cease contact with the entire social group. However, this often depends on the level of commitment that each individual gives to the main objective of the movement:

... the extent to which group characteristics and group processes affect the social self may differ from one group member to the next, depending on the extent to which they consider themselves in terms of that particular group membership (Ellemers et al. 2002).

A small number of those who joined in the 1970s stated that they were introduced by family, although most of these informants were not specific about which member. This

186 Some informants have cited names of individuals that regularly participated in the past, but are no longer supportive of the Manx folk scene. This has often been due to personal matters, such as arguments between individuals, or members moving away from the Island.

answer was meant to denote that the interest had been passed down by their parents, but it is very possible that most of those who ticked the 'family' box meant that they were introduced by brothers and sisters in the 1970s.¹⁸⁷ There are still a few instances of siblings following the movement since its early days, including brothers Mike and Paul Boulton, but occasionally there were entire 'clans' involved, such as sisters Margaid and Catreney Craine who had become involved along with their parents.

Although they were not involved in the same movement, Stewart Bennett (who joined in the 1970s) spoke about his father as an inspiration:

... my father, though he was born in England, considered himself as an Englishman, he had got to Caesar Cashen's Manx classes in... the 1930s... he used to talk about Manx, and he used to talk about the meaning of Slieu Whallian and things like that, you know, parts of the place names... it just sort of got me interested (Stewart Bennett 19/03/1999).

This type of introduction appears to have been fairly unusual within the movements' early members. While quite a few informants recalled their parents using Manx sayings...

Generally, I had no previous experience of Manx traditional culture, except that I lived in country areas... my parents used Manx words and expressions without really knowing that they were using Manx words (Hazel Hannan 23/12/2002).

... or had mentioned hearing some traditional songs at home, the revival of the 1970s seems to have been quite independent of any previous generation, and began as a predominantly youthful movement. The involvement of whole families is a more recent development, and often derives from original or early members of the revival bringing their own children up within the folk community. However, a compulsory membership is not implied, as not all 'revivalist offspring' remain within the group.

187 According to interviews and a personal knowledge of the folk scene. For instance, David Fisher (interviewed 23/12/1998) stated that he was introduced by his uncle, Barry Pitts (interviewed 28/12/2000) who is of a similar age.

Over time, the folk community has become more accessible to the general public. Originally focused in Peel, “the Celtic centre of the Island”,¹⁸⁸ the traditional music scene has dispersed to other areas of the Island, although activities tend to be based in the smaller towns and rural areas, rather than urban centres. As Brian Stowell (22/12/2000) remarked, there is a “great shortage of any Manx activity in Douglas [the capital of the Isle of Man]” even though many of the community members actually reside there.¹⁸⁹

Although the folk scene did not have any formal boundaries to its membership, it was not publicized either, and in its early stages was perceived to be an exclusive community by outsiders:

I think there’s something been over the years, people thought [that] people who spoke Manx and played traditional Manx music, they were cliquish and this was this sort of them and us attitude (David Fisher interviewed 23/12/1998).

However, some of the braver individuals have joined the Manx folk scene of their own accord, having had no previous contact with its members. Teacher and singer with Cliogaree Twoaie, Kate Pitts (part of husband Barry Pitts’ interview 28/12/2000) chanced upon Bock Yuan Fannee performing in Ramsey shortly after moving to the Island from Glasgow in the 1970s, and felt inspired enough to join herself:

I think the first time I got into anything to do with the Isle of Man and the traditional scene was dancing in the street. I saw some people dancing in the street and I asked them what it was all about... I started to go to Manx lessons and stuff like that in the Queen’s Hotel [Ramsey]. But it... all came from seeing somebody in the streets... I started to dance with them [Bock Yuan Fannee] as well... the choir [Cliogaree Twoaie] came a few years later... Other people got involved, they don’t sort of seek it out, it just kind of happens... it hits you in the face, and... it was like that with me, ‘cause I was new to the Island and I wanted to know what it was all about. And seeing that in the street just... caught my imagination, kind of thing.

188 Letter from early 20th century revivalist Sophia Morrison to folklorist Charles Roeder, quoted in Maddrell 2002b.

189 A quarter of the participants in the Yn Chruinnaght survey live in the Island’s capital, Douglas and in the adjacent suburban village of Onchan. The Isle of Man Census 2001 reported that 43% of Manx Gaelic speakers live in Douglas and Onchan.

2.2 Manx Traditional Culture and Education

Most of the people who had joined ‘of their own accord’ had discovered Manx traditional culture in more recent times, when activities such as organized workshops, advertised dance classes and Manx Gaelic lessons were well established and available to the general public. Livingston (1999:73) claims that there is almost always a “pedagogical” element behind the ideology of a revival, although she adds that “how well the community is educated about the tradition... varies according to the individual dispositions of participants”. In accord with this, the inclusion of Manx music, dance and language as extra-curricular activities within the Island’s schools has always been determined by individual teachers. Once the revival was well under way, some of the revivalists brought their knowledge into the schools. Primary school teacher and revivalist, Mike Boulton, was particularly influential in the north of the Island from the 1980s onwards. By devoting his spare time to lunch-time and after-school activities, he introduced a younger generation to the folk scene. Sue Ling Jaques joined his folk group, ‘Moonjey Veggey’ (Little People; the Manx expression for fairies) as a pupil at Albert Road Primary School:

I really can’t tell you how much he’s done, that man!... things like, you know, writing music down so it’s accessible to children who don’t write music... giving them the whistle, or giving them the instrument. I mean, he bought a lot of the instruments himself to start off with. Giving up his playtimes, lunchtimes etc. Having ten thousand children in his room, all whistles blowing! Can you imagine how awful that sounded? Yeah, it really is down to him and his dedication... I think if Ramsey didn’t have that, and if we didn’t have Mike, it would never have grown to the stage it has... (Interview with Sue Ling Jaques 19/05/1999).

There are also examples of children who were brought up or ‘born’ within the folk scene actually taking Manx traditional music and dance into the schools themselves:

A lot of the children in the secondary schools who’ve gone on to form groups like ‘Perree T’ have actually come into their music from outside the school system... the ones, shall we say, with stronger personalities, have brought it into the school system, rather than the other way round... Ramsey Grammar School has had a music group [Paitchyn Vannin] for a long number of years now, but again, although the original one was started by Fenella Bazin when she taught at the Grammar School in the ‘80s, its revived form, if you like, came from the

pupils themselves and ex-pupils (Fiona McArdle interviewed 19/05/1999).

Long-running school folk groups such as 'Paitchyn Vannin' (Children of Mann) and 'Share na Veg' (Better Than Nothing) continue to evolve, often without the aid of teachers, rejuvenating its members as each school year passes, and drawing previously unacquainted members into the folk scene.

The use of schools as a method of dissemination has depended on generational stages. Manx traditional music has only been encouraged in the national curriculum in recent times, yet it still depends on the enthusiasm of individual personalities. As the former Minister for Education, Hazel Hannan MHK (Member of the House of Keys) was instrumental in bringing several cultural matters into the Manx education system:

Yes I did have an influence on the inclusion of Manx traditional music in the school curriculum although I did have tremendous arguments with Alan Pickard who was not at all supportive of Manx music. However, Bernard Osborne was and he followed on from Alan Pickard as Music Co-ordinator. I worked with [former Manx Language Officer] Brian Stowell when I was Minister for Education and the GCSE course in Manx was one of the developments during that time. I saw it as a very strong message that a "GCSE" Manx examination was set up, but... nothing would have happened without the input and the vision of Brian Stowell. His work cannot be estimated, it was/is so important.

The presence of Mona Douglas is apparent throughout the revival, although she had little influence over the direction of the music itself. She provided source material, established Yn Chruinnaght and encouraged the young revivalists in all aspects. However, according to the survey, her role as a promoter seems to have lessened by the 1970s. Her Manx youth club, Aeglagh Vannin was still running at this stage, but she did not appear to be recruiting members for the new revivalist community:

... you're talking about a period when you still had folk who'd grown up in that period of Mona Douglas, if you like. You had people like Clare [Kilgallon], Anne Kissack and so on. They'd grown up, very much under the sort of wing of Mona Douglas. Those people were around and there's no doubt that when the point came... they provided a valuable contribution. I didn't see a great deal of evidence of their presence in the early days at all (Bernard Moffatt, interviewed 28/07/1999).

According to the survey results, very few of the early folk scene members had learnt about Manx culture at school, although there were a few who had been taught dancing by Leighton Stowell (see Chapter Two) and consequently joined the revivalist teams: “Carol [Hayes] joined quite early on. She’d done dancing many, many years ago with Leighton Stowell at school” (Greg Joughin, interviewed 24/07/2000). It would seem that, apart from her work with Aeglagh Vannin up till the late 1970s, Mona Douglas focused on promoting Manx folk culture to schoolchildren during the earlier and middle part of the twentieth century, and therefore her educational work did not influence this revivalist generation in a major way.

Livingston (1999:70) claims that once a shared ideology is established, core revivalists “communicate their vision to, and organize, a select group of converts”. I propose that instead of the core revivalists of the Manx revival selecting others to join, subsequent members have sought out the folk scene for their own reasons. The social networks that have brought people together in the Manx folk community have depended on circumstance and the development of the revival. Figures taken from the survey indicate that there has been variations over the last thirty years, which have gradually brought traditional music, dance and the Gaelic language to a wider audience. The core revivalists in all elements of the cultural revival in the 1970s joined through friends and similar interests, whereas the majority of participants who joined in the 1980s stated that they had joined the folk scene as children.¹⁹⁰ The introduction of traditional music and dance into schools was still in its infancy at this stage, so this indicates that most of these individuals were introduced via their parents, and in some cases, were probably ‘first-generation Manx’. The 1990s shifts back to a similar story as the 1970s, as according to the survey, over half of these participants were not born on the Island. However, the most dominant generation of those who joined in the 1990s was again within school age, which complies with the more prominent inclusion of Manx culture within the Island’s schools. And this presents another angle to the scene during the

190 I would count myself among this group. My parents (one Manx, one English) followed the Manx folk scene from the 1970s, and my sister and I were taken to events from an early age. We both continued to join dance groups and take part in festivals and competitions.

'90s: Non-Manx children who had been brought to the Island by their parents seemed to have joined of their own accord via school, regardless of whether or not their parents participated.

3. Creating a Sense of Community

So far, this chapter has described the 'identities' of people that have been attracted to the Manx folk scene over the past thirty years, with an investigation of why and how these individuals joined the movement. But what gives these people a sense of community and belonging within the movement? In relation to the fifth ingredient of her revival model, "revivalist activities", Livingston (1999:69) offers some theories on how these groups physically and mentally create a sense of community:

These events are crucial to the revivalist community because revivalists meet each other face-to-face to share repertoire and playing techniques, to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of artists within the tradition, to actively learn and experience the revivalist ethos and aesthetic code at work, and to socialise among other "insiders" (Livingston 1999:73).

This section will look at the ideological and physical factors that have given the Manx folk movement a purpose and direction, with an overview of the more important social and political occurrences that have led to the consciousness of a community spirit.¹⁹¹ The Manx folk community will be also examined from the perspective of the wider Manx population, to determine whether the revived symbolism and ideology is representative of the contemporary 'Manx identity'.

3.1 *Revivalist Activities - Social*

In the early days of the revival people were prepared to travel all over the Island to mix with like-minded people. The music scene, largely based in Peel at the Bwoie Doal

191 More detailed references to these 'revivalist activities' will be discussed in the next chapter, because of their relevance in illustrating the standardization and development of ideology in Manx folk music.

sessions during the 1970s,¹⁹² was just one part of the social schedule of nationalists, dancers, musicians and Gaelic speakers:

Every night of the week, nationalists gathered for entertainment, solidarity and education at some of these informal events. Some of the best attended were the Saturday music session in Peel, the Sunday dance practice in Ramsey, the Wednesday language lessons in Ramsey, the Thursday language lessons in Douglas and the Friday music session in Sulby Glen... Other events filled up the rest of the week... People from all parts of the Island would attend these events on a regular basis (Nixon 1983:75).

As found elsewhere, informal folk music in the Island has long been associated with socializing and drinking alcohol. While the Bwoie Doal session has continued to exist in Peel, the levels of attendance dropped dramatically with the tightening-up of drink-driving laws in the 1980s, an element that inevitably affected the interaction of the community members. Quite a few of the informants commented on this change of attitude towards attending the Bwoie Doal sessions:

... you had a nucleus of people there. People who just went to dancing, and they... go just to hear the tunes, you know? People who spoke Manx. It was a Manx speaking night as well as a music night. And 'Oieghyn Gaelgagh' [Manx speaking night] as well... Manx speaking nights organized by the Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh [Manx Language Society] once a month. We went all round the Island to different venues, but of course you can't do it now, because you'd be picked up after your second pint!... So, that's really... put the 'drogh' [misfortune] on the Oieghyn Gaelgagh...

Another admitted that the enforcement of drink-driving laws discouraged him from making the journey to Peel from his hometown:

In those days, I used to drive around you know, and drink. So, I didn't mind going to Peel... I've stopped going to places where I have to drive to, you know. I used to be able to drive anywhere, you see, and drink. But now, you can't.

This may have been a shame for the Bwoie Doal session (and a triumph for road safety in the Island), but these restrictions consequently provided the impetus for the

192 Primarily, the Bwoie Doal sessions were based at the Central Hotel, and from 1989, the Whitehouse Inn, Peel.

launching of new and more localized sessions and meeting places. Usually based in pubs, these informal music sessions have come and gone in popularity over the years.¹⁹³ Almost all of those surveyed stated that they had attended a music session in the Island, either as a musician or as an observer, which reaffirms that the communal context of Manx traditional music is still an important part of the revivalist ideology:

Sessions in the folk scene do not merely create different sounds from, say, orchestras but also express a difference of socio-musical ideology... The expression of individuality in ensemble is to be understood as a statement of the autonomy of cultural production, of socio-musical values which in different ways celebrate individuality in community (MacKinnon 1994:136).

While some members were still prepared to support the original session in Peel, the 'localization' of the scene has resulted in various sub-divisions of the folk community, concurring with Livingston's observation that "although revivals tend to originate in a specific locale, they quickly spread outward..." (1999:72-3). This has also allowed the membership to expand to a significant extent, meaning that individuals who were not aware of the Bwoie Doal session may have come across music-making in their local pub, or dancing through a local centre [Appendices 19-23]. For instance;

Perree Bane was... developed out of Bock Yuan Fannee. It was a few of them, mostly around the St. John's area who formed a separate group. It wasn't any kind of break-away group, it was... for their social convenience, and as they drew more members to them, it was worth them setting up separately (Colin Jerry, interviewed 10/03/1999).

Despite these geographically determined offshoots within the movement, organized get-togethers and festivals have retained the sense of unity within the Manx folk community. The annual and week-long 'Yn Chruinnaght' in Ramsey is the most eagerly

193 The following venues have been (or in some cases, still are) associated with the folk scene over the past thirty years, several of which catered for general folk music, folk singing and visiting bands:

North: The Plough, The Antrim, The Iron Pier, The Mitre, The Swan, The Prince of Wales, The Viking, The Trafalgar [Ramsey].
South: The Glue Pot, The Viking, The George [Castletown].
East: The Coach & Horses, The Bridge [Laxey], The Central Folk Club [Douglas].
West: The Central, The White House, Creg Malin, The Viking Longhouse [Peel], The Hawthorn, The Tynwald, Farmer's Arms [St. John's], Glen Helen Hotel [Glen Helen], The Mitre [Kirk Michael].

anticipated folk festival in the Island; “our big national party” (David Fisher 23/12/1998), where members from all over the Island compete, perform and socialize together. Other festivals have been added to the folk scene calendar in more recent times, such as Feailley Veg in February, Shennaghys Jiu in March/April and Feailley Ghaelgagh in November. Eyermann and Jamison (1998:121) commented on the importance of festivals in the formation and longevity of communities such as this:

Folk clubs and eventually, major festivals... provided a new social space for experiencing a sense of community and collective identity...

Another excuse to congregate is the observation of traditional calendar customs, a selective mixture of continuous, revived and new customs. Amongst the ‘Kegeesh Ommidjagh’ (Foolish Fortnight) celebrations of Christmas and New Year is the continuous tradition of ‘Hunt the Wren. The song and dance are performed outdoors on Boxing Day by various folk groups, followed by the revived game of Cammag (similar to hockey, but with no pitch boundaries) in St. Johns, and a music session in one of the local pubs. A commemorative service is held annually on the 2nd of January to the Manx patriot, Illiam Dhone,¹⁹⁴ conducted in Manx and English, followed by a session, usually in Castletown. Moirrey ny Gianle (a Gaelic Church service held at Candlemass on the 2nd of February) and Hop-tu-naa (31st October) are also prominent events in the Celtic Calendar. Although the latter was a continuous tradition of dance and song that has continued outwith the folk movement in some parts of the Island, it has received a boost of popularity thanks to the revival. Other events include Tynwald Day (the Manx national holiday held on the 5th of July), where musicians, dancers, Gaelic speakers, Manx nationalists (and the general public) gather. Colin Jerry (10/03/1999) agreed that even though the folk scene is now diffused around the Island, these revivalist activities and events have reinforced the sense of community:

I think we’re keeping pretty well aware of what developments are happening because we’re bound socially to run into each other. It’s certainly likely on Tynwald Day, we’ll all get together there, but I mean, many other occasions

194 Illiam Dhone (1608-1663) was Receiver General for the Isle of Man during the Civil War. After leading a nationalist uprising, he was accused of treason which led to his execution at Hango Hill in Castletown. This annual commemoration was created by the revivalist movement.

where socially, we run into each other. When we had that do to commemorate Mona Douglas up in Laxey... Yeah, there was the ones from all over playing, dancing and singing... So yeah, as I say, all groups are fairly well aware of what's going on elsewhere. Some better than others. Depends on whether you drink or drive now anyway. That's what puts the knockers on it!

Informality is a major factor in the ideology of the Manx folk community, and consequently music and dance practices also function as regular 'get-togethers' between friends. Anne Kissack (interviewed 28/07/1999), conductor of Caarjyn Cooidjagh, spoke of their informal rehearsals:

... we sit in my house in Cregneash... there's lots of us got young kids now, so rather than go to a place... at least we can get, you know, it cuts down the baby-sitting. And we all squash in, and we talk most of the time, and do about half an hour's singing!... It's a social life as well, for pathetic people like me who don't get out! It's a way of getting people there... Oh, it's good fun.

Participants in the Yn Chruinnaght survey were asked which activities they were directly involved in and were given choices, of which most selected more than one. Dance, followed by music, then the Gaelic language were the most dominant preferences, as was an involvement in heritage societies. However, this latter element is probably reflective of current lifestyles, as it is more of a recent phenomena within the folk community, and is most popular with members of 40 years of age and above.

A considerable amount of the informants stated that they found out about the traditional music via an involvement in another aspect of Manx culture: "... people have got involved in the language and then through into the music and dancing" (Greg Joughin, interviewed 24/07/2000). While speaking an indigenous language is commonly seen as the ultimate symbol of a nation, a new language is also (perceived to be) much more difficult to learn when compared to music and dance: "Few people are prepared to make such a commitment... Music, by contrast, offers a pleasant and easy participation for the dilettante" (Chapman 1994:35). For this reason, music has played an important part in the creation of the Manx folk community. The informal context has admitted individuals of all levels of competence, and the communal ambience has allowed individuals to share the experience of music-making with others, which has therefore

reinforced their sense of belonging.

The survey results do not reflect how proficient an individual might be at playing an instrument or dancing, although in some of the returned questionnaires, members have commented on their ability: “[I play] Whistle, harp (badly, in private)”, and “learning the whistle, but very slowly”. For many members, musical competence is of secondary importance to the sense of belonging which is achieved by being involved in a community such as this. As Gellner (1999:34) explained, “culture carries a great emotional charge, and its members are highly conscious of their participation in it”.

Neither can the results of the survey indicate the level of commitment each individual gives to any one discipline: A tick in the ‘Manx language box’ does not necessarily mean that an individual is fluent in the language, but they may know a few words, or sing in Gaelic with one of the choirs. In relation to the general population of the Island, the 2001 census reported that out of the 76,315 residents, 1,689 people (2.2%) could speak, read or write Manx, which doubled the figures from the census ten years earlier.¹⁹⁵ However, like the Scottish Gaelic situation, even census results are not entirely infallible: “From the census we have no way of knowing whether people are claiming to speak [Scottish] Gaelic on the basis of half-a-dozen evening classes...” (Macdonald 1997:62). While it is possible that members of the revivalist following assume they should have an involvement in all of the main areas of Manx folk culture, and therefore the language, the fact that the survey was conducted at a Manx folk community event boosts the probability that a substantial amount of the Island’s Manx Gaelic speakers were in attendance. David Fisher (23/12/1998) illustrated the ‘interactivity’ of the community:

... all these things were interactive. One would support the other, so if you had a Manx language night, you would possibly have several musicians who would go along to it. And because they’ve gone along to it... when we came to the informal part of the evening, they’d say, “have you got your whistle then?”

195 The 2001 census recorded that 1527 residents spoke Manx Gaelic, 706 could write Manx Gaelic, and 910 could read Manx Gaelic (1689 in total). Ten years earlier, the 1991 Census recorded that 643 residents spoke Manx Gaelic, 343 could write in Manx Gaelic, and 479 could read Manx Gaelic. See Miller 1993, the Isle of Man Census 2001 and <www.gaelg.iofm.net>.

“It’s in the car.” “Go and get it then”... And if you have a dance night, you’d have the musicians there. And a lot of people... both the musicians and the dancers would be Gaelic speakers.

The results clearly show the aesthetic and symbolic preferences of the community, as there are definite indicators of the revivalist ideology displayed by the prominence of some aspects; dancing, instrumental music and the Gaelic language. In contrast, the Manx Dialect is an example of a traditional genre that does not represent this community. Although it is included in the competitions at Yn Chruinnaght, it is not a major part of the traditional culture scene for the rest of the year. While reciting the poetry of T.E. Brown and Cushag in the Anglo-Manx dialect is as (if not more) traditional to the Isle of Man as the other revived disciplines, it is obviously not considered to be as pure. It is spoken in English, so it was immediately discounted from the ‘Celtic’ or ‘Gaelic’ image that was required for the revival, and its associations with an older generation and its continuous tradition among local eisteddfods and the Guild (Manx Music Festival) competitions probably added to its dismissal in this revival.¹⁹⁶ The traditional cultural traits, especially within music and dance, had been selected by the core revivalists and were subsequently presented in a new context in the 1970s, and evidently that ideology still remains intact today:

The cultural traits by which an ethnic group defines itself never comprise the totality of the observable culture but are only a combination of some characteristics that the actors prescribe to themselves and consider relevant (Roosens 1989:12).

There are also a small percentage of individuals who do not participate in a creative sense, yet follow the folk scene and consider themselves part of the community. As Chapman (1994:36) explained, “music provides an entry into the practices and sentiments of ethnic belonging, for those whose commitment is small, and who require entertainment rather than effort”. This section of the survey included people who were

196 Much of the older Manx generation are aware of this tradition, having learnt the poems at school and at home, and most would be able to recite at least one poem in the Manx dialect. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the Anglo-Manx dialect was an important part of the cultural revival at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Mona Douglas also wrote in the Manx dialect for her plays. See Maddrell 2002 for more details.

supporting their children or friends in events at Yn Chruinnaght that year, and although they often admitted to taking part in the dancing at the festival ceilis, they were not officially connected to a particular group. Followers have also involved themselves in the folk community by organizing or stewarding at events, or by belonging to the nationalist party, although there are also members that just socialize within the community. To summarize, these social activities have constructed a community spirit by bringing various networks of people face-to-face. Social events have reinforced each individual's sense of belonging by allowing them to participate and share experiences with each other.

3.2 Revivalist Activities - Political

Over its history, there have been other occurrences that have tested the 'community spirit' of the Manx folk movement. The late 1980s saw a new wave of nationalist backlash directed at the economic boom of the offshore finance sector in the Isle of Man. As new businesses multiplied in the Island, they brought an influx of new residents which inevitably provoked another significant increase in property prices. Daubings of FSFO, "the initials standing for an Anglo-saxon, rather than Gaelic, invitation to the finance sector" (Kinley 1998:18), were reminiscent of the 'Fo Halloo' campaign of the 1970s,¹⁹⁷ but this time, activists took a step further than their predecessors:

There was a period of militancy connected to the fact that Manx born residents are now outnumbered by non-Manx, making the Manx people an ethnic minority in their own country... The FSFO campaign which emerged enjoyed strong public sympathy and support and culminated in the imprisonment of nationalists who burned down holiday homes.¹⁹⁸

FSFO had existed since 1987, and when they were caught in 1989, the identities of the

197 The FSFO campaign also displayed significant parallels to the Welsh nationalist protests of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when English-owned 'second homes' in Welsh-speaking areas were targeted by arson attacks. See Berresford Ellis 1985:91.

198 From an article interviewing Bernard Moffatt, vice-chairman of Mec Vannin: Manx freedom - 'when', not 'if' on SAOIRSE - Irish Freedom web-site, 1999. The 'holiday homes' were actually houses under construction.

three arsonists shocked the Manx nation. While every resident in the Island was aware of the slogan, (it was spray-painted on roads, written in 'weedkiller' on Tynwald Hill, and the campaign was constantly discussed in the local newspapers), few had suspected that the culprits were folk dancers and musicians:

... there was this shock-horror when... [the] FSFO campaign was finally brought to a halt by the Government, when they found out the people who were involved in it. I mean, I think there was great consternation because although they'd always identified the authorities, in inverted commas, who they assumed would be involved in nationalist agitation and direct action... they hadn't made the link between the cultural side and the political side to a certain extent. Since that time, I think they know that the two are synonymous (Bernard Moffatt, interviewed 28/07/1999).

Greg Joughin, Philip Gawne and Chris Sheard spent "a year, a week and a day in prison" (Greg Joughin interviewed 24/07/2000), but throughout their term, the Manx folk community rallied around to support them in different ways. 'Caarjyn-ny-Troor' [Friends of the Three] was founded to give support to their families, fundraising events were held, and small gestures were made to help out their friends. Greg recalled when musicians from Yn Chruinnaght 1989 travelled down to Douglas and played outside the prison:

I could say that... I've been to every Chruinnaght since it started even though I spent a year in prison because the Chruinnaght came down and played outside the prison (*ibid.*).

Yn Chruinnaght also received a lot of press coverage that year for allowing the following tribute to take place. The *Isle of Man Examiner* (Tuesday, July 25 1989:1) reported that;

The three men gaoled earlier this year for arson attacks on new housing developments seem set to pass into Manx folklore. At the closing event of Yn Chruinnaght... a special dance was performed, apparently in their honour... members of the Perree Bane group - carried cardboard cut-outs of houses. The climax of the dance came when the dancers 'torched' the cardboard houses which went up in flames. It brought a packed audience in the Viking Aparthotel to their feet cheering and clapping.

This particular incident demonstrates the internal tensions that can erupt within a community that tries to maintain a balance between cultural and political activities. While some members regarded the activists as ‘martyrs’ to the nationalist cause, and others overlooked the illegal implications and supported the accused because they were friends, the whole incident publicly highlighted the indisputable relationship between Manx traditional culture and nationalism. However, because the folk community was seen to be openly advocating nationalist and illegal activities, “the apolitical stance of Yn Chruinnaght was challenged” (Prentice 1990:79) and a strict ban on the distribution of political propaganda was subsequently enforced by the festival.¹⁹⁹ The dangerous connotations of nationalism can therefore threaten the boundaries of a movement that claims to be egalitarian and inclusive, yet the social support displayed through this incident illustrates the depth of community spirit that can emerge under such conditions, regardless of political beliefs.

3.3 The Manx Folk Community within the Manx Nation

The Manx folk scene appears to constitute a self-contained community in itself, but how does it correspond with the rest of the Manx nation? In the early days of the cultural revival, its members had an uneasy relationship with the rest of the Island’s population, with the language, in particular, dividing this group from its surroundings. Feelings of pity and betrayal towards the remainder of the Manx nation reinforced the determination of the folk community to revive its language and culture, regardless of whether the ‘ordinary’ Manx wanted it or not. From the perspective of the general public, the folk scene was viewed with suspicion; many Manx residents could not comprehend why the revivalists would want to highlight traditions that they regarded as having no place in modern-day life. The older generation of the Manx population especially disapproved of speaking in Manx Gaelic, and it was assumed by the revivalists that this negativity was a sign of shame because they had lost their language.

199 After a major dispute amongst Yn Chruinnaght committee regarding this incident, its president Charles Cain resigned. The *Isle of Man Courier* (February 2nd 1990) reported that Cain “could no longer tolerate the ‘fascist’ element in a group he believes should only be seen as cultural”. See *Isle of Man Examiner* 1989 and *Ramsey Chronicle* 1990.

Manx people went from being very fond of the language to absolutely hating it... Even now some older people get disturbed or angry if you say you're promoting Manx (Brian Stowell quoted in Croall 1993:3).

Gaelic speaker, Fiona McArdle (19/05/1999), speculated on why some members of the Manx public became hostile towards the revivalists:

... people often say it's because they were ashamed of the language, but I think it's actually because they're ashamed that they never got around to learning the language. I think that's quite a lot to do with it. And I suppose, also there was still a feeling that it was like a secret language, a hidden language and it was being used against them. You know, you still get this attitude nowadays.

A recent letter in a local newspaper written by a "Manx Monoglot" confirmed that the use of the Gaelic language is still a source of contention for some people born in the Isle of Man. But instead of portraying shame as the revivalists have presumed, it would actually appear that the Manx language and cultural revivals are perceived as condescending by some.²⁰⁰ When referring to a previous article by the Manx language columnist, the reader wrote;

... [He made] illogical statements to justify his belief that there is some sense in resurrecting a language that died many generations ago... I have always suspected that the nationalists were the main driving force behind re-inventing 'Manx'... [they] have a vision of what they consider to be a 'Manx identity' and I wonder who they consulted before they decided the profile of this identity... Is it me or is there genuinely some logic in artificially maintaining

200 A local poet demonstrates how some of the Manx populace have felt patronized by the revival of traditional language and culture:

New age Gaelic by Vinty Kneale (2001)

Do you speak the Gaelic; he asked?
(Vel Gaelic ec shiu)
No I replied in English
Do you?

He smiled a smug smile an' raised a smugger brow
An' in English tones for my benefit, said;
"Then who's the Manxman now."

Says I; ["I] speak the English tongue
In the ignorance where I grew
An' I've never thought to change it
For the ignorance of two."

something that no longer provides any function other than to keep linguists and nationalist politicians in a job? (Letter in the *Isle of Man Examiner*, 17th of June 2003).

Music cannot be categorized in the same way as language, and as a symbol of the ‘re-invented Manx identity’ it has not provoked such outright anger from members of the public. However, Manx traditional music has not been wholly integrated into the wider society either, and it largely remains the property of the revivalist community, academics and other musicians working within Celtic music. When Prentice (1990:80) conducted a qualitative survey amongst Manx-born residents and incomers in 1989, he found that only “one in twenty-five mentioned music” as an aspect of Manx traditional culture. As Chapman (1994:30) explained, when comparing the attitudes of music revivalists and the general public of an area; “[Locals] ... often know little or nothing of this music, and have no interest in it. It is not their music”. A letter written in response to a debate called “Who are the Manx?” in *Inheritance* magazine, confirmed that even though traditional music, dance and the language were perhaps more recognized amongst the Islanders ten years after Prentice’s survey, the Gaelic Manx identity perpetuated by this minority group is still not accepted as being representative of the indigenous population:

I for my part - though the only Manx dance I know is *Yn Mhelliagh* (I have three left feet), my level of Manx language (to my shame) is equivalent to that of Manx Airlines, I work in the finance industry and play brass rather than tin whistle - would hope that the values I embrace and hope to pass onto my children reflect as much about what we hope is Manxness as any amount of Hop-tu-Naaing (Quane 2000:60).

So, in many ways, rather than representing the Isle of Man, the Manx folk community has isolated itself from the other residents and has instead aligned itself to similar groups in the Celtic countries. Chapman (1994:33) noted this element of the larger Celtic revival after participating in a Scottish Gaelic language course on the Isle of Skye: “... there we all were, Gael and Gall alike, drawn into a common conspiracy to celebrate the Gaelic world that we all felt should exist.” It is therefore quite ironic that

while many of the revivalists saw themselves as retrieving a lost culture on behalf of the Manx people, they were actually forming barriers between themselves and the rest of the population: “These symbols - language, dance and music and traditional cultural values - delineate interest groups. One either supports the cultural revival, or one does not” (Nixon 1983:75). Therefore, while striving to create a ‘Manx identity’, it is very apparent that this formulated community was and is not representative of the entire Manx population, whether native or not.

Conclusions

Insiders of the Manx folk movement commonly perceive themselves to be part of a specific community, but what distinguishes the Manx folk scene from other leisure societies or clubs? A photography club or amateur orchestra, for instance, can be made up from an equally diverse mix of people, and in addition to offering an organized platform for a shared interest, a ready-made social life is provided for members. In an attempt to show the distinctions between an organization, society or club, and a community, its properties must be recognized: In contrast to a member of a community, it is more likely that a photography club member would have to officially sign up to belong; they are more likely to meet the rest of the club members, whereas members of a community might not; they would have to attend at an allocated time and venue, but would then probably socially disengage themselves from the other members for the rest of the week, whereas a community would not have such formal constraints.

So, from this standpoint, does playing traditional music, which might be considered to be a pastime by some, ultimately have to become a lifestyle, or ‘state of mind’, in order to become a community? When considering the concept of ‘community’, the immediate image is of a group of people brought together by geographical factors, a shared ethnicity, family ties or even occupational factors. Yet the members of the Manx folk scene were not placed together by accident or coincidence; individuals actually chose to be part of a movement such as this, and are therefore free to disengage themselves at any time. The inferred commitment that is found in social units determined by kinship

or location is not apparent in a movement like this. The Manx folk community cannot force an individual to remain loyal because its boundaries are fluid enough to allow individuals to come and go at their own will.²⁰¹ This fluidity allows the ideology of the group to evolve over time: "... identity shifts according to the context in which it is relevant..." (Edwards 1988:162), allowing a diversity of membership and the flexibility of its boundaries.

Members of the Manx folk scene were definitely drawn together by location because of its roots in the Isle of Man, but its members were scattered around the Island, gradually forming sub-groups of this larger entity. Also, in comparison to the general perceptions of the term community, there are few 'membership' restrictions concerning race or social background, although unconsciously, members may actually share these attributes. It is, therefore, very difficult to make any generalizations about the members of the Manx folk scene, or its status as a community. The Manx folk scene is not typical of any individual meaning of 'community', but as Anderson (1983 [1991]) pointed out, all communities are constructed around aesthetic values, symbolism and an imagined alliance which individuals perceive to be shared by others in their group; a definite element of this particular revival.

In accordance with Finnegan's fourth meaning of 'community' (1994:210, see Introduction to this chapter), the Manx folk community contains several levels of commitment among its shared "sense of belonging together": At the top of the scale are the key motivators of the cause, some of whom instigated the revival, hoping to achieve a specific shared goal; the sympathizers who take an supportive interest in the ongoings, but perhaps do not actively take part; and the subsequent followers, who, in their various ways, contribute to the imminent success, dissemination and expansion of the movement. These followers can enter the revival from various standpoints and inevitably their initial approach affects their commitment and level of participation. It would appear that the consequent followers of the movement came from the following

201 The survey only represented contemporary members, but personal observation can verify that members can easily join the Manx folk community and completely immerse themselves for many years, then (for various reasons) may choose to drop out, yet continue living in the Island.

standpoints: General musicians; those with links to other Manx cultural activities, such as dance, the Gaelic language, and heritage societies; the political/nationalist audience; and newcomers to the Island who may, or may not, have had a previous interest in folk culture. In addition to the participants or supporters, the revivalist community also produced ‘mediators’ who have distributed information about the tradition through the media in its many forms.

To become a community, an element of personal interaction has to become just as important as the common cause itself, and people and personalities must ultimately become attached through a deeper meaning than the group’s initial objective: “... group cohesion is often conceptualized as stemming from interpersonal ties between individual group members” (Ellemers et al. 2002). And as displayed by the overwhelming support for the FSFO campaigners, ‘caring’ and ‘friendship’ often override any political beliefs.

Of course, referring back to Roosens (1989:16) in the introduction, each individual belongs to various communities. For instance, one of my ‘Manx folk community’ informants might be a teacher, which places him in the teaching community on the Island and beyond, he may attend St. Olave’s Church (Church of England) and be part of their community, may be part of the North Shore Road Community, because he lives there, which is part of the Ramsey community, which is part of the North Community, which is part of the Manx community, and so on. Therefore, each individual has a different pattern which is often beyond their control. However, I would speculate that being part of the Manx folk community is a lifestyle choice which can be abandoned at any point.

Over time, the Manx folk scene has grown from a few musicians, dancers and Gaelic speakers to a community of hundreds. Because of the size of the current movement, with subdivisions based in various parts of the Island, some members may not know each other, may not have even met, yet they still believe that they share a common objective and an imagined allegiance to each other. In this case, “the “community” refers to a heterogeneous group of people for whom the thing being revived has some

essential cultural (and therefore communal) meaning” (Rosenberg 1993:195). As a manipulatable art-form, music has demonstrated the extent to which people of diverse backgrounds can share communal experiences, and it has therefore acted as a binding force between members of the folk scene. Manx traditional music has been interpreted to reflect political and ideological beliefs, yet it has not inferred that relationship onto all members of the folk scene.

It has already been confirmed in previous chapters that the Manx traditional music revival was, in part, a consequence of a renewed interest in traditional music in England and the Celtic countries, and when viewed on a macro-level, Anderson’s theories (1983 [1991]) present another angle: Do the individuals involved in the Manx folk scene consider, or imagine, themselves to be part of a larger ‘folk’ community? The binding factor within the Manx folk revival was that all of its members chose to pursue elements of traditional ‘Manx’ culture, as opposed to English or Irish traditional culture for instance, and this mutual purpose has organized individual personalities and motivations into a particular group that on another level could be thought of as an offshoot of a larger community. As discussed earlier, the Manx folk scene certainly feels an allegiance to its Celtic cousins, but it would appear that this ‘Celtic status’ is only employed when needed, maintaining an independence from their more dominant cultural allies.

As for its relationship with the Manx public, the Manx folk community has gradually blended into its surroundings. Although Manx Gaelic still ‘spells trouble’ for some Islanders, and traditional music and dancing may still be seen as a curiosity (especially by newcomers to the Island), there is little resentment of their ‘meddling’ by the current local population and authorities. Today, the traditional-cultural scene is well established in the Isle of Man. There is a greater awareness of the Island’s culture and heritage amongst the general public (more so than ten years ago when Prentice (1990) conducted his survey), and to a certain degree, within the other Celtic countries. The Manx Government is keen to contribute financially, and traditional music is actively encouraged in the schools system. With the Manx Government funding road-signs in

Manx, putting the Manx national anthem before the English in school assemblies (see McInnes 2003), Gaelic language classes in schools, and Manx Gaelic radio shows, it would seem that the revival has given the Manx an identity in the eyes of outsiders. Whether it is the same identity that existed before the Manx 'lost' it, is debatable!

Chapter Six

The Establishment of Manx Traditional Music: Organization and Development

Introduction

The final stages of Livingston's model are "revivalist activities (organizations, festivals, competitions)", and "non-profit and/or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market" (Livingston 1999:69). Both stages are concerned with the communication and marketing of revivalist ideology, so for the purposes of this chapter, they will be combined and discussed within the context of 'organization and development' within the Manx traditional music revival.

To avoid criticism from outsiders and to create a sense of authenticity for insiders of a movement, information about a tradition has to be produced through an official process that legitimates its revival. This usually involves the input or employment of academic research and government bodies or institutions which authenticate, identify and promote the tradition. This stage can provoke an "emergence of associations and institutions fostering the revival of ethnic, regional, and national traditions" (Blaustein 1993:263). In regard to the last chapter, Livingston recognized "revivalist activities" as being essential to the construction of a revivalist community and the perception of a shared identity amongst its individual members. However, another aspect of the revivalist activities will be considered in this chapter. Competitions, workshops, festivals, concerts and informal get-togethers are organized by leading members of the community with the purpose of communicating and controlling the revivalist ideology through its members:

... These events are crucial to the revivalist community because revivalists meet each other face-to-face to share repertoire and playing techniques, to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of artists within the tradition, to actively learn and experience the revivalist ethos and aesthetic code at work, and to socialize among other "insiders" (Livingston 1999:73).

The final ingredient of Livingston's model is the development of the "revival industry" (*ibid*:79); enterprises that cater for the revivalist community.

In order to create a sense of community, revivalist magazines, journals, recordings and radio stations help to bring people separated by geographical space together, while festivals bring people physically together... (*ibid*:73).

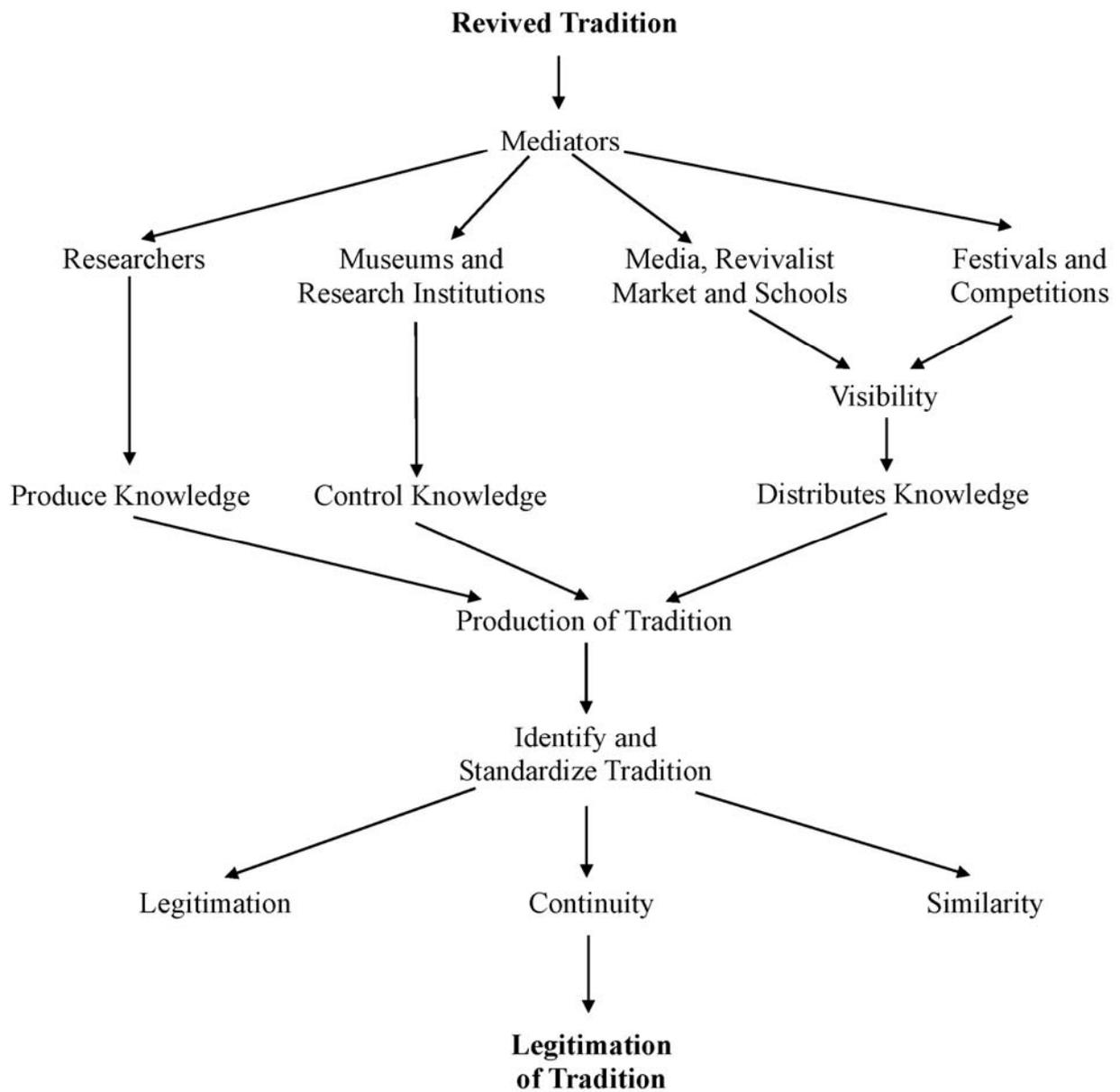
The marketing of concerts and festivals, specialist instrument suppliers, newsletters, magazines, radio stations and recordings are geared towards maintaining a sense of unity and belonging within a revivalist following, but the industry can also act as a method of promotion, which encourages the continual perpetuation of the revivalist ideology. Once the musical tradition is established within the core group, it is communicated to others through published tune or songbooks, then "fixed in time and space" by commercial audio and visual recordings, and "offered for public consumption" through live performance and through the media (*ibid.*). These industries can be either non-profit-making or commercial, although there is a general distrust of the latter amongst revivalist groups. Most revivals are formed in resistance to the "global expansion" (Wiora 1965:161) of modernity, because of its negative effect on cultural diversity, and therefore any elements of industrialization are viewed with antipathy (see Ronström 1996:8-9).²⁰² However, revivals of the twentieth century have often contradicted their initial ideology, and have succumbed to technological progress for recording purposes, amplification, the construction of instruments, printing and publishing.

Livingston (1999:79) claims that revivalist activities and an associated industry are often responsible for the longevity of a movement because they perpetuate the revivalist ideology and maintain the sense of community. She states that "it would be difficult for any revival to exist for more than a few years without entering into this phase", although she adds that the revivalist market is not exclusive to all revivals, and tends to be most apparent in countries with a highly developed economy (*ibid*:82n).

202 Lomax 1968:5 and Nettl 1983:347-8 discuss the concept of a 'cultural grey-out'. They warn that because of growing internationalism and globalization, the symbolic boundaries that distinguish national cultures from each another are in danger of becoming indistinct.

Mediators

Livingston has highlighted the processes behind the organization and development of revivalist movements, and identifies the agents who administer these acts as “recording companies, magazine publishers, state institutions, professional musicians and attendant managers, producers, public relations people” (*ibid*:80); members of an outside industry who have the potential to dramatically transform the context of the revival to that of a popular culture phenomenon. Ronström (1996:10) approaches this stage from a different viewpoint, and focuses upon the individuals that mediate between the revivalists and the culture industry. He names these people “mediators” or “connectors”. Ronström states that mediators make contact with the necessary sources that can cater for the various needs of the movement: They forge links with academic and research institutions who formally identify the tradition, by producing and controlling knowledge about the tradition. The commercial market is employed to serve the revival and its following, and schools and the media cooperate by raising visibility and distributing knowledge about the tradition to a wider audience. He claims that the standardization and repetition of the tradition through festivals and competitions produce similarity, recognizability and legitimation which are the processes that ensure the continuity of the tradition. The following chart, based on Ronström’s ideas, describes the processes that shift the ‘revived’ tradition to an ‘established’ tradition:



Based on Ronström 1996:10, "Mediators and Legitimation".

Throughout its thirty year lifespan, the Manx traditional music revival has been directed by individual personalities, but are these individuals typical of Ronström's 'mediators'? According to Ronström, these individuals are 'middle men'; entrepreneurs and agents that organize and promote the revival on behalf of the folk community and tradition: "They stand both literally and metaphorically in the middle... They are teachers, doctors, veterinary surgeons, artists, intellectuals... sometimes also industrial leaders and politicians" (1996:10). However, Slobin (1983:39 and 42-3) and Rosenberg (1996:196) offer an alternative view of these individuals, as they perceive the mediators as the core revivalists themselves. It is the revivalist "immigrants" (i.e. someone who was not born and brought up with the tradition) who mediate between the "old masters" (tradition-bearers, or in the case of the Manx traditional music revival, source material) and the next generation of potential "specialists" or "apprentices".

This chapter will bring the analysis of the Manx traditional music revival up to present times by observing and discussing Livingston's final points with a consideration of Ronström and Slobin's descriptions of revivalist mediators. These issues will be presented in three sections: The production of knowledge about the tradition through research and the gaining of official recognition through government policies; the control of knowledge through communal activities; and the distribution of knowledge through the revivalist industry.

1. Producing Knowledge of the Tradition - Research and Legitimacy

According to Ronström (1996:10), mediators will establish contact with "researchers and others that produce the knowledge about traditions to be revived... [and] institutions that control knowledge about the traditions". An analogy here might include the 'School of Scottish Studies' which since the 1950s has proved an invaluable source to Scottish musicians by providing a vast collection of written and recorded musical material, information about the chosen tradition, and an assurance of authenticity. Thus, academic research of this type can legitimate and authenticate the selected culture which is to be revived. Ready-prepared research on the chosen tradition can play a

persuasive and influential role in decision-making processes over repertoire, interpretation, style and ideology. Rosenberg (1993:180) agrees that “it is not just revivalists who play roles but also researchers, and that ultimately ‘no one is free from constituting domains though interpretative acts’”.

However, literature and research relating to revived traditions can also be conducted in hindsight. As witnessed by much of the subjective writing on revivalist movements, it is commonplace for insiders and outsiders to analyze the development of a revival after it has occurred. The two main approaches taken in the academic post-analysis of revivalism have been identified by Ronström (1996:10): The subjective investigation of “objects, styles, forms and their origins” where researchers challenge previous perceptions of authenticity, and the less common approach, where “revival is seen as a cultural expression or a communicative process”, and is concerned with functions, meanings and change. From the insiders’ perspective, Rosenberg et al. (1993) provide evidence of the reflexive view of the American folk revivals in *Transforming Traditions*: All of the essays were written by former revivalists who have subsequently become involved in the academic study of their own cultural histories.²⁰³ While this type of research is not necessarily used by the revivalists for authenticating material, (it is often too late by then), it does challenge Ronström’s theory, and proves that researchers and mediators are not necessarily outsiders to the revival.

But what happens if there are no researchers or academic institutions to consult, and little historical documentation to work with? The Manx revivalists had only Moore and Gill’s written guarantee that the Victorian source material was authentic (both 1896), and most of the core revivalists had their doubts about Douglas’s evidence, yet they selected certain ‘factual’ details from these sources for their interpretation. Equipped with more documentary evidence concerning the Manx language, the music revivalists must have realized that when Gill, Clague and Moore conducted their collections in the late 19th century, the Gaelic musical culture that accompanied the language had

203 Cohen 1998 has written an interesting review of Rosenberg, ed. (1993). She concludes that; “my ‘folkie” persona can’t help wondering whether this is yet another example of the GWSS (Great White Scholar Syndrome): the GWSS examines him/herself, affecting mildly ingenuous — but at the same time ripely mature—hail-fellow-well-met rationalizations and justifications”.

virtually ceased to exist. Yet, appropriate elements were selected from the source material and hastily ‘brought back to life’. The 1970s music revivalists did not have the luxury of a reservoir of information to guide and legitimate their revival, and consequently authenticity could not be of concern in the initial stages of the revival. However, as the new tradition has grown and become more exposed over time, revivalists have had to explain and justify their decisions.

It is therefore understandable that much of the literary material relating to the Isle of Man’s traditional music has been written in recent times by the participants of the scene (see Jerry, Carswell, Speers, Stowell, Guard, Broderick, Maddrell, Douglas and Bazin). From the initial stages of the revival, when Colin Jerry commandeered the selection of source material and perpetuated the revivalists’ preferences through the source book *Kiaull Yn Theay* (1978), through to the modern-day ‘Centre for Manx Studies’ where elements of the music are now being studied,²⁰⁴ the research aspect of the revival has been largely exercised by the revivalists themselves. As determined in the previous chapter, the movement has produced its own ‘experts’ rather than attracted them, and these individuals have communicated the revivalist ideology through published articles, conference papers, radio programmes, theses and web-sites. With the urgency to construct a body of traditional music based upon very little historical evidence, the ‘authenticating’ stage that most revivals undergo in the initial stages was largely overlooked. Therefore, most academic research has actually been conducted in hindsight, which implies that much of the ‘evidence’ has been shaped to justify decisions that have already been made. That is not to say that an imagined history has been fabricated to suit the viewpoint of the revival, but because of the interests and motivations of the researchers, there has been an unconscious tendency to highlight certain elements of the past, thus passing over other elements.²⁰⁵ From a survey of various revival movements, Livingston noticed that revivalists usually conduct research

204 In 1999 David Speers wrote an MA thesis on “Nationalism and Traditional Culture. Celtic Identity and Ideology in the Isle of Man 1890-1940”, and Bob Carswell received his MA with “Music collection in the Isle of Man in the late 19th century: rescue archaeology” in 2002.

205 While many of the revivalists have tried to be impartial in their research, the general approach has been to focus upon the Gaelic history of the music, ignoring the English language ballads and songs that were just as prevalent at the turn of the century, (although John Kaneen has tried to represent this genre through local talks and presentations).

in preparation for reconstruction, which later assures a sense of continuity and authenticity through authoritative publications:

... the specific history and meaning of revived cultural practices are constructed and maintained by the revivalists themselves: an important part of the revivalist process is the distillation and verbalization of these associations (Livingston 1999:69).

While the Manx traditional music revival adheres to Livingston's observation that the past is remoulded by the core revivalists (and not necessarily by outsiders, or in advance, as Ronström implies), the Manx folk scene perhaps displays that the process of legitimating actions through research can in fact be conducted retrospectively, although there is the added risk of adverse consequences when research can 'delegitimize' the revived tradition.

Only a few of the Manx traditional music revivalists were already involved in elements of academic research before the revival in the 1970s. Dr. Ross Jellicoe was researching Manx cross slabs when he happened upon the *Clague Collection* in the Manx Museum, but he has not contributed to the literature concerning Manx traditional music. Dr. Brian Stowell, a revivalist singer, has concentrated on Manx Gaelic rather than the analysis of the music, and has devoted his career to researching and promoting the language. Core revivalist Dr. George Broderick (Celtic Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin) has also combined his interest in the Manx Gaelic language with the revitalization of the Island's traditional music, and has produced seminal works on the history and analysis of Manx Gaelic songs.²⁰⁶ As an amateur musical group, there was no core revivalist appropriately qualified to analyze the music that they were trying to revive, and consequently the revival went ahead without any proper research. Only after the music was revived, did certain individuals stop to contemplate the authenticity of their new tradition:

206 See Broderick: "Manx Traditional Songs and Song Fragments I" (1980-1), "Baase Illiam Dhone" (1981), "Manx Traditional Songs and Song Fragments II" (1982) and "Ny Kirree Fo Niaghtey" (1984) and others. The emphasis in these cases has been on the Gaelic lyrics of the songs, rather than the melodies.

[Manx traditional music]... is fragmentary, because there's been no proper study on it. The only person who has studied it in my view is David Speers, musically, and from me, from the song side of it. I'm not boasting now... (George Broderick interviewed 23/03/1999).

As discussed in Chapter Four, any direct questioning or criticism of the revivalist ideology through academic research, even by insiders, has aroused disapproval. David Speers' fresh look at the interpretation of Manx traditional music in the 1990s publicly denounced the revivalist discourse formed twenty years earlier, and subsequently he found that his views were opposed in "very aggressive and dogmatic terms" (Speers 1994-5. See 1996-7). Another example is Stephen Miller, a (relative) outsider to the scene who has studied most of the musical source material from a folkloristic viewpoint. Although he is from the Isle of Man and has attended many of the revivalist activities, his interest in traditional culture appears to be primarily academic. By republishing out-of-print articles and books by Gilchrist (1924-6 [2001]), Moore (1896 [1994]) and Douglas (various [1994]) through his publishing company, Chiollagh Books, Miller has made much of the original source material accessible to the revivalist community for the first time. But his critical 'probing' into the source material of Mona Douglas in particular, has raised issues of authenticity which the revivalists had managed to avoid acknowledging until now (see Chapter Two). When these opinions have been aired in public (at the *Sleih Gyn Thie Seminar* in 2000, for instance), some of the Manx traditional musicians have accused Miller and others of 'over-playing' their doubts over authenticity, declaring that academic research should instead be geared towards promoting the positive aspects of the tradition.

Dr. Fenella Bazin has been on the fringes of the revival since its inception, as a friend of Mona Douglas', an advisor to local school folk groups (Paitchyn Vannin and Crosh Vollan) and as a former member of the Yn Chruinnaght committee. Her academic input has included producing a text-book based upon her Ph.D. research called *Much Inclined to Music- the Manx and their Music before 1918* (1997) which introduces Manx traditional music to the Island's schoolchildren. However, Fenella has never been a 'full member' of this particular revivalist community: "I never got involved in sessions. I'm still not convinced that session music was traditional in the Island anyway"

(interviewed 26/05/1999). Her professional qualifications as a musician (from the Royal Academy of Music), her close relationship with 'tradition-bearer' Mona Douglas and her position as the Director of the Centre for Manx Studies (until her recent retirement) though, have made her an authority on Manx traditional music on and off the Island. Furthermore, she has not criticized or cross-examined the revivalist ideology and she has been respected for this by contemporary Manx traditional musicians.

So far, the Manx traditional music scene has generally produced the type of research where the "objects, styles, forms and their origins" (Ronström 1996:10) have been prioritized. Because this approach has been directed from inside the movement, researchers have concentrated (perhaps unconsciously) on particular elements of Manx history and traditional symbolism to verify and promote their cause. As authoritative reference material, some aspects of research have been employed to perpetuate the revivalists' ideals, which conforms to Rosenberg's observation of research procedures in revivalist movements:

Although in their activities as historians, researchers, and musical acolytes revivalists are keenly interested in authenticity, they characteristically create new perspectives. This is because the issue of authenticity usually does not arise until the revival begins... Revivalists become revisionist historians when they attempt to establish standards of authenticity. They view the tradition's past not only from an ideological viewpoint but also from a new temporal and experiential viewpoint, and almost always also from the viewpoint of a different class (Rosenberg 1993:196).

As a nationalist movement that has consciously highlighted suitable cultural symbols, the Gaelic and Celtic aspect of Manx cultural history has been highly emphasized in literary reference material. Sir David Wilson (2000:22-3), former Director of the British Museum, claims that this is a biased perception of the Island's past; a selective history that only serves to maintain imagined boundaries within the Manx nation:

Manx culture is not, and this I would insist, founded in an entity described as 'Celtic', although a mythical miasma over the years based on this perceived entity has undoubtedly become one of its elements... it sometimes seems to incomers like myself that they [Manx nationalists] will do almost anything to deny that the English have contributed anything but trouble and divisiveness to

their general culture.

However, this perception of Manx culture and identity is not a modern phenomenon invented by the current nationalists, but a vision stemming from the late Victorian era. As respected historical figures associated with Manx traditional music, A.W. Moore, Sophia Morrison, Mona Douglas and others have eternalized the Celtic bias of the Island's culture through their publications. Kinvig (1975:173) states that; "The definite revival of Manx national consciousness and spirit can be traced above all to the influence of the writings and other activities of Arthur W. Moore..." As reference material for modern-day revivalists, the bias of these works has endorsed an element of legitimacy in the current interpretation of traditional culture. In contrast, the exhaustive work of Gilchrist, an 'outsider' who analyzed the *Clague Collection* in the 1920s has had little impact, possibly because she revealed that many of the melodies were variants of those found elsewhere in English-speaking areas of the British Isles, and that much of the collection was religious in content. This displays the inherent contradiction between the aims and nature of academic research and the cultural practices which form its object. The authority of 'appropriate' research is essential as a source of legitimation and official identification of a revived tradition, yet when the identity of the revival group is questioned through academic research, the knowledge is perceived as potentially detrimental.

Although there has been little academic interest in Manx traditional music from outsiders in recent times, it is conceivable that the Manx revivalists would not purposefully "establish contact" (Ronström 1996:10) with researchers and research institutions. In theory, any outside attention would be perceived as potentially harmful to the stability of the new tradition and the identity of its perpetrators. Therefore, the production of knowledge about the Manx music tradition has not been conducted by institutional agencies (i.e. research programmes, university departments or museums) as witnessed in other revival movements. However, as Ronström predicted, academic research has been employed to legitimate the new musical tradition, albeit on the revivalists' terms.

Although the cultural and language revivals grew out of a dissatisfaction with the Isle of Man Government's policies in the 1970s, ironically, the consequences of these policies have allowed the movement to continue. As Gaelic speaker Charles Cain admitted; "... many of us who were labelled in the 1970s as *dangerous nationalists* (but were nothing of the kind, simply enthusiastic patriots) were also deeply committed to the development of the finance sector" (1999:20).²⁰⁷ Likewise, the influx of new residents during the 1970s also brought enthusiastic newcomers who contributed considerably to the cultural and language revivals; an indisputable fact that Manx nationalists downplay when necessary. Without the prosperous economic climate borne from the tax haven status and New Resident Policy, which subsequently provided ample funding through the Arts Council, the Isle of Man Lottery and the Manx Heritage Foundation, the revival probably would not have continued as long as it has. The Manx Heritage Foundation has been particularly supportive of the traditional music scene, funding recordings and festivals, and this is probably due to the influence of its administrator, Charles Guard. As a well-established Celtic musician himself, his empathy with the traditional music scene has worked to the advantage of both the Island's musicians and to the aims of the Heritage Foundation:

I'm the administrator of the Manx Heritage Foundation whose remit is to support Manx culture, and we do... we spend a lot of money producing books and cassettes, doing academic research, supporting the Chruinnaght and all sorts of things like that... We have to keep the culture going. It's only when... people find it relevant for today that it will live. And that's why we put money into modern things as well... CDs like "The Lighthouse" (compilation of Manx traditional music)... and videos and modern books and things like that... There's more money now thrown at heritage and culture, the support of 'Mooinjey Veggey' (Manx language playgroup), the support of 'Caarjyn ny Gaelgagh' and 'Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh' and the Chruinnaght. All these things are all being supported by government money... (Charles Guard, interviewed 27/04/2000).

For both financial and political reasons, it has been essential to the development of the revival that its members maintain an agreeable relationship with the local government.

207 Although Charles Cain states that "many of us" were in favour of the finance sector, I believe that it would be very difficult to get anyone else in the folk scene to admit this. Most of the informants interviewed for this thesis still feel very bitter about the Isle of Man Government's policies during this period, and even today, are reluctant to directly accept any financial assistance from companies which are involved in the finance sector.

The potential leverage of local politics has also motivated some members of the folk scene to run for Government themselves. Formally a Manx dancer and member of Mec Vannin, Hazel Hannan has achieved objectives on behalf of the folk community through her position as an MHK. As Minister for Education, she was involved in the introduction of a Government programme which provided Manx Gaelic lessons in the Island's schools, occupational positions that have been filled by members of the language and cultural movements.²⁰⁸ Hazel has also encouraged the use of Manx traditional music in the school curriculum, and instigated the removal of "God Save the Queen" from speech days at the local secondary schools, replacing it with the Manx National Anthem, "O Land of our Birth".²⁰⁹ Peter Karran MHK has also been influential in view of the language. Amongst other developments he set up the Gaelic Broadcasting Company, which increased the amount of Gaelic to be included on Manx Radio. The use of Manx Gaelic on Governmental stationery, vehicles and road-signs has also become routine, and is advised by the quasi-government body, *Coonceil ny Gaelgey*, a Gaelic Advisory Council run by members of the folk scene.

However, at the time of writing, little accommodation has been made towards the traditional music movement.²¹⁰ Charles Guard, of the Manx Heritage Foundation, stands alone in the official promotion of Manx traditional music, but his influence is ultimately limited by the financial backing of the Government. While he can make certain concessions by funding, say, one traditional music album a year, there are no plans to establish an institution that focuses entirely on the music, such as the very successful Feisean nan Gaidheal movement (The National Association of Gaelic Arts

208 Brian Stowell, Phil Gawne, Julie Matthews, Anne Kissack, Catreney Craine, Paul Rogers and others have all pursued careers in Manx Gaelic education. Incidentally, these individuals are all traditional musicians. There is now a 'Manx Language Centre' at St. Johns, where primary schoolchildren are taught in both Manx and English.

However, the Government only conceded to fund the educational project after commissioning a Gallup Poll in 1992, which reported that 36% of a representative portion of the population "showed solid support for Manx in schools" (Crennell 1997). Since 1997, it has been possible to attain a GCSE and an A-level equivalent in Manx Gaelic.

209 Words by W.H. Gill (1907) and music adapted from traditional Manx air, "Mylecharaine's March". Translated into Manx by J.J. Kneen. See McInnes 2003 for article about the national anthem. Gaelic speaker, fiddle player and former FSFO campaigner, Phil Gawne, has also recently been elected as the Rushen MHK.

210 In 2004, the Manx Heritage Foundation revealed plans for a 'Manx Music Policy'.

Youth Tuition Festivals) or the Adult Learning Project workshops as found in Scotland (see Pearlman 2002-3).

Current Government policies have been particularly influential in regard to the development and visibility of the Gaelic language, but ultimately, “the overwhelming work and funding [in language and culture] has resulted from the efforts of individuals” (Kermode 1999:22), and these individuals are invariably insiders of the revival.

2. Controlling the Knowledge - Revivalist Activities

Livingston (1999:73) proposes that activities such as organizations, festivals and competitions provide a social forum where members “actively learn and experience the revivalist ethos and aesthetic code at work”. The control and repetition of a music genre during these activities produces similarity and recognizability, which results in the continuity and standardization of a style, repertoire and ideology amongst followers of the tradition: “... folksong and music traditions consist of musical systems perpetuated by communities consisting of specialized performers and knowledgeable audiences” (Rosenberg 1993:196). The social aspect of these events also legitimates the ‘living’ part of the revived tradition and instills a sense of continuity: “Revival participants take part in activities that, for them, traditionalize both their activities and their interpersonal relationships” (Nusbaum 1993:210). Revivals being movements that consciously try to avoid mainstream culture and institutional education, these events are often relied upon as a process of educating others about their tradition:

Competitions, exhibitions and festivals seem to be of great importance in a culture which does not obey the laws of commercialism, and which is not included in the ordinary system of musical education (Ling 1996:4).

Another element is introduced by Ronström (1996:10) who observed that public events of this kind boost the visibility of the tradition, as the tradition is passively introduced to new ears. There is also the potential factor of raised visibility and status for individual musicians through public performance at these activities, which in turn can provide creative motivation for other performers.

This section will explore the relevance of these issues in relation to the Manx folk community through a review of the organizations, festivals and competitions that have been created in response to the growing movement.

2.1 Organizations

In established musical traditions such as those in Scotland and Ireland, specialized organizations are constructed to actively preserve and perpetuate the tradition through regular meetings, workshops and events (Cooke 1986:127-8).²¹¹ A fundamental repertoire, social etiquette, style and ethos are passed on by the more experienced musicians to the new ‘specialists’ in a controlled atmosphere: “Supportive organizations and programs make it easier for young people to get involved in the music” (Pearlman 2002-3). However, these organizations or societies can have negative effects on a developing tradition: “... structural support from organized groups that set down specific criteria for evaluating their art, thus [force] a conservative, regressive pattern on a cultural form that had always changed and developed” (Fujie 1996:3).

There are no equivalent societies or organizational bodies devoted to traditional music in the Isle of Man. To a certain extent, the Manx Heritage Foundation, local festivals, and the Manx Gaelic language societies²¹² have contributed to the perpetuation of the tradition, but they do not provide regular, all-year round stimulation or education for the Island’s musicians. Instead, Manx traditional music is preserved and standardized on a small-scale through sessions and group classes or rehearsals.

211 Cooke cites the Shetland Folk Society, the Shetland Fiddle Society and Lerwick Accordion and Fiddle club. Other organizations in Scotland include TMSA (Traditional Music and Song Association), the Feisean movement, Ceoltas, the Glasgow Fiddle Workshop, and ALP’s (Adult Learning Project) Scots Music Group in Edinburgh. These organizations arrange weekly classes, festivals and performance opportunities for children and adults.

212 Manx Gaelic language organizations that arrange social events, adult and children’s language classes and fund research include; Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh (The Manx Language Society), Banglane Twoaie (Northern Branch of Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh), Possan Gaelgagh (Manx Language Group), Bing Ymskeaylley Gaelgagh (Gaelic Broadcasting Committee), Coonceil ny Gaelgey (Gaelic Advisory Council - for official translations), Yn Unnid Gaelgagh (Manx Language Unit), Mooinjey Veggey (Little People - Gaelic language playgroup) and Caarjyn ny Gaelgagh (Friends of the Manx Language).

The majority of contemporary music and dance groups stem from Bwoie Doal, the Saturday night session in Peel which has endured for almost thirty years [Appendix 19]. Its connection with the dance movement in the 1970s has also ensured a continued close relationship between Manx traditional music and dance. This association has meant that most contemporary musicians will have played for one of the Island's dance groups, or may have participated as dancers themselves at some stage, and to a significant degree, the context of contemporary Manx traditional music is perpetuated through these rehearsals.²¹³ Although "it's come and gone in popularity" (Greg Joughin, interviewed 24/07/2000), Bwoie Doal is seen as the 'home' of the music movement; an inaugural institution that aspiring musicians must attend in order to learn the trade:

Most Manx musicians have, at one time or another, played as part of the amorphous aggregation which is Bwoie Doal. The Saturday night sessions at the Whitehouse Inn, Peel have always been part workshop, part social, part performance and some would even say part group therapy (*Yn Chruinnaght Programme* 2001:19).

Today, the Bwoie Doal sessions are regarded as the foundation of the revived tradition, but it would seem that apart from disseminating the standard repertoire to newcomers, its leaders have had little influence over the 'apprentices'. One of the younger musicians explained her experiences of the Saturday night session:

[Bwoie Doal was] not particularly awash with fiddle players... And I think I might chance it by saying that I don't really think that we've got a... definite style... I mean Colin Jerry was one of the first ones I met and he was always seemed like, big sort of traditionalistic, wants to keep it how it is and stuff. But there wasn't a [tradition-bearer]... I mean like in... Shetland, you had... Tom Anderson... And Aly Bain had him to look up to, and he was, you know, the big fiddle player, but there wasn't anything like that over here... I think I didn't take an influence from fiddle players. I took it generally. So I did just like gradually picked it up and stuff like that... And then the trouble with that, I mean, at the session, they play the same stuff every week. And I mean, if you[ve] got a session in Ireland... 'cause there's so many tunes there, like they don't play the

213 This displays an alternative approach to that taken by the instrumental revivalists in Scotland in the 1970s, where the context was based around sessions, bands and soloists. There was no direct social connection to folk dancing. See MacNaughton 1980, Symon 1997 and Stevenson 1997.

same stuff every week. So we were getting bored because we knew it all, and... we'd done all our variations and stuff (Katie Lawrence, interviewed 29/07/1999).

Core revivalist and former schoolteacher, Mike Boulton has, however, earned the reputation of tradition-bearer. Over the past couple of decades, his school-based music and dance groups, Mooinjey Veggey, Share na Veg and (his latest group) Bee er dty Hwoiaie²¹⁴ have produced musicians that have continued to support the scene as adults. But other than Mike's work in the north, secondary schools have not had a major part in the development of Manx traditional music. There have been occasional examples, such as Crosh Vollan and King Chiaullee who were established at St. Ninian's High School, and Paitchyn Vannin at Ramsey Grammar, but these developments have been entirely dependent upon individual initiative from members of the folk scene, and these groups have often involved young people who were already associated with a dance team.²¹⁵

Organized dance teams and musical groups have probably been the most important forums for passing on the tradition. Socialization through the regular meetings of dance teams such as Ny Fennee, Perree Bane and Bock Yuan Fannee, and choral groups, Cliogaree Twoaie and Caarjyn Cooidjagh have retained the significance of communal and informal music-making, but with the added factor of instruction. These also serve to perpetuate the aesthetic preferences of the core revivalists, as the leader of 'singing group'²¹⁶ Caarjyn Cooidjagh revealed:

The singing has to be as unfussy and natural as possible. I think if anyone with a wobbly voice tried to join we would politely tell them they weren't suitable, though it is quite difficult to give a refusal and be tactful! (Kissack 1999:30-1).

214 Translations: Mooinjey Veggey - Little People, Share na Veg - Better than Nothing and Bee er dty Hwoaie - Be on your North (a colloquial expression for Look Out!).

215 In recent years, folk scene members and primary schoolteachers Sue Ling Jaques and Sarah Shimmin have formed a Gaelic choir and tin whistle group at the Dhoon School, and Scoill Vallajeet now have a Gaelic choir tutored by Jo Collister.

216 Since their inception in 1989, Caarjyn Cooidjagh have rarely referred to themselves as a choir, but as a singing group. This slight difference in terminology stresses the informal philosophy of the group, and denies any associations with classical music. Cliogaree Twoaie, on the other hand, seem less concerned with the connotations. In the style of the Scottish Gaelic choirs that perform in the Mod, they perform 'classical' arrangements of Gaelic songs, they call themselves a choir and they dress in uniform.

Because these groups attain an element of hierarchy and an official membership, (where some groups charge a fee and its members are expected to attend on a regular basis), there is an sense of purpose, education and routine. Though often diverse in artistic output, the ideology of these groups inevitably refers back to the original revivalist ethos, because their leaders have often been involved in the revival since its inception, and therefore certain regulations over repertoire and interpretation continue to abide. The display-oriented nature of Manx dance as championed by Mona Douglas and Leighton Stowell, the Manx Folk Dance Society and consequently, Bock Yuan Fannee, has set stylistic boundaries that also apply to the music. Since their revival in the 1950s by Douglas and Stowell, Manx dances have been associated with particular melodies; “it’s basically one tune per dance” (Greg Joughin 24/07/2000), and dancers and musicians therefore learn the standard dance repertoire through constant repetition. Because of the instilled relationship between Manx dance and music, many of these dance melodies have constituted the session repertoire played at Bwoie Doal. It could be said that the stylistic boundaries of dance, with its prescribed steps and characteristic style, have had such an influence on musical style that it has been difficult for associated musicians to break away from that standardized pattern:

This idea of playing several tunes either to the same dance is a new thing brought in by David Speers... One dance, one tune is Mona [Douglas], [and it has been] been perpetuated in the Whitehouse [Bwoie Doal sessions], though in the Whitehouse now, they do play a series of tunes. They... are now putting a series of sets together... (George Broderick, interviewed 23/03/1999).

Although still fragmentary, the development of instrumental groups or bands can be attributed to the dance scene. While the musicians of Bwoie Doal have emphasized informality through its unorganized and relaxed atmosphere, public performance has always been the objective of Manx dance teams. However, as the session group became more visible in wider circles, the demand for public performance increased, and musicians had to deviate from the original ‘grass-roots’ ideology. Some of the musicians had already experienced performing Manx traditional music in public by accompanying Bock Yuan Fannee dance displays, but the idea of people watching and listening to solely the instrumentalists was a new prospect. Peter Cubberley

(29/07/1999) commented on this new and unfamiliar context of music-making:

Bwoie Doal used to do bits, you know, for whatever concerts, and put stuff together... that was quite often a flexible sort of gathering of whoever could make it, and... at one stage, there was a hardcore of people. Colin and Cristl Jerry, Simon Capelan... Bob Carswell, David Fisher... Mike Boulton... they were sort of the hardcore... And they would get together and do these concerts. By the way, it was a big traumatic experience, I can remember. Practices they used to have because it was going to be recorded, or it was going to go out on the radio, like *Folk Weave* from England were coming, you know, from the BBC... they wanted Manx music. So there'd be a big panic. "How many times?" and all this. And they had to do something, they weren't happy about playing it, you know, "let's just play it like we do down the Central". 'Cause I mean you just can't do that, not unless you're brilliant. You know, you can record a session in Ireland maybe, with tip-top musicians, but there wasn't... that standard then.

While performing in public was not part of the original objective, there were members of the revival who found this prospect more appealing than sitting in a pub playing the same melodies every week. This resulted in several off-shoots from the Bwoie Doal and Bock Yuan Fannee groups, including the female choir, Cliogaree Twoaie who chose to concentrate on the Gaelic carvals, and dance groups Perree Bane and Ny Fennee, who have developed the style of Manx dancing and accompanying music to a significant degree.²¹⁷

Ny Fennee were formed in the early 1980s by several ex-members of Mike Boulton's youth group, Mooinjey Veggey. By their late teens/early twenties, these individuals were well accustomed to performing in public through numerous school concerts, Yn Chruinnaght, and festivals away from the Island such as the 'Celtavision' (Feile Pan-Celtiagh) song contest in Eire. They brought a sense of self-confidence to the movement, and led the direction away from the informal session. Mactullagh Vannin, an instrumental group formed by the musicians of Ny Fennee, represented the new context:

... it was the first time that Manx music... had been arranged and played for an audience... As opposed to the session music and playing it in a pub in a circle

217 Translations: Cliogaree Twoaie - Croakers of the North, Perree Bane - White Jacket[s] and Ny Fennee - The Champions.

(Sue Ling Jaques 19/05/1999).

Mactullagh Vannin (Echo of Mann) aimed for polished performances, displaying individual talents within an accomplished ensemble. They also brought a fresh approach to the interpretation and style of the Manx tunes: "... because we were playing for the dancers, we thought that we'd make it a bit more interesting than just playing through the tunes so many times" (Peter Cubberley 29/07/1999). Heavily influenced by the high-profile instrumental groups of the time, Mactullagh Vannin introduced the concept of playing tunes in sets, an idea that had not reached the Manx folk scene (successfully) before: "... we were sort of trying to emulate what was happening in other places and trying to bring that into Manx music" (*ibid.*). From the mid to late 1970s, Irish and Scottish groups such as Planxty, The Bothy Band, The Tannahill Weavers and Stockton's Wing had popularized the instrumental set-up that has become associated with traditional music. Typically "Their melody section... was provided by pipes, flute, whistles, and fiddles, while the rhythm section consisted of guitar, *bouzouki*, and *bodhran*" (Skinner Sawyers 2000:225. Her italics). In a similar fashion, Mactullagh Vannin featured low and tin whistles [Peter Cubberley], fiddle [David Collister], tenor banjo and mandolin [Mai Ying Lee (Ellis)], guitar [Sue Ling Lee (Jaques)], bouzouki [Guest musician - David Speers] and bodhran [John Corlett]. Without the structural and rhythmic boundaries of accompanying the dances, Mactullagh Vannin experimented with existing source material and composed their own melodies. And in a break away from the session ambiance where everyone played the melody repetitively in unison, the band presented a variety of timbres and textures; they took turns to play the melody, used harmonies and counter-melodies, composed variant melodies to complement the Manx tunes, and experimented with the original rhythms. In 1986, Mactullagh Vannin released a self-titled album which further increased their visibility. With sophisticated arrangements of traditional Manx material, and melodies composed in the 'Manx idiom' by Peter and Mai Ying, the band were "setting new standards in Manx music"²¹⁸

It would be expected that after the surge of excitement that this group brought to Manx

218 Charles Guard. Sleeve-notes from the Mactullagh Vannin album 1986 (re-released in 1992). See McGann 1996 for further details about the band.

traditional music, other instrumental bands would have sprung up and carried on the idea, but when Mactullagh Vannin disbanded a few years after their album, (due, in part, to members leaving the Island to attend university), the scene returned to its former self; sessions and music for dancing.

There'd been nothing like that before or since really. Not purely instrumental Manx music... There seemed to be a big gap after Mactullagh Vannin in... standard. When we kind of fizzled out, there was nothing, again, in traditional [music] (Peter Cubberley 29/07/1999).

This lull in activity only ceased a decade later when the school group, Paitchyn Vannin (Children of Mann) briefly came to the forefront of instrumental music, after performing at the Royal Albert Hall in the School's Proms, and at the National Festival of Music for Youth at London's Royal Festival Hall in 1995. Founded at Ramsey Grammar School in the 1980s, and initially instructed by music teacher Fenella Bazin, the group had fluctuated in popularity since its inception: "Paitchyn Vannin... sometimes it's thrived, and other times it's sort of disappeared a little bit, but that's been more or less continuous since then" (Fenella Bazin 26/05/1999). The majority of the Paitchyn Vannin reincarnation of the mid 1990s were also members of Ny Fennee and were heavily influenced by its older members Peter and Sue Ling and the re-release of the Mactullagh Vannin album in 1992. In 1995, Paitchyn Vannin released an album called "Fragments", which was recorded and produced by Charles Guard, the administrator of the Manx Heritage Foundation. The instrumentation was virtually the same as their predecessors in Mactullagh Vannin, and as well as including the 'traditional' repertoire, they featured their own compositions, and two of Peter Cubberley's compositions which had been passed down through Ny Fennee. Although at the time this group were in effect emulating, or even imitating their predecessors in style and interpretation, they opened up possibilities that have influenced other young bands:

... it's taken the likes of Paitchyn Vannin to come back, who were heavily influenced, I mean they even ripped off some of our arrangements (Mactullagh Vannin musician, Peter Cubberley interviewed 29/07/1999).

In recent times, young bands Paitchyn Vannin (with a new line-up), King Chiaullee, Fo'n Chrackan, Moot and Corragh have kept the context of live performance active.²¹⁹ Essentially, the younger members of the scene have been given the responsibility of developing and experimenting with the genre, whilst older, more experienced members retain the original context of the revival as 'tradition-bearers'. And as older members of the community have expressed in the Yn Chruinnaght 2002 survey, these developments are perceived as essential to the longevity of the movement: "Music has made good progress with 2nd generation revivalists and wider appeal" (written comment from survey informant, age 50-59), "*It is excellent* - Especially with so many young people involved" (30-39) and "There is a lot of talent in a small population: a testament to the encouragement of the young performers" (50-59). It is also apparent that the folk scene has not taken an "anti-technological" stance (Livingston 1999:80) in their interpretation of traditional music. Because the tradition is not bound by rules of authenticity, experimentation through electric instruments, sound distortion devices and sampling equipment are encouraged.

However, considering the substantial number of local rock bands who compete at the Island's 'Battle of the Bands' every year, and the hundreds of children who attend the 'Manx Youth Orchestra', the traditional music genre is still under-represented by the Island's young people. As demonstrated in equivalent cultures in Britain, the most successful ways to get children involved in traditional music are through school groups, feisean workshops, residential courses and competitions; activities which are usually dependent on the support of local funding.

A different approach to Manx traditional music has been explored by folk-rock band, The Mollag Band. Formed in 1991 by members of the Perree Bane dance group, their principal aim was to voice their political beliefs through traditional music. By incorporating Manx traditional tunes with self-penned lyrics in English and Manx with an instrumentation that blended folk with rock music, they were representing a

219 Translations: King Chiaullee - Music Heads, Fo'n Chrackan - Under the Skin, Moot - colloquial term for a turnip, and Corragh - Crazy, rocky place or jerry-built.

“syncretist” approach (Baumann 1996:80-1).²²⁰ Singer and guitarist, Greg Joughin had joined the music revival during its early stages, became a member of Bock Yuan Fannee and left to form Perree Bane in 1981. Inspired by the housing boom of the late 1980s and ‘90s, he became involved in nationalist politics,²²¹ but over the past decade has preferred to “voice his radical concerns through the songs of the Mollag Band...” (Kinley 1998:19).²²² The Mollag Band represented a different angle of the folk scene, which was accepted readily by the community. Their three albums are owned by most members, and the band are always well received at concerts on the Island.

A genre that not been fully exploited in the Manx traditional music scene is that of the soloist, although over the years, certain players have come to the forefront. George Broderick believes that the absence of an identifiable style in the revived tradition has led to “an emergence of prima donnas” (Broderick 1999b:22); soloists that have been elevated to ‘virtuosic’ status by the rest of the community, because they are so few in number. This is evidently becoming an irritation with some members, as comments from the Yn Chruinnaght 2002 survey demonstrate: “One problem I find is that the same few Manx people are plugged, despite there being so many Manx performers” (informant, age: 20-29). Another added; “... there hasn’t been any fresh talent for a while” (20-29). Broderick claims that these exalted individuals do not aid the long-term development of Manx traditional music, because they are only noted for their technical ability, and not necessarily for playing in a ‘Manx style’:

So consequently... its interpretation [has been].. each after his own style, way of thinking it. It’s fragmentary, it’s led to a number of prima donnas... it’s led essentially to individualistic performance and the only group that’s been together consistently over the past twenty five years is the one on the Central, and in the Whitehouse, which is essentially Colin and Cristl with friends... [Bwoie Doal is] the only consistent group, been right the way through. I don’t particularly agree with the way they do it, but the fact that they[’ve] done it.... that has been the main lynch-pin... And... everybody else who... plays in Manx music has been in

220 Instrumentation of The Mollag Band: Voice/s, viola, flute, acoustic guitar, bass guitar and drum-kit.

221 Greg Joughin was a ringleader in the FSFO campaign [see Chapter Five], and unsuccessfully stood as a Mec Vannin candidate for the House of Keys General Election in 1991.

222 The late Paul Lebedzinsky voiced his protest through poetry, where he forewarned the effects of the latest boom. For instance, “‘Golddigger’, a farmer’s lament for the girl he has lost to a high-flier from the financial sector” (Inheritance 1999:44).

that group at some time or other.

Emma Christian is a Manx-born soloist who has taken traditional music to international audiences. Her interpretation of Manx Gaelic songs and melodies sung and played on recorder and harp has raised the visibility of the Island to a significant extent within Celtic music audiences in Europe and the USA. However, Emma has never been asked to perform at Yn Chruinnaght festival, the majority of Manx traditional musicians do not support her local concerts, and she has generally been snubbed by the Manx folk scene.²²³ One informant declared that; “She doesn’t represent my Manx music, but she represents a section of Manx music”, while another stated, “I don’t enjoy it myself, but she’s obviously very good”. Even though the folk community now claims to advocate a ‘free-style’ interpretation within its own musicians, it would seem that their rejection of Emma Christian’s music is because she did not develop from their community and because she is commercially successful.

Over its history, the music revival has not formally established a Manx style of playing. Standardization has depended upon a limited repertoire immortalized by the Bwoie Doal session and the dance repertoire prescribed by Mona Douglas. Attempts have been made to break the mould through new compositions written in the general folk idiom, and by presenting the music through new contexts and textures, but other than the repertoire and the precept that the music-making should be as informal as possible, any intricacies of style and etiquette have not been defined in Manx traditional music. The bare bones of the musical tradition and the ideology of the community are perpetuated through the leaders of music groups and dance teams, but without a direct identification of its unique qualities, the creative output remains fragmentary. However, the advantage of not relying upon any specialized societies that teach the ‘right’ way to perform Manx traditional music, its exponents are offered two choices. There is the dependable ‘traditionalist’ camp still located at the Bwoie Doal sessions, or there are the more progressive or ‘syncretist’ groups; different approaches which appear to complement each other and give the impression of a ‘living tradition’.

223 Emma Christian was interviewed, but did not grant permission to use any of the material. However, her side of the story has been taken into consideration in this thesis.

2.2 Festivals

Festivals are a celebration of the community of which they serve. By displaying familiar cultural symbols and by gathering friends together, they provide a reminder of the community identity and the boundaries in which it resides. When Nusbaum (1993:208) studied the Bluegrass revival in America, he found that “Recurrent types of events and settings for events provided sets of familiar visual and aural cues, enabling participants to perceive given events and settings as similar to others...” The phenomenon of the inter-Celtic festival is an extension of this concept:

The main role of inter-Celtic festivals is to generate solidarity between the Celtic countries. For the most part, strong feelings of solidarity outside the festivals only seem to exist on the part of activists... An important effect which these festivals has is to reactivate the activists if they are feeling downhearted, particularly with respect to their languages... mutual support is important for activists and this applies to music and dance as well as to language (Stowell 2000).

The main event for the Manx folk community is Yn Chruinnaght, an inter-Celtic festival that celebrates dance, music, language and the traditional arts. Formed in 1978 by Mona Douglas, Yn Chruinnaght was established as the national festival of the Isle of Man, on a par with the Scottish Mod, the Welsh Eisteddfod and the Irish An t'Oireachtas. Since the early twentieth century, Manx nationalists have striven to become accepted as one of the six Celtic nations, and the inter-Celtic element of Yn Chruinnaght has therefore been very important in maintaining that relationship: “The common Celtic identity has... been established through the medium of several Pan-Celtic festivals which have become annual events” (Berresford Ellis 1994:195).

Manx musicians have been representing the Island at various inter-Celtic festivals since before the beginning of the revival. Although the Manx Folk Dance Society had performed off the Island in the 1950s, the new popularity of inter-Celtic festivals emerged in the 1970s. Harpist, Charles Guard, spoke of his involvement:

For years the Isle of Man has been under-represented. There's a Pan-Celtic festival in Killarney, and there's the Lorient festival (Brittany). Now I was the

first Manx person to go to either of those representing the Isle of Man, and that must've been back in 1972... So there was a slight representation there. Things are a lot better since then of course, 'cause lots of Manx musicians go to Lorient. But you've got to accept, I suppose, that because our population and that of Cornwall is so small, we just haven't got the numbers of people available to go to all these festivals.

By the mid 1980s Mactullagh Vannin were one of the most popular representatives of the Manx traditional music in the inter-Celtic scene. In contrast to previous years at the inter-Celtic festivals when the 'poor Celtic cousins' from the Isle of Man had "all the bum do's at three o'clock in the morning at an old fishmarket... with all the drunks and stuff" (Peter Cubberley 29/07/1999), Mactullagh Vannin had improved the profile and raised the visibility of Manx traditional music:

... we were in Brittany, sort of... round that middle [19]80s, people actually listened to us and took notice, and before that it was like, "oh, the Manx was back", and you know, whatever. But that first year... I think it was '84, we really went down well, and [they] started giving us some decent venues to play... We'd got to a standard where we could hold our own and we could give some of the Irish groups a run for their money. You know, people would take us seriously, "these guys are good"... We were young with ideas and a bit of zest... put a bit of excitement into it (*ibid.*).

Since then, Manx groups and individuals have become a regular part of festivals such as Festival Interceltique de Lorient (Brittany), Speyfest (Scotland), Pontardawe (Wales), Lowender Peran (Cornwall), Festival Celtia de Corona (Galicia) and Feile Pan-Celtiagh (Eire). This participation outwith the folk scene in the Island has maintained visibility for the Manx traditional music tradition, although it has generally been amongst communities of an equivalent status, and therefore avoids exposure outwith its abilities.²²⁴ On the whole, these festivals and their participants are very similar to the Island's own Yn Chruinnaght. They feature amateur groups from the Celtic countries who advocate a similar ideology of non-competitive and egalitarian "happy playing" (Ling 1986:3). The Gaelic or Celtic cultural aspects are emphasized by all of these participating groups, and by maintaining the inter-Celtic relationships, a sense of

224 Apart from a concert featuring Emma Christian, Glasgow's Celtic Connections does not involve Manx or Cornish musicians. As a commercial and seemingly apolitical festival, it tends to employ high profile, professional musicians, and is not absolutely Celtic in the literal sense.

extended community is reinforced and legitimated for all involved. While select groups are chosen to represent the Island at these festivals, at home, Yn Chruinnaght provides the opportunity for all of its local musicians to play to appreciative audiences.

Yn Chruinnaght has become the highlight of the ‘traditional music calendar’ in the Isle of Man, as an inter-Celtic festival that attracts virtually every member of the Manx folk community to the northern town of Ramsey. Every July, the Island’s traditional music and dance groups congregate for a week of socializing and ‘catching up’ with each other and friends from the other Celtic countries. As well as being “a platform... for people to get together” (Sue Ling Jaques 19/05/1999), Yn Chruinnaght festival also acts as a method of transmission to the ordinary public through its daily entertainment. The week’s events are well publicized in the Manx newspapers, both in advance and throughout the week, and a live report is aired by Manx Radio news every day. Manx and visiting acts are taken to the streets to perform around the Island, and the nightly ceilis held in Ramsey attract a lot of people who would usually not attend traditional music events. While “Organizers of festivals often complain that the local people in the festival venue rarely show any deep interest in their festival” (Stowell 2000), in reality, the presence of these ‘local people’ sometimes leads to annoyance amongst the regulars.²²⁵ Some members of the folk scene claim that it is the late drinking licence, the pretty young girls from visiting groups, and the party atmosphere that attracts most of these local ‘outsiders’:

Ceilis. They’re the one thing that make the money you see... But they wouldn’t [tell] the difference whether it was a rock n’ roll or an oompah band or anything. There’s an atmosphere there which is created by a lot of drink and a lot of people, and you’d get that atmosphere anywhere... So, I don’t think it’s the Manx music that’s... bringing them there (David Fisher 23/12/1998).

In 2002 Yn Chruinnaght abandoned their infamous ‘survivors’ night’ (which previously attracted all of the local ‘undesirables’), and moved the festival to a less accessible location in order to maintain a more subdued and focused atmosphere. Evidently when

225 I had hoped that the survey conducted at Yn Chruinnaght 2002 would represent outsiders to the scene who were attending for the first time, as well as the performers or regular attendees, but evidently only a few of these individuals felt that the questionnaire applied to them.

the objective of the festival becomes blurred, supporters feel protective over the culture and attempt to shield it from outside influences. However, as a non-profit-making organization, the festival needs the financial support of these people:

Even though the constructions surrounding a festival might have been formed from within a folk social consensus, the festival cannot succeed unless it attracts 'passive' or even 'non'-folkies (Brocken 2000).

On the one hand, the protagonists have been keen to 'sell' the revivalist philosophy to the general public via Yn Chruinnaght, but they have simultaneously pursued a path of exclusivity. While ostensibly aimed at the general public and making use of the limited public funding to mount the exhibition (Arts Council, Tourism and Leisure, Manx Heritage Foundation grants and underwriting), there are areas where there have been few concessions to non-Gaelic speakers. For example, the opening ceremony has long been seen as a platform for nationalist expression, the guest speaker usually being someone involved with the language movement, who gives their message in Gaelic, which is then translated into broken English. There follows an introduction of guests from the Celtic nations; Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany, where representatives are invited to say a few words, preferably in their own Celtic language. Expressions of this kind highlight the nationalist undercurrent that supports these inter-Celtic festivals, yet Yn Chruinnaght balances this carefully and draws a line at overt nationalism.²²⁶ The committee have always maintained an apolitical stance as not to jeopardize funding from the Government, yet the philosophy of the festival furtively protects the nationalist community.

Another Manx traditional music festival, called Shennaghys Jiu was founded in 1999, primarily by members of Ramsey dance group, Ny Fennee (and ex-members of Yn Chruinnaght committee). The annual festival was to focus upon the youth aspect of Manx traditional music, with less of the inter-Celtic flavour of Yn Chruinnaght. The concept of the festival was also to avoid the competitive nature that had become associated with children's traditional music in the Island. Presumably, Shennaghys Jiu

226 For example, after the FSFO episode (Chapter Five), the selling of the Celtic League magazine, *Carn*, was banned at Yn Chruinnaght.

were referring to Yn Chruinnaght festival and the Guild (Manx Music Festival) where the main forum for school age performers is during the official competitions:

[Shennaghys Jiu] allowed one and all to enjoy the music and get together informally for a session or at the ceilidh to jam and learn from each other. Younger performers also took the opportunity to “take the stage” without the added pressure of competition (<http://www.shennaghys.org>).

The founders of this new festival consisted of young people who had been brought up in the revived music and dance tradition; examples, perhaps, of Slobin’s “apprentices” (1983:42-3). The majority being in their twenties and thirties, most of the committee members had experienced being the first generation of youngsters within the folk scene, where the context of their involvement was mainly preparing as separate groups for public performance, or being encouraged by parents and older members into competing against one another in the Yn Chruinnaght competitions every year. Therefore, Shennaghys Jiu saw an element of the folk scene that was missing; a platform for the younger generation to share the tradition. Founding member, Rachel Pressley (interviewed 26/04/2000) talked about the motivations behind this new festival:

... we just thought it’d be good to get all the young people on the Isle of Man who had some kind of interest in the music or dancing, to perform together on the same stage. And our favourite phrase is something like “come together in a non-competitive environment”... this year my highlight of the festival was when I heard that Kirk Michael [Primary] School were going to get involved with their choir, and had never sung any Manx songs before, but had gone out and learnt Manx songs especially to sing at Shennaghys Jiu. And I just think that kind of meets the whole point of the festival.

Though still in its infancy, Shennaghys Jiu has successfully introduced newcomers to the scene. By directing its focus upon children and the local schools for a long weekend every year, the festival has located an essential ingredient in the formation of an ongoing tradition. However, it is then the responsibility of individual teachers to keep the interest alive for the rest of the year, and this does not often happen. McCarthy (1999:186), commented on the importance of the younger generation in continuing a tradition:

The generational transmission of music is a primary site for inducting the young into a group's musical practices and traditions, and through that process immersing them in communal values and passing on traditions that link the generations, symbolically and musically.

Yn Chruinnaght, Shennaghys Jiu and other folk community festivals such as Feailley Veg and Feailley Ghaelgagh have essentially remained independent from outside influences. Although the Isle of Man has been economically prosperous since the NRP of the 1970s, these festivals do not have commercial sponsorship and receive limited funding from the Government. In contrast, the short-lived 'Isle of Music' festival established by Emma Christian and Steve Coren was a commercial enterprise that relied upon private sponsorship from the Island's finance sector. An adventurous project, the festival featured high-profile Celtic musicians such as Capercaillie, Shooglenifty and Sharon Shannon. However, after a few years, the poor attendance levels meant that the financial expense of the festival could not be justified. It was particularly noticeable that few members of the Manx folk scene supported the event.

Folk events such as Yn Chruinnaght have consciously tried to remain independent from Government control and the commercial mainstream. They often work on a shoestring budget, relying upon their own fundraising, voluntary support and on the goodwill of its participants and followers. On principle, Yn Chruinnaght committee very rarely pay visiting or local performers, but will provide travel expenses and accommodation. For these reasons, it could be said that Yn Chruinnaght has blatantly avoided the commercialism that many modern festivals rely upon, simply because of the principle of the issue. As a manifestation of a nationalist movement that boycotted the influx of new residents and the establishment of the Island as an offshore finance centre, to receive funding from these sources would compromise their ethical standpoint:

I would think that history would probably say that FSFO did have an effect on the Government thinking, and it has caused them at the very least, to put money into heritage, which ... I have reservations about. Some of it, sort of trying to buy people off by putting money into heritage (Greg Joughin 24/07/2000).

In many ways, the ideology of the Manx traditional festival has developed very little in

the past thirty years. The scene is reliant on the loyalty of its followers, local talent and contacts that have been made through other inter-Celtic festivals. Although Yn Chruinnaght has had many venues since 1978 and has seen the rise and fall of a ‘bier-keller’ ambience, in essence, the context of the festival has remained the same. It is not concerned with expansion or the opinions of the outside world, it fosters nationalist allegiances (although it attempts to welcome all), and it is thoroughly egalitarian in its ideology.

2.3 Competitions

In academic writing, competitions are seen as an important part of a revival process because they communicate information within the tradition and to outside audiences: “Festivals and competitions promote visibility... in addition to raising the status of the winner and the entire genre that is displayed” (Ronström 1996:10). On an individual level, would-be professional musicians and groups can be talent-spotted at these competitions, and adjudicators and the teachers of successful pupils can receive high acclaim for their contribution (see Cooke [undated]). Being pitted against equivalent musicians can encourage individual performers to improve their technique and showmanship. For instance, Gold-medal winners at the Scottish Mod frequently become inundated with invitations to perform at various venues; prestige is attached to the award because the competition is respected as an institution. Visibility can also be raised for the tradition itself through its award winners, as competitions (or prize-winners concerts) are sometimes broadcast to national audiences through radio and television. In more recent times, competitions such as the Danny Kyle Open Stage at Glasgow’s annual Celtic Connections and the Young Scottish Traditional Music Awards offer recording contracts and professional engagements as an incentive, with the promise of ‘fame and fortune’!

Competitions gather musicians together and provide an opportunity to compare performance practices, repertoire and style under the guidance (or restrictions) of standardized and accepted rules. Therefore, competitions are particularly important to

the development of revivalist movements, because “... competition accelerates stylistic change and standardization” (Blaustein 1993:269). McCarthy (1999:191) commented on the importance of musical competition in Ireland:

The significance of competition in the development of Irish musical culture... it brought a degree of uniformity and standardization to the transmission of music that left deep traces on the motivation to teach and learn music, and the way in which music performance was evaluated and rewarded.

Since its revival in 1977/8, Yn Chruinnaght has included musical competitions as part of its activities. The original Yn Cruinnaght Vanninagh Ashoonagh founded in 1920s (see Chapter Two) was almost entirely based on competition, and when it was reincarnated by Mona Douglas in the 1970s she had aimed to preserve this element:

[The competitions] were possibly more important then, than they are now. The first year or two we offered huge prizes, and one year [Millennium of Tynwald - 1979] we offered a thousand pound prize for the best group... But the competitions were inter-Celtic in those days... and they would usually have three international judges... So we had that kind of calibre of judges for that sort of competition, and the competition was really tense. Now it's much more relaxed, much better (Fenella Bazin, who was a member of the committee in the 1970s, interviewed 26/05/1999).

In the heyday of its musical competitions, Yn Chruinnaght was responsible for the formation of musical groups which still exist today. Clare Kilgallon (interviewed 19/04/2000) spoke about the inception of the Manx Gaelic choir, Cliogaree Twoaie who formed especially for an Yn Chruinnaght competition in 1984: “... three or four of them... from Bock Yuan Fannee [dance group] decided let's go and sing at Yn Chruinnaght in the competitions.” The ‘other’ Manx Gaelic singing group, Caarjyn Coojdjagh (Friends Together) was also formed in response to the competitions, although not until 1989: “It originated as a group of friends who wished to support the Gaelic group singing competitions in Yn Chruinnaght competitions” (*Yn Chruinnaght Programme* 2001:20).

In the last ten years though, the significance of the competitions has diminished, as has the incentive to compete. Since Mona Douglas' death in 1987, the context of the

festival has gradually shifted to accommodate the revivalists' egalitarian approach towards performance, where informality and equality are encouraged. Douglas' vision for Manx culture had been to develop a national art-form based upon traditional symbols and in its earlier years, the Yn Chruinnaght competitions emulated the Welsh Eisteddfod and the Scottish Mod. The competitions also offered an 'traditional' alternative to the classical music-based Guild (Manx Music Festival), of which Douglas was also an enthusiastic supporter. However, the revivalists who carried on the organization of the modern-day Yn Chruinnaght were of a different generation to Douglas. Their perception of traditional culture is of a grass-roots nature, where elements of classical high-art, professionalism, imperialism and formality are all rejected. Ronström (1996:11) states that these attitudes are reflective of contemporary fashions in many revivalist movements:

While the... institutionalized forms of folk music and dance were geared towards making folk traditions a part of national high culture or "the great tradition", the revival of the 1970s was rather aimed at making the folk traditions again a part of everyday life, "the little tradition".

In many ways, Yn Chruinnaght has become the antithesis of the Guild, because it has made conscious moves to display an alternative form of Manx culture. Griffin (2001:19-20) notes that the contrasting perceptions of the Manx identity appear to be the main source of acrimony between the Guild and Yn Chruinnaght.²²⁷

The Manx Music Festival [Guild] is not all things to all men; it does have its opponents, from those who see competition in music as being unhealthy for musical development, to those who think it could be doing more to help the more "traditional" Manx arts. Indeed, there is great debate among many parties as to what the term "Manx" actually signifies... There are... a number of interested parties in the Isle of Man who vehemently promote what they see to be a Manx culture that is not to be found in the Manx Music Festival. To the promoters of this particular cause, the Manx Music Festival is seen as anything but "Manx"; it

227 It is also possible that the Guild's continuous 111 year history and its dynastic tradition among the participants are perceived as being exclusive. Griffin (2001:11) notes that local singers or musicians in the modern-day Guild are often the 5th or 6th generation of their family to be taking part. Although the Guild offers classes for Gaelic solo and choral singing, Manx dancing, instrumental ensemble, Manx Gaelic and dialect, there is a noticeable absence of participants from the folk scene, (with the exception of Philip Gawne and family who do support these competitions). Information taken from the *Manx Music Festival Programme 2002*.

may take place in the Isle of Man but that is the only claim to the loaded term “Manx” that it can make. It does nothing to promote the traditional way of life that was changed forever by the arrival of English dominance in the nineteenth century, with the exception of a few token “Manx” language classes; it is, indeed, part of the system that was responsible for the erosion of Manx culture in the first place... Many supporters and promoters of the “traditional” see the Manx Music Festival as not being sympathetic to what they perceive as being Manx Culture. Although the Manx Music Festival has... periodically offered a number of Manx language, music and dance classes, this has never been wholly accepted and supported by the “traditional” community... [Instead, Yn Chruinnaght] has been embraced by the traditionalists as being truly “Manx.”

Although Yn Chruinnaght is now more concerned with communal entertainment through events such as informal concerts, ceilis, workshops and sessions, competitions are still included, possibly as a token gesture or loyalty to Douglas’ ideals:

There have been many changes over the years, and there will continue to be changes. However, at heart, Yn Chruinnaght will continue to promote the vision of its founder, Mona Douglas (*Yn Chruinnaght Programme* 1995:9).

At the time of writing, the children’s competitions are held the week before the official start of the annual festival, coinciding with the last week of the school summer term and they finish with a concert featuring the prizewinners. The adult (open) classes are held during the festival, with a prize presentation later in the week, where certificates and trophies are awarded. Junior and adult competitions include categories for traditional Manx dance, song, music, Gaelic language and literature, and Manx dialect. While the competitions are mainly supported by the local folk community, schoolchildren also regularly take part, and for some schools, (depending on individual teachers), Yn Chruinnaght marks an important part of their educational year.²²⁸

While categories are prescribed at Yn Chruinnaght,²²⁹ the musical content of each entry

228 An illustration of this was the noticeable increase of participation from pupils of the Dhoon Primary School in the Yn Chruinnaght competitions of 2002. This was entirely due to the encouragement of recently employed teachers, Sarah Shimmin and Sue Ling Jaques who were both members of dance group, Ny Fennee.

229 Yn Chruinnaght Music Competitions (based on 2000): Solo Instrumental, Instrumental Duet, Instrumental Group, Original Tune Composed in the Manx Idiom, Solo Unaccompanied Bagpipes, Manx Music Interpretation, Recitation (Manx Dialect), Solo in Manx Gaelic, Duet in Manx Gaelic, and Two Songs in Manx Gaelic for Choir.

is decided by the performers themselves and apart from the bagpiping class, instrumentalists are grouped together. Because no repertoire is set for the entrants, the classes really are open to interpretation. There is however, an presumed emphasis on the Gaelic language and for traditional music as found in Manx historical source material, and this is perpetuated through the few available source books.²³⁰ There are no specifications stating that the music has to be Manx, and although competitors will normally select Manx melodies, there have been instances of self-composed melodies being performed.²³¹ The solo instruments too, tend to conform to the typical folk favourites of the Island (fiddle, harp, whistle), although the syllabus does not place restrictions on instrumentation. In contrast to competitions where restrictions are placed on the repertoire, style and instrumentation, therefore validating “certain aspects of the ongoing tradition while delegitimizing others” (Blaustein 1993:269), the Yn Chruinnaght music competitions appear to encourage an element of freedom.

In truth though, Yn Chruinnaght has had to accommodate this freedom because no recognizable criteria has been identified in Manx traditional music. The dance competitions are more successful than the music in this respect, because a style of Manx dancing has been standardized within its revival. There are particular steps and techniques prescribed by Mona Douglas and Leighton Stowell that have become ‘characteristic’ to the Manx tradition, and therefore the adjudicators are familiar with the stylistic parameters from which dancers can be assessed. This presents a difference to the music tradition. Apart from the correct pronunciation of Gaelic in the singing competitions, there are no recognizable stylistic boundaries to adhere to in Manx traditional music. Stylistically, there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way of performing Manx traditional music (as would be the case in Pibroch competitions for instance), or at least no one has actually defined what the preferential boundaries may be. It is therefore

230 Mainly *Kiaull yn Theay* 1 and 2. As the most well-known and accessible tune books, most of the participants refer to these sources for recital material. In contrast, participants rarely employ the Douglas/Foster arrangements for voice and piano (although some of the songs are available in the *Manx National Song Book* Vol. 2); a repertoire that is often used in the Guild for the Gaelic singing classes.

231 In 2000, I witnessed a duet of “Clementine” translated into Manx Gaelic and arranged for two female voices. The tendency to perform self-composed pieces is predominant amongst the younger generation of Manx traditional musicians.

interesting to learn that Manx musicians do actually consider themselves to have performance parameters and a standardized style, but when asked to elaborate (see various interviews), musicians cannot describe what those standards are: “I think there is a Manx idiom, but to actually define it is so difficult. It’s a thing you feel inside yourself” (Peter Cubberley 29/07/1999). David Fisher (23/12/1998) added that;

I think it might take another century before we settle down to a traditional Manx style. But, you can always tell a Manx musician and Manx music. There’s something about it. No matter what ornamentation you put on it, if it’s a Manx tune, no matter how it’s been ornamented, you can still tell it’s a Manx musician or a Manx tune. And I don’t know what that certain quality is.

For a relatively ‘new’ tradition like the present Manx traditional music scene, the problem occurs over who is qualified to accurately comment on why one musician provided a better performance of Manx traditional music than another. In an article for *Béaloides* (1996-7:231), Manx musician, David Speers, declared that “adjudicators [for Yn Chruinnaght] often appear poorly qualified to make any critical comment of value... with the result that no real guidance is given”. He argued that as a revived tradition that was established without any historical research into performance practices, there are no standards to adhere to, and therefore no grounds for criticism over individual players.

In well-established or continuous traditions, adjudicators are selected for their experience and knowledge of the music under study, and therefore performers anticipate their response and may take heed of their guidance (see Cooke [undated]). Of course, it is not always straightforward in any musically competitive situation, whether classical or traditional: Adjudicators may have preferences for a particular repertoire or style of playing, and with experience, performers may adjust their playing accordingly to suit that adjudicator. Furthermore, performers may take offence at a judge’s decision and perhaps feel they know more about the tradition than them. The use of written music as an ‘authoritative source’ whether as part of a set repertoire or provided for the adjudicator, can also be limiting for some performers who have been brought up through an oral tradition (cf. Blaustein 1993:266-9 and Cooke 1986:127-8). These

issues rarely effect Yn Chruinnaght competitions though.

Nowadays, the adjudicators of Yn Chruinnaght music classes are usually local classical music teachers or older members of the revival who have come to be regarded as 'tradition-bearers'.²³² The marking system within these competitions is an ambiguous area. Because there are no prescribed guidelines for grading the performers, no set pieces and no need to supply written musical material, the marking system can vary from year to year depending on the adjudicator. However, when the results are announced, the criteria appears to be relatively simple; competitors are judged for overall musicality and a knowledge of their instrument, and from personal observation, it would seem that some judges often rely merely on the intonation of a performer to decide who should win. Winners seem to be selected on their technical ability, rather than for having an firm understanding of a regional vernacular.

Traditional music competitions are often associated with rigid guidelines, high standards, and the dividing of participants into winners, runners up and losers. However, Yn Chruinnaght does not appear to possess these competitive qualities, nor does it appear to employ a discriminatory grading system. For instance, in the open instrumental solo competition a few years ago there were only two entries; one musician with over ten years experience and another who had been learning their instrument for less than a year. Despite the obvious differences in competence, the more experienced player beat the other by one point (both got scores of a 'distinction' level), and everybody seemed satisfied with the result. The participants of Yn Chruinnaght competitions tend to consist of a small nucleus of musicians who take part in most of the competitions. This may not be a particularly unusual feature of musical competitions, but there have been instances at Yn Chruinnaght where the adjudicator has felt inclined to award the prizes alternately as not to cause offence. Furthermore, when there are more than three entries in a class, a 'joint' third place is often awarded, so that there is no loser. For a revived tradition where there are no musical standards set

232 In fact, as a 'music graduate' and 'researcher of Manx traditional music', I was asked to judge the children's music competitions in 2001. I declined because I did not feel really qualified to adjudicate.

by historical authenticity, and an ideology which advocates a friendly, egalitarian atmosphere, Yn Chruinnaght adjudicators do not want to discourage participants with what would be construed as constructive criticism in other circumstances, and therefore usually concede to the ‘everyone’s a winner’ option.

In comparison, the adult dance competitions are much more competitive and well attended than the music classes, and are judged by experienced Manx dancers.²³³ The major dance groups and accompanying musicians rehearse months in advance of the competitions, enthusiastically inventing new dances based upon the ‘Manx idiom’ and selecting their best dancers for the more demanding roles. Here, the incentive is not necessarily to win in the competitive sense, but by recognizing that other dance groups of an equivalent standard will be taking part, each soloist or dance team is encouraged to perform at their best. The dance competition rules do not predetermine which dances are to be performed, and for many, the highlight of the classes is when each group will perform a twenty minute display of composed and traditional dances. These competitions usually attract a large audience, and this can perhaps be explained by the context of the performance. Held in the main festival venue, the dance competitions provide a public spectacle which Yn Chruinnaght audiences eagerly anticipate. The public know that the displays will be exciting and new, and most audience members will have a preferred team to support.

In contrast, the open music competitions take place in a church hall or a side room, and there is a fragmentary attendance from the participants and audience members. In this case, the prospect of raised visibility for individual musicians is improbable at Yn Chruinnaght and the musicians certainly do not have expectations of being talent-spotted by agents or record-producers. Instead of a source of inspiration and development in performance practices the competitions merely give an opportunity for individuals, bands or choirs to air material in front of friendly audience (or practise, as

233 Adjudicators have included older members of the Manx Folk Dance Society which was formed in 1951, or founding members of Bock Yuan Fannee (1977). Because they were guided by dance revivalists Mona Douglas and Leighton Stowell, their apprentices are now seen as having legitimate grounds for judging the competitions. One of the judges, Ian Radcliffe, also adjudicates the Manx dancing competitions at the Guild.

some will go on to perform the same material that evening in a concert), and give those learning an instrument a chance to play in public for the first time. Ultimately, the musicians who do take part, do so out of a sense of loyalty to the ‘tradition of competition’ at Yn Chruinnaght, as was once the objective.²³⁴ Therefore the incentive to improve oneself cannot be fully achieved through competition, as there are no personal challenges for the competitors.

Unlike the serious nature of adult competitions at, for instance, the Guild or the Scottish Mod, Yn Chruinnaght lacks that competitive spirit with its mature members, and the competitions are treated instead as a yearly regeneration of source material and ideology. With regard to development of the music tradition, the category of ‘Original Tune Composed in the Manx Idiom’ has produced prize-winning melodies that have been integrated into the popular repertoire:

... the Chruinnaght’s a useful place for that, because it has encouraged competition. Not competition with this great desire to get a great trophy at the end of it or anything like that, but competition in the good [sense] of producing new material... Which can then go on and be used, because in both song and music, and dance, you get the public performance, and then people say, “yeah, I like that”... then it goes on to be used (Fiona McArdle 19/0519/99).

Greg Joughin (interviewed 24/07/2000) agreed that while the competitive element is viewed with negativity by most of the folk scene, the competitions provide a incentive to create new material:

I’m not a great believer in competition music, song and dance, ‘cause there’s always... one winner and the rest are losers. But... they’ve sort of created this new tradition of creating new dances and some of them have gone on to be sort of standards.

While it is true that for Yn Chruinnaght, new melodies, songs and dances are composed, and hypothetically, the standard of playing of some of its participants is annually put to the test, it is unlikely that the whole experience would have any effect

234 For instance, the choir Cliogaree Twoaie, who were originally formed in response to the competitions, are still ardent supporters, regardless of the fact that they are often the only competitors.

on the development of performance style.

On a local level though, the use of competition as a source of transmission and visibility could be applicable in regard to the children's classes. These competitions of Yn Chruinnaght continue to be well-attended by primary schoolchildren from all over the Island, although their participation invariably depends on the encouragement of individual schoolteachers, who often treat the festival as an end of term project. The media also takes a great interest in the children's classes, publishing the results and photographs of the competitors in the Island's newspapers. These methods of transmission introduce new faces to the folk scene every year, and has brought about an awareness of Manx culture within the younger generation (and their parents) in the Island:

... it starts with very small children in infant school, and if they become aware of the existence of the music and the success of it, then they certainly do develop from that, very often to take an independent interest in it within and... outside school (Fiona McArdle 19/0519/99).

The non-competitive nature as demonstrated in the adult classes is generally reflective of ideology of the entire Manx folk scene. Apart from Emma Christian, who has received little support from the Manx folk scene,²³⁵ there are no professional traditional musicians in the Isle of Man, nor does anyone appear to harbour any such aspirations. Therefore the competitive element that is often associated with making a living out of music and securing professional gigs is not apparent in the revivalists' ideology, and that concept has been extended into the competitions. This attitude is reminiscent of the 'grass roots' folk movements of the 1970s, where "... any creative artist who makes money is not a great artist" (Woods 1979:85). While few informants have actually expressed any dissension towards the competitive part of Yn Chruinnaght, it would follow logic that the prospect of members of the community competing against each other would be a direct breach of the revivalist grass roots ideology (see Chapter Four).

Manx traditional musicians and dancers have also participated in competitions outwith

235 Emma Christian was a finalist in the BBC 2 Young Tradition Award in 1995.

the Isle of Man. Since the 1970s, local groups have entered inter-Celtic competitions such as the Feile Pan-Celtiagh (formerly known as ‘Celtavision’) in Ireland, where musicians perform a composed song, as per the Eurovision Song Contest. In recent years, young band, Fo’n Chrackan, entered the BBC Young Folk Musicians awards, and Perree T, the youthful by-product of Perree Bane competed at the British Telecom Festival of Dance in 1998. These groups have not brought any awards back to the Island as yet, but their willingness to participate in ambitious contests on an international scale displays the self-confidence that some of the younger members of the folk scene now possess.

The role of competition within the Manx folk scene is to create a context for communal activities rather than to encourage a competitive spirit amongst its members. It gives the impression of allowing anyone admittance to the community through its loose restrictions and easy-going nature, but the unspoken emphasis on Gaelic and specific context of performance (i.e. the use of folk instruments, unaccompanied voices in the competitions and non-classical style) has placed boundaries that protect its own members, but potentially prevents access to outsiders.

3. Distribution of Knowledge - Revivalist Industry - Media and Market

The existence of a revivalist industry (whether commercial or not) is largely dependent on the size of the movement and the national economy that supports the culture. Whether funded through local institutions, private commercial ventures or through the revivalists’ own pockets, the acquisition of specialist publications, radio programmes and recordings are usually dependent on a highly developed market economy. As Livingston explained (1999:82n), this stage is not an essential requirement of all revivals, but it can determine the longevity and growth of a movement.

It is impossible to accurately gauge the size of the Manx traditional music following because it is part of a community that supports several aspects of culture and involves individuals of varying levels of commitment. Given that most language enthusiasts tend

to also support the music scene, and that many musicians also have a knowledge of Manx Gaelic, it could be speculated that supporters of Manx traditional music consist of around 2.2% of the Island's population (1689 people) if based upon the Isle of Manx Census 2001 which recorded the number of Manx residents who could speak, read or write in Manx Gaelic. Depending on the size of the movement, Livingston (1999:73) claims that an associated media and commercial industry strengthens the sense of community within a revivalist group: "revivalist magazines, journals, recordings and radio stations help to bring people separated by geographical space together." While this may be one consequence, this stage of a revival can also be viewed as a method of communication between leaders of the movement to its followers and outsiders, because the revivalist ideology is perpetuated through print and sound. 'Visibility' (Ronström 1996:10) in the outside world then distributes knowledge about the tradition to a wider audience, and potentially leads to its identification as a genre.

Revivalist enterprises can be either directed and produced by the revivalists themselves, or from commercial establishments who have detected financial potential in the movement. In regard to source material, the publication of Manx traditional music has been dependent upon individual innovation from within the revival. With the exception of Gill's *Manx National Songs* which had been republished at various stages since 1896, there were no accessible tune-books in the Island until core revivalist Colin Jerry published *Kiaull yn Theay - Manx Music and songs for Folk Instruments* in 1978. As discussed in Chapter Four, Jerry's selection of 81 melodies from various original sources was of immense importance to the development of the revival. This publication both represented the musical objectives of the original revivalist group in their choice of melodies, but because it was the first and only accessible source, the repertoire of subsequent revivalist musicians was also standardized. Melodies and songs from the ensuing publications of *Kiaull yn Theay 2* (1979) and *Cur Cheb (Have a Try) - a Beginners book of Manx Tunes for Whistle and Recorder* (1982) were also accepted into the popular repertoire.²³⁶ In contrast, Jerry's *Kiaull Vannin - a Source Book for Manx Tunes, transcribed from the collections of Dr. John Clague and others* (1987 [1991])

236 *Cur Cheb* features a selection of the easier melodies from *Kiaull yn Theay* 1 and 2, and is designed as a children's book.

which contains around 450 melodies from all available sources has had less impact on the folk scene, and only a fraction of the melodies are actually played.²³⁷ This can be possibly attributed to the fact that the book is not published or available from retail outlets. To date, *Kiaull Vannin* is only available on request. Jerry had published *Kiaull yn Theay* 1 and 2 at the beginning of the revival for the purposes of establishing Manx traditional music and to give enthusiasts a selection of melodies and songs to play, but it is unlikely that he had planned for that limited selection to constitute the entire repertoire for the next thirty years. Unwittingly, the influence and reliance on the medium of print in revivals such as this, leads to a standardized and potentially stagnant repertoire.

Therefore, much of the repertoire of contemporary musicians is still limited to the collections of source material that were selected and published by Colin Jerry in 1978 and 1979; the ‘yellow book’, *Kiaull yn Theay* and the ‘red book’, *Kiaull yn Theay* 2. These books have been extremely influential in creating a uniformity within the repertoire of Manx traditional musicians and this is further reinforced by the few recordings that tend to feature the same corpus of traditional melodies (see Discography).

However, a sense of rigidity bound by the repertoire developed shortly after the inception of the revival, as by the mid-1980s performers were beginning to feature their own melodies in their concert programmes and commercial recordings, and some of these compositions written in the ‘Manx idiom’ have become integrated into the popular repertoire.²³⁸ The reliance on such a small and limited repertoire has produced

237 Other publications that are available to the folk music community include Colin Jerry and John Kaneen's songbook *A Garland for John Clague* (1998), The Manx Folk Dance Society's *Leighton Stowell and Other Manx Dances* [with accompanying cassette] (1989) and Fenella Bazin's *Ree ny Marrey. Traditional Manx Songs for Children with Piano Accompaniments and Chords for Guitar and Keyboard* (1994). Bernard Osborne, violin teacher and fiddler for the Manx Folk Dance Society, has also produced an unpublished book of Manx tunes which he has used with his pupils since the 1970s. Over the past few years, a facsimile of A.W. Moore's *Manx Ballads and Music* (1896 [1998]) was printed, as was Anne Gilchrist's articles on Manx traditional music for the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* (1924-6 [2001]). Most of these are available at selected bookshops, or at museum shops on the Island, but not necessarily in the music shops.

238 For example, melodies written by the following musicians have become part of the living tradition: David Speers ["Quoi t'an Dooiney Quagh" and "I Once Loved a Lady" ("Keayrt hug mee

another new approach in recent times. With the common belief that the capacity of Manx source material has been both established and exhausted, younger members of the folk scene have tended to move away from the Manx repertoire and search further afield for inspiration. Sisters Kirsty and Katie Lawrence were brought up within the folk scene, as pupils of Peter Cubberley (of Mactullagh Vannin) and as members of traditional music and dance groups, Paitechyn Vannin and Ny Fennee. They consider themselves to be very familiar with the Manx repertoire, believing that they have explored all possibilities. Because of this, they have abandoned Manx traditional music, now preferring to perform mainly Irish and Scottish melodies, along with their own compositions:

We started playing Irish stuff and Scottish stuff because... I mean, Manx music's brilliant, but you run out. You definitely run out of good tunes to play and... we just wanted to move on really... When we were kids we used to go through the books looking for tunes to play for the Chruinnaght. Different tunes every year and now we don't even do that, and we should go back and start going through the tunes again, and finding some more... We kind of get tunes from Irish and Scottish CDs, and just do them in our own way (Interview with Kirsty Lawrence, 02/01/2001).

As yet, there have been no specific publications devoted to new tunes composed in the 'Manx idiom', although a few melodies have been featured in the Manx Heritage Foundation's magazine *Inheritance*. Clearly, the Manx revivalist market is not as comprehensive as that of a larger movement, so in some respects, discontented Manx musicians have had to concede to the mainstream folk industry for inspiration.

Revivalist newsletters or magazines have not been produced especially to cater for Manx traditional musicians, as has been found in other documented revival movements. Special issues on music have instead been incorporated within Manx cultural, political or Gaelic language publications. Low-key publications by the cultural revivalists have included *Fritlag* which in the 1980s focused upon the Manx language, *Yn Pabyr Seyr*, the free paper of Mec Vannin, both of which were distributed within the revivalist

Graih)], Peter Cubberley ["Yn Ratch Rannag" and "Balley Keeill Eoin"], Bob Carswell ["Oh Vanninee"] and Katie Lawrence ["Dooragh" and "Tune for Grandad"]. Few of these have appeared in print, but have been transmitted through sessions, dance group rehearsals and recordings.

community, and the Manx section of the Celtic League magazine, *Carn*.²³⁹ Articles about traditional music have also been featured in local commercial magazines, such as *Manx Life* and the more recent publication of the Manx Heritage Foundation, *Inheritance*.

Media coverage of the traditional music scene has also been directed primarily by insiders of the revival, and not by entrepreneurial 'middle-men' as Ronström has suggested (1996:10). Every Sunday, since 1977, button accordionist, John Kaneen, and flautist, (dancer, singer, Gaelic speaker and academic!) Bob Carswell have kept the Island up-to-date with the traditional music of the Island and abroad on *Manx Radio*.²⁴⁰ John's *The Folk Show* "... is a mixture of folk music from, mainly, the English speaking world with contributions from both traditional and contemporary sources..." (Manx Radio Web-site), whereas Bob presents a bilingual show called *Claare ny Gael* (The Programme of the Gaels) which features Manx folklore, with Manx and Celtic music. According to Manx Radio statistics, John Kaneen received an average of 2,738 listeners per show during 2001/2, and Bob Carswell had an average 3,283. These figures denote 2-3% of Manx Radio's average audience of 78,000 listeners, and that percentage has been consistent over the past twenty years.²⁴¹ If compared with the average size of the

239 *Manninagh*, a folklore journal edited by Mona Douglas in the early 1970s featured articles about Manx music. However, this publication slightly pre-dated the revival under study.

240 Brian Stowell, former Manx Language Officer also presents a Manx Gaelic language show on Manx Radio. Harpist and composer Charles Guard has been a broadcaster for Manx Radio for many years, and singer, Emma Christian currently has a Celtic and World Music Show. See <<http://www.manxradio.com/presenters>>.

241 George Ferguson, Sales and Marketing Manager of Manx Radio provided the following information:

Claare ny Gael (presented by Bob Carswell: 6.30pm - 7.45pm Sundays) and *The Folk Show* (John Kaneen: 5.30pm - 6.30pm Sundays) have both been running for more than 20 years. In that time, their listener-ship has remained static in terms of numbers. It remains at around 2 - 3 per cent of the station's total audience of 78,000. In the case of *Claare ny Gael* the figures for 2001/2002 was an average of 3,283 per programme and *The Folk Show* 2,738. The other traditional music programme is Emma Christian's *The Isle of Music - Celtic and Roots Music* (9pm - 9.45pm Thursdays) which has been running for about five years and received an average of 2,738 listeners per programme in 2002. 2 - 3 per cent was the national average for 'specialist programmes', whether they be jazz, dance band, heavy rock or folk. In a survey undertaken by the station in 2002, 47% of people interviewed said they would like to hear more traditional music on Manx Radio, but 43% said they would like to hear less. Some years ago, the Sunday folk programmes had been relegated to medium wave from FM, resulting in a poor reception in many parts of the Island, but from April 2003 they will be available on both frequencies. This was a result of a general shake-up in programming rather than a response to complaints. As a government-owned station, it was part of their remit to include some 'indigenous' material

folk movement in the Isle of Man, then these figures are fairly equitable. The influence of the media has therefore been limited, and these shows largely serve as a source of entertainment and information to those involved in the folk scene. The size of the Island and of the movement has not justified the funding of television companies, but because radio is more localized and less expensive to finance, traditional music has been granted a small percentage of the local air-waves. Of all the Celtic countries, only Brittany has achieved its own cable channel devoted to the Breton language and culture, an achievement that the rest of the Celtic nations yearn for: “Unless a language is heard and seen on the television, many young people will not think of it” (Stowell 2001:28). The Isle of Man does not have its own regional television station, but shares the Border ITV network, based in Carlisle, which has very occasionally featured Manx traditional music as part of the news. In more recent times, Manx traditional music has been featured on Scottish Gaelic television programmes, including *Cairt-Turais*, shown on STV.

In instances where a tradition is transformed into a mainstream “popular culture phenomenon” (Livingston 1999:80), the associated record industry plays an important part in raising the visibility of the revival. However, in its thirty year history, the Manx traditional music revival has only produced about twenty ‘commercial’ recordings (see Discography), and very few of these have been financed through record companies. Patently, as the *Manx Radio* figures of listener-ship indicate, there is not an established market for Manx traditional material. Most of the recorded artistes or groups have had some financial backing from the Manx Heritage Foundation, but with the prospect of limited sales in the Island and no established or exploited market off the Island, it is a risk that funding bodies have rarely taken. Celtic harpist Charles Guard was an exception to the rule, as in 1977 he reached an international audience with his album, *Avenging and Bright* on the Irish label, Claddagh Records, and performed regularly at venues off the Island. In recent times, Emma Christian too has also had immense

(whether it be music or language) in their programming schedule and this included Brian Stowell coming onto the Andy Wint Show to do a (Manx Gaelic) ‘Word A Day’ slot. Of traditional music in general, George Ferguson stated that; “It attracts a narrow band of our audience, but it is vitally important that we give it air time because it is part of our history and it tells people what the nation is all about” (verbal source).

international success with her interpretation of Manx traditional melodies on recorder, Celtic harp and voice. Alternatively some of the Manx artistes have followed recent trends in home recording; "... a global DIY movement in the music industry facilitated by the availability of cheap computer-based means of production" (Hannan 2002:5). These recordings are not available in the mainstream retail outlets, but are distributed within the community, and therefore the chances of raised visibility through recordings is minimal.

Although they have limited appeal outside of the folk scene, traditional music recordings have made a small impact inside the Manx folk community. One particular case was the influence of Mactullagh Vannin's self-titled album (1986). The re-release of their album in 1992 by the Manx Heritage Foundation had a newfound effect on the new generation, provoking youth group Paitchyn Vannin to release their own recording, "Fragments" (1992), a album that bore an uncanny likeness to their predecessors.

Because of the size of the movement, there are no specialist music shops in the Isle of Man catering for the needs of the traditional music movement. Also, because no particular instrument has been identified as being indigenously Manx, no instrument-makers have moved over to profit from the revival. The few musical instrument shops on the Island stock a very general range of goods to cater for the local rock groups, brass bands, school orchestras and so on, but do not purposefully cater to traditional musicians in the Island. Cheap whistles and bodhrans can be purchased in local shops, but when players have become more proficient, they have had to approach shops away from the Island for better quality items. Ireland has become a popular destination for this. Day-trips to Dublin on the Isle of Man Steam Packet boats have given Manx musicians the chance to purchase quality and sometimes hand-made instruments. Mail-order companies such as, 'Hobgoblin' in England have also been used, especially for their DIY harp kits which have become very popular in the north of the Island in recent years.

The emergence of a revivalist industry as predicted by Livingston (1999) has occurred in the Isle of Man, although it is has been on a very small scale. Because of its size and

limited appeal there has been little outside commercial interest, and the industry has instead been constructed and maintained by the revivalists themselves. Because much of the produce has been on a limited edition, 'DIY' basis, it merely serves the revivalist community and therefore does not act as a source of visibility. The revivalist industry supplies the demand from its own members, but that demand is still very small.

Conclusions

As sources of communication and organization, the impact of revivalist activities and industry in the Manx folk scene has been fragmentary. Historical research has been conducted in hindsight to legitimate the revival, but has served mainly to advocate decisions that have already been formed as part of the revivalist ethos. There are no formal music organizations that supply information or encourage development and expansion through regular workshops or classes. Instead, the pedagogical manner of the main dance teams and the few school music groups "pass the information on in a controlled manner" (Livingston 1999:73), and via this process, the revivalist ideology is perpetuated from one generation to another, albeit on a relatively small scale. Where there is a sense of leadership, the tradition appears to flourish, but where there is no sufficient guidance, as demonstrated at the Bwoie Doal sessions, some individuals have grown impatient and have proceeded away from the core of the tradition. The folk scene has had to accommodate both "purist" and "syncretist" approaches (Baumann 1996:80-1) in its interpretation, but as demonstrated in other revivalist movements, these positions are "rarely separable" (Blaustein 1993:264) and are a sign of a healthy tradition. However, while members of the folk scene believe that there is an established Manx tradition, with its core located in the Bwoie Doal sessions, and development has been encouraged with its younger participants, as yet, the full potential of the musical tradition has not been achieved, and is currently limited by musical repertoire and an absence of uniformity and guidance.

The majority of folk community events and commercial ventures are directed from inside of the movement, with little outside assistance. The folk scene has accepted some

financial support from the Isle of Man Government (via their 'mediator', Charles Guard), but as an essentially nationalist movement, it has preferred to remain independent. They need acknowledgement from local institutions and policies to officially identify the tradition, but its members rarely want to compromise their self-sufficient status. Furthermore, visibility is not an important issue for the Manx revivalists. Although the community wishes to assert their perception of the Manx identity through the local festivals and events, it is also a movement which wishes to remain exclusive, and therefore little effort is actually made towards attracting new participants.

It is clear that the ideological focus and the propagation of Manx traditional culture has been directed by insiders of the movement, an element which is not entirely consistent with Ronström's hypothesis (1996:10). Independent middle-men have not been employed as the 'go-betweens', nor have influential agents offered their services to the Manx cultural or language revivals. Instead, the individuals who have instigated these developments in the Isle of Man are personally connected with the revival, and have taken on organizational roles on behalf of their community.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the development of the most recent revival of Manx traditional music from its initial stages to the present day. A descriptive model designed by Livingston (1999:69) was employed as the structural framework, and the content of the thesis closely referred to each of her six steps with the aim of producing a balanced and extensive study which may correspond with other case studies of revivalism in the future. Other abstract accounts of revivalism have also been alluded to, in addition to ethnomusicological, sociological and political material. This material has been combined with a review of Manx historical information, individual interviews, a qualitative survey and original source material to achieve a full understanding of the movement under study.

Primarily, a major issue to contend with in this particular case study was determining whether this movement was actually a 'revival'. As outlined in the first two chapters, there have been two major periods of collecting/revivalism in the Isle of Man before the 1970s, and because of the close proximity of personalities, agendas, source material and the cross-over of timescales, the identification of the latest movement as a revival has been challenging. The issue of whether one revival can overlap with another has not been addressed in academic literature, and although there are many examples of related revivals following each another, they have often been discussed separately. Therefore, one purpose of this thesis has been to demonstrate that this new movement was not merely an extension of the Mona Douglas phenomenon, as some of her associates have suggested, but a revival in its own right. Although she provided suitable conditions for the new revival and had an obvious influence over some features of their ideology, the 1970s revival would have occurred despite Douglas' previous movement because of the widespread fashion for folk and ethnic revivalism around the world at this time.

The use of Livingston's model and other academic accounts have not only been employed to identify the typical characteristics of the current movement in Manx traditional music, but have been used as a guide to defining the contemporary

understanding of the term, revival. Although the term has been used throughout this thesis, it is only after an extensive analysis of the whole movement, with a consideration of the contrasting motivations, context, fashions and socio-political influences of the Bwoie Doal generation and that of Mona Douglas before them, that this movement merits the entitlement of 'revival'. The definition of revival when applied to culture is often misinterpreted, or taken too literally, because the term evokes an image of a dead tradition which has been resurrected long after its true context, but as most world-wide examples prove, a tradition is often still alive and can be accessed through tradition-bearers. Hence, its reinvigoration by a new generation through a contemporary objective brings about its 'revival'. To translate this to Manx traditional music, then it could be said that a form of Gaelic music had continued since its collection in the 1890s through Mona Douglas and her revivalist work, but the 1970s brought a new incentive, agenda, context and approach, and this surely earns it the label of revival.

Livingston defines the first stage of a music revival as the initiative taken by "an individual or small group of "core revivalists"" who choose the tradition and make decisions about the direction of its revival. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, the influence of 'individuals' is essential to the development of a revivalist movement, and their "predilections" (*ibid*:68) can significantly predetermine the outcome. Livingston and others have recognized that core revivalists are usually middle class and outsiders to the geographical location of the tradition, and certainly these connotations pertain to the Manx revivalists, although not exclusively. Because the traditional music revival was an essential part of the concurrent nationalist movement in the 1970s, the issue is perhaps a little more complex. The Manx revival has shown that its middle class participants tended to be apolitical 'outsiders' who instigated and concentrated on the cultural side of the revival, whereas Manx-born participants were more likely to have been working class and politically active in the nationalist part of the movement. The "overt cultural and political agenda" (*ibid*:66) as found in most other revival movements is prevalent here, but is often displayed through contradictory behaviour. Through a diverse mixture of different motivations, these individuals have all been in

pursuit of a common Manx identity that is rooted in tradition and Gaelic history, and this has manifested itself through music and other cultural symbols.

The second stage of Livingston's model is the location of "revival informants and/or original sources (e.g. historical sound recordings)". Livingston has remained quite open-minded concerning this issue and in contrast to some of the other revivalist theorists, she has acknowledged that there may not always be the presence of tradition-bearers or "old masters" to advise and teach the revivalist "immigrants" (Slobin 1983:42-3). She emphasizes the importance of sound recordings (Livingston 1999:71) as a source of authenticity when tradition-bearers are not present, and claims that authentic reconstruction is ambiguous when only written source material is available. This appears to be the domain of Early Music research, where performance practices are liable to equivocal interpretations, and the revivalists have to construct their own realms of authenticity. The Manx traditional music revival too has shown that when there is little information or evidence with which to reconstruct a tradition, authenticity becomes a minor issue. As a 'living link', Mona Douglas was the nearest source of legitimacy for the 1970s revivalists, but her own revivalist stance and particular way of reconstructing history forced the younger generation to bypass her interpretation and pursue the original source material in the form of the *Clague Collection*. Although all revivals select and reconstruct their own histories, most have some source of evidence to legitimate their reconstruction, but the manuscripts of Clague and Gill had little to offer the Manx revivalists, other than a relatively small collection of 'songs without words'. Consequently the source material offered only a musical repertoire, with little indication of its original performance or context.

The "revivalist ideology and discourse" as identified in Livingston's third stage is often concerned with "ideas of historical continuity and organic purity" (*ibid*:74). Although the *Clague Collection* seemed 'organic' and 'pure', the Manx revivalists soon found that the pursuit of authenticity was in vain, and in compensation, constructed their own forms of authenticity or conservatism based upon the predilections of its more dominant personalities and the political bias of the revival. This has been particularly reflected in

the choice of musical material, where certain elements have been highlighted and others have been ignored. Without any authoritative guidance, the interpretation of this material has been entirely dependent upon individual inclination and the expectations of its perpetrators, under the auspices of 'grass roots' music-making where it was hoped that a 'stylistic common denominator' would decide the direction of the music. Concerned with producing an egalitarian living tradition that implied a sense of continuity, the Manx revivalists have reconstructed the music in a new context and within a set of ideological boundaries that have conveyed exclusivity. Over time, as the political situation has altered, the revival has lost its oppositional character, and this has been reflected in the free-style interpretation of the music. Though still in its infancy, the development of 'syncretist' approaches have become acceptable alongside the 'traditionalist' genre which was created in the 1970s.

Livingston's fourth stage is the formation of "a group of followers which form the basis of a revivalist community". The issue when applied to this movement was to determine whether the followers of the Manx traditional culture constitute a distinct community. Following Anderson's thesis that all communities are imagined by their members and constructed around symbolic boundaries, then this certainly applies. The Manx folk community has been formed from individuals of various dispositions, concurring with Livingston's observation that revival movements attract "people whose paths may never have crossed outside of the revival" (*ibid*:72). The motivations of its members have been both overt and unconscious, and this diversity has been essential to the development of the movement. However, for most members, the issue of a common identity is imperative, and this factor binds these individuals together. This 'Manx community' has been formed through structural and symbolic boundaries, although it currently bears little relation to the perceptions of the rest of the Manx population.

The development of "revivalist activities (organizations, festivals, competitions)" are methods of maintaining a sense of community spirit and communal identity. As Livingston noted, these activities are a method of communicating and standardizing the revivalist ideology amongst its followers. Although the organization of Manx

traditional music remains fairly unofficial and independent from outside influences, it can be said that the repetition of the tradition through regular rehearsals and school groups has produced a recognized genre that appears continuous. She also observed that revivals “almost always have a strong pedagogical component in order to pass on the tradition in a controlled manner”, and to a certain extent this has been the case with the Manx traditional music revival.

Livingston’s final stage is that of “non-profit and/or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market”. Although this stage is not essential to all revivals, it can be affirmed that the Manx traditional music scene has incorporated this element, albeit on a very small scale. The community has not taken an “anti-technological stance” as found in other revival movements, but this is probably because there is not an overriding concern for authenticity. The revival has, however, attempted to remain non-commercial in that most of the revivalist industry has been conducted from inside the movement, and on a DIY basis. These products have served to perpetuate the ideology of the revival amongst its followers and to maintain the boundaries of the community identity.

Livingston’s model could be applied to any of the movements mentioned in this thesis. While the observation of a “anti-technological stance” may not apply to the period of collecting and reviving as instigated by the Gill brothers, Clague and Moore, the general characteristics outlined in her model are adaptable to suit any movement, regardless of time, size or focus. Livingston’s model describes a process that has a definite and often conscious beginning and sometimes an end; features which identify revivalism as a special kind of culture change.

On reflection, it would appear that there are three variant types of musical revivalism: The revival that resurrects an extinct tradition, the revival that rescues a dying tradition before its imminent extinction, and the revival that revitalizes a living (or ongoing) tradition through a new context and at a higher profile. Evidently, as demonstrated by this thesis, these types of revival can also overlap one another, and the context of the

revival is the defining feature between them.

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INFORMANT DETAILS

* Facts and figures apply to the date of interview*

All interview recordings are lodged in the archives of the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Name of Informant	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
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Adam Rhodes	Edinburgh, Scotland	06/12/2000
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Adam was born in Essex, and moved to the Isle of Man as a child. His father is a fiddle player, who played traditional music in England before moving to the Isle of Man. Adam is a classically trained violinist and is currently an undergraduate music technology student at the University of Edinburgh. Along with the rest of his family, he was a member of Perree Bane, before forming Manx traditional music group, 'King Chiaullee'. Age - 19. *Adam talked about his involvement with King Chiaullee and his view of the current Manx traditional music scene.*

Anne Kissack	Ramsey, Isle of Man	28/07/1999
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Anne is a Manx-born primary schoolteacher. She was a member of Mona Douglas' youth group 'Aeclagh Vannin' in the late 1960s/70s. She is now the conductor of 'Caarjyn Coidjagh' (a Manx Gaelic choir), and a singer and pianist with 'The Mollag Band', 'Perree Bane' and the 'Arthur Caley Giant Band'. She is a Manx Gaelic speaker, and is married to Manx Language Officer and traditional musician, Phil Gawne. Both of her young children have been brought up as bilingual in Manx Gaelic and English. Age - 40s. *We spoke about her involvement with Aeclagh Vannin in the 1970s, her memories of Mona Douglas and the development of the Manx traditional music scene.*

Barry Pitts	Foxdale, Isle of Man	28/12/2000
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Barry was born in the Isle of Man. He was involved in the language and dance revivals of the 1970s, and was also involved in the nationalist protests of the same era. His wife, Kate Pitts, also speaks on the recording, and she was formerly a Bock Yuan Fannee dancer who now sings with Cliogaree Twoaie. Age - 40/50s. *Barry recalled his experiences of the political aspect of the Manx cultural revival in the 1970s.*

Bernard Moffat	Douglas, Isle of Man	28/07/1999
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Born in the Isle of Man, Bernard is the Chief Executive of the Isle of Man Transport and

General Workers' Union, and Chairman of the Trades Council. A member since the late 1960s, Bernard was formerly the Chairman of 'Mec Vannin' (Manx Nationalist Party), General Secretary of the Celtic League and Chairman of the Manx Board of Civil Liberties. Age 50s. *We spoke about his experiences of the Manx nationalist protests in the 1960/70s, and its effect on the revival of traditional culture.*

Bob Carswell

Ramsey, Isle of Man

20/05/1999

Brought up in England, but with Manx parentage, Bob works as a civil servant but recently completed an MA in Manx Studies at the Centre for Manx Studies (2001). He sings and plays flute and whistle with various groups including 'Bwoie Doal', and composes Manx Gaelic songs and poetry. As a dancer he was a former member of the 'Manx Folk Dance Society' and founding member of 'Bock Yuan Fannee'. He is a fluent Manx Gaelic speaker, and has presented 'Claare ny Gael', a Gaelic music and language programme on Manx Radio for over twenty years. Bob's son, Gilno, plays with traditional music group, 'King Chiaullee'. Age - 40/50s. *We discussed the folk scenes in Britain and the Isle of Man from the 1960/70s and its development.*

Dr. Brian Stowell

Douglas, Isle of Man

22/12/2000

Brian is of Manx descent, but lived in Merseyside before moving back to the Isle of Man. Brian was a physics teacher and latterly the first Manx Language Officer before he retired. He speaks fluent Manx and Irish Gaelic, sings and plays melodeon. Age - 60s. *Brian talked about his involvement in the Manx language, music and political scenes since the 1960/70s.*

Charles Guard

Onchan, Isle of Man

27/04/2000

Charles was born in the Isle of Man, and studied music at the London Royal College of Music and Celtic harp in Dublin. As a composer, producer and harpist, he has released several recordings of Celtic music. He was previously a broadcaster on Manx Radio, but is currently the Administrator of the Manx Heritage Foundation. Age 40s. *We talked about Mona Douglas and her influences and about the general folk music scene in the Isle of Man.*

Clare Kilgallon

Onchan, Isle of Man

19/04/2000

Clare was born in the Isle of Man and is trained as a schoolteacher. A former member of 'Aeglagh Vannin', she became a solo Manx Gaelic singer, a member of dance group 'Bock Yuan Fannee' and a founding member and conductor of the choir 'Cliogaree Twoaie'. Clare's son, David, plays fiddle in contemporary Manx traditional music group, 'King Chiaullee', her daughter Ester sings and her other son, John, dances with Bock Yuan Fannee. *Clare recalled her involvement in Mona Douglas' Aeglagh Vannin in the 1970s and the Manx Gaelic choir Cliogaree Twoaie.*

Colin Jerry

Peel, Isle of Man

10/03/1999

Born in Essex, former schoolteacher Colin moved to Peel in the Isle of Man in 1969. Colin and his wife Cristl were leading figures in the revival of Manx traditional music, as founding members of groups 'Celtic Tradition', 'Bock Yuan Fannee' and 'Bwoie Doal' in the 1970s. He has played Uilleann pipes, five-string banjo, tin whistle, saxophone and hurdy-gurdy, and also makes instruments. Age - 60s. *We talked about Colin's previous musical activities and his inspirations behind reviving Manx traditional music in the 1970s.*

Dave Richardson

Edinburgh, Scotland

04/12/2000

Born and brought up in Northumbria, Dave has lived in Edinburgh for many years. He has played mandolin and concertina with the influential folk group 'Boys of the Lough' since the 1960s. Age - 50s. *We discussed the British folk revival and his involvement since the 1960s.*

David Fisher

Ramsey, Isle of Man

23/12/1998

David was born in the Island, and works for the Isle of Man Government Department of Tourism. He plays flute, bodhran and whistle, and speaks fluent Manx Gaelic. As a dancer, he was an early member of 'Bock Yuan Fannee' and as a musician, a member 'Bwoie Doal' since the 1970s. Age - 45. *David spoke about his involvement in Bwoie Doal and about subsequent developments in the Manx traditional music scene.*

David Speers

Ramsey, Isle of Man

23/05/1999

Although his parents were Manx, David lived in England and Germany as a child, before moving to the Isle of Man in the late 1970s. At the time of interview, he was a part-time Masters student at the Centre for Manx Studies, studying Manx music and nationalism before 1940. He plays mandolin and bouzouki, composes traditional melodies, and is also a Manx dancer. David participated in groups, 'Bwoie Doal' and 'Bock Yuan Fannee' from 1980s and has played with other bands since. Age - 40s. *We talked about Bwoie Doal, issues of interpretation in the revival of Manx traditional music and the development of traditional culture.*

PERMISSION HAS NOT BEEN GRANTED TO USE

MATERIAL FROM THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW

Emma Christian

Ramsey, Isle of Man

12/03/2001

Emma was born in the Isle of Man and attended Chetham's College of Music as a teenager. She sings in Manx Gaelic, and plays recorder and Celtic harp. As well as studying for her PhD, she has become a popular singer in the Celtic music scene, having toured extensively

and having released several albums of her music. She is a founder of the annual 'Isle of Music Festival' with partner, Steve Coren. Age - late 20s. *We spoke about her impressions of the current traditional music scene, her experiences as a performer, and the development of the Isle of Music festival.*

Dr. Fenella Bazin

Ballaugh, Isle of Man

26/05/1999

Born in the Isle of Man, Fenella studied piano and singing at the Royal College of Music, later becoming a schoolteacher in England. Latterly, she became a lecturer and the Director of the Centre for Manx Studies, University of Liverpool [now retired - 2003]. She has written several books and has lectured extensively on Manx music. Age - 50/60s. Founder of 'Paitchyn Vannin' and 'Crosh Vullan' and former committee member of 'Yn Chruinnaght' festival in the 1970/80s. *We discussed the cultural revivalism of Mona Douglas, and her effect on contemporary Manx musicians.*

Fiona McArdle

Douglas, Isle of Man

19/05/1999

Fiona was born and brought up in Scotland, but moved to Island in the 1970s. She now works for Manx National Heritage, but was formerly a schoolteacher. An early member herself, she now leads 'Bock Yuan Fannee' and sings with 'Cliogaree Twoaie'. She is also a Manx Gaelic speaker, and has been a member of 'Yn Chruinnaght' committee. Age-40/50s. *Fiona talked about her involvement with the revival, the development of Yn Chruinnaght and Cliogaree Twoaie and the current scene.*

Freddie Cowle

Ramsey, Isle of Man

11/03/1999

Born in Ramsey, Freddie (James or Jamys F. Cowle) is currently a funeral director. He has been a Manx Gaelic speaker since the 1970s and is a prominent member of 'Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh' (Manx Language Society). Age - 40s. *We discussed the political and language scene in the Isle of Man in the 1960/70s.*

Dr. George Broderick

Ramsey, Isle of Man

23/03/1999

Manx connections, but born and brought up in Liverpool, George has homes in both the Isle of Man and Germany where he is a lecturer in Celtic Studies at Humboldt University, Berlin. He learnt Manx Gaelic in the 1960/70s and was founding member of 'Bwoie Doal' where he sang and plays mouth organ. George has published many articles about Manx language and culture, sometimes under his Gaelic name, Shorys y Creayrie. Age - late 40/50s. *George talked about the inception of Bwoie Doal, political influences, Mona Douglas and the current music scene.*

Greg Joughin

Ramsey, Isle of Man

24/07/2000

Manx born, Greg is a dry-stone waller. He was a former member of 'Bock Yuan Fannee' and 'Bwoie Doal', and he later founded the Manx dance group 'Perree Bane'. Greg is also a Manx Gaelic speaker, and singer-songwriter and guitarist with 'The Mollag Band', the 'Arthur Caley Giant Band' and 'Staa'. His daughters Caly and Grianne have been involved in the folk scene since childhood as musicians and dancers. Grianne is a founding member of dance-team 'Perree T'. Greg is an active member of 'Mec Vannin' (Manx nationalist party) and has stood for Tynwald in the past. Age - 40s. *We spoke about the political scene of the 1980s and his involvement with the Manx traditional music scene.*

Hazel Hannan

Douglas, Isle of Man

23/12/2002

Hazel is a former Trustee of the Manx Museum and National Trust, Member of the Manx Heritage Foundation, and former Minister for Education. She is now an MHK for the Department of Health and Social Security. As a Manx Dancer, she performed with Perree Bane for many years and she also was a long-term member of Yn Chruinnaght committee. *Hazel talked about the political situation in the Isle of Man in the 1970s and how it inspired her to pursue politics through Mec Vannin (Manx Nationalist Party).*

John Kaneen

Douglas, Isle of Man

18/03/1999

Of Manx ancestry, John was born in England, but returned to Isle of Man in 1970s. He was previously involved in English folk scene, but has played with 'Bwoie Doal' and various other folk and ceilidh bands on concertina, button accordion and guitar. John has also presented 'The Folk Show' on Manx Radio for over 20 years. Age - 50/60s. *John and I discussed the British folk scene of the 1960s and its effect on Manx traditional music.*

Kate Pitts

Foxdale, Isle of Man

28/12/2000

Kate, a schoolteacher, was born in Scotland but moved to the Island as a teenager. She was formerly a dancer with 'Bock Yuan Fannee' and now sings with 'Cliogaree Twoaie'. Wife of Barry Pitts. *Kate contributed to the final part of Barry Pitt's interview, and spoke of her introduction to Manx traditional culture.*

Katie Lawrence

Ramsey, Isle of Man

29/07/1999

Katie was brought up in the Isle of Man by English parents with Manx connections. She plays fiddle for various Manx traditional music groups including 'Ny Fennee', 'Fo'n Chrackan', and 'Sheean Raah'. Katie was studying for music degree at the University of Huddersfield at the time of interview, but has recently completed an MA in traditional music at the University of Limerick. Sister of Kirsty. Age - 21. *We talked about Katie's musical influences, her opinions of the traditional music scene and her compositions.*

Kirsty Lawrence

Edinburgh, Scotland

02/01/2001

Older sister of Katie. Kirsty plays whistle and 'cello for various Manx traditional music groups with her sister. She obtained her music degree at the University of Huddersfield, and at the time of her interview, Kirsty was studying for a PGCE at the University of Edinburgh. Age - 22. *Kirsty spoke about her involvement in traditional music since childhood and the current situation of the scene.*

Mike Boulton

Ramsey, Isle of Man

27/12/1998

Born in Ramsey, Mike is a retired primary school teacher, although he still tutors youngsters in Manx traditional music. Mike plays guitar, bodhran and whistles and was an early member of 'Bwoie Doal'. He went on to form children's groups 'Mooinjey Veggey' and 'Share na Veg', and has been involved with 'Paitchyn Vannin', 'Ny Fennee' and other groups for many years. Age - early 60s. *We talked about his early involvement with the Manx traditional music scene, and his influence on musicians in the north of the Island.*

Norman Clague

Ramsey, Isle of Man

16/03/1999

Norman was born in England, but has Manx ancestry. He is now retired from his career as a French teacher at Ramsey Grammar School. Norman sings and plays guitar, double bass and recorder and has played with well-known local group 'Mannin Folk' since the 1960s. Age - 60s. *We spoke about the general folk music scene of the 1960s and the impact of Norman's folk group, Mannin Folk.*

Peter Cubberley

Ramsey, Isle of Man

29/07/1999

Born in the Isle of Man, Peter (also known as Peddyr, and formerly nicknamed Boris) works for Manx National Heritage. He has been a traditional flautist, whistle player and composer since the 1980s, and is also a Manx Gaelic speaker. Peter has been associated with 'Bwoie Doal', 'Mactullagh Vannin', 'Sheean Raah', 'Emma Christian' and other groups. Age - late 30s. *Peter told me about his involvement Manx traditional music movement since the early 1980s and its subsequent development.*

Rachel Pressley

Ramsey, Isle of Man

26/04/2000

Born and brought up in Ramsey, Rachel was a PhD student at the Centre for Manx Studies, University of Liverpool at the time of interview [graduated in 2002]. After playing mandolin and guitar with 'Ny Fennee' for many years, she became an advisor for the traditional youth music group 'Paitchyn Vannin' with Juan Garrett, and a founding member of Manx traditional music festival, 'Shennaghys Jiu'. Age 26. *We talked about the ideology behind the festival, Shennaghys Jiu, and her involvement in Manx traditional music and dance since primary school.*

Stewart Bennett

Peel, Isle of Man

19/03/1999

Born in Isle of Man and inspired by the nationalist politics of the 1970s, Stewart learnt Manx Gaelic and became a founding member of the 'Bock Yuan Fannee' dance group. Age 40/50s. *Stewart talked about the political aspect of the Manx cultural revival of the 1960/70s.*

Sheila Corkill

Ramsey, Isle of Man

09/03/2001

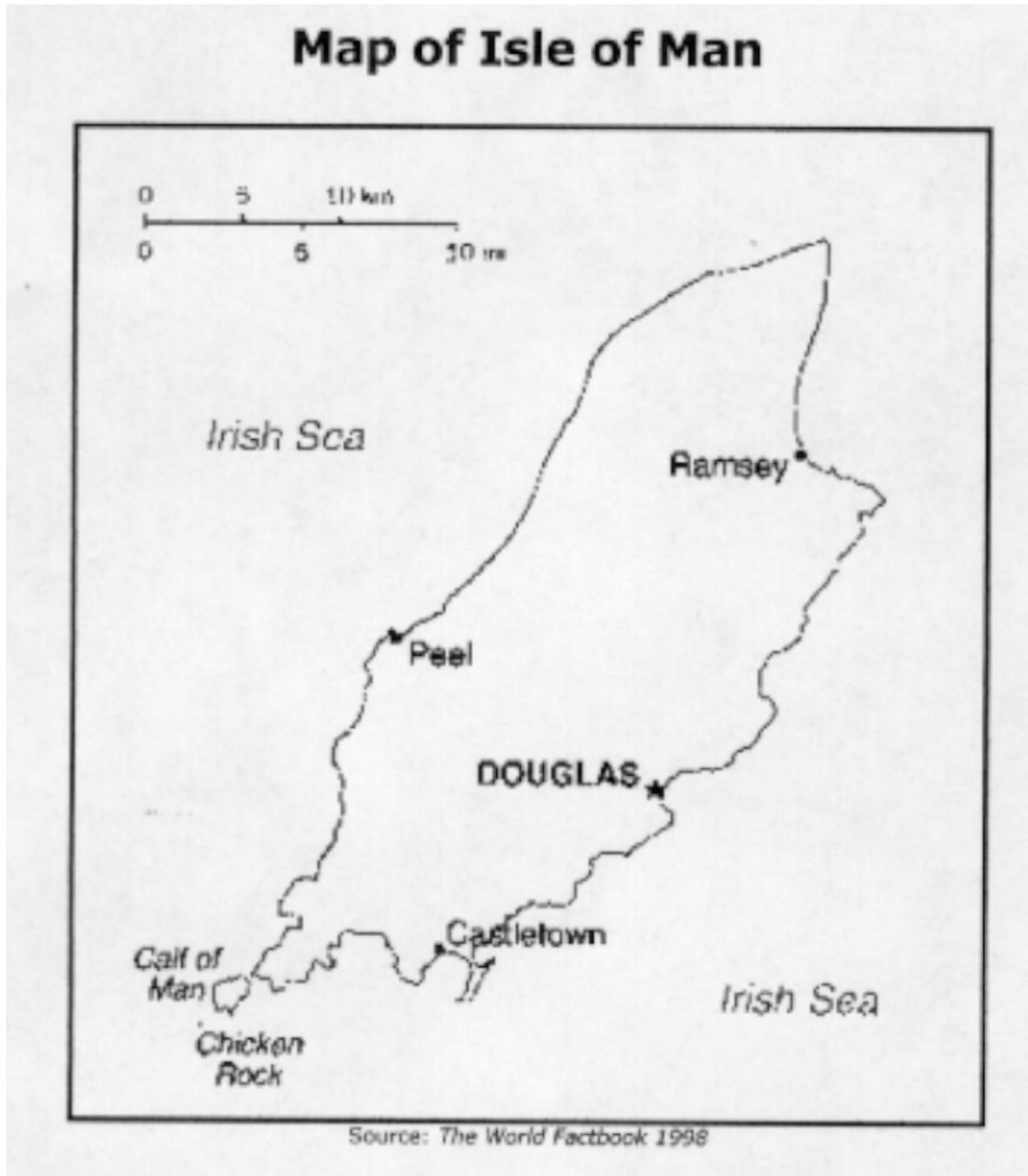
Sheila was born in the Isle of Man, and was a schoolteacher until her retirement. From the 1950s she played fiddle for the 'Manx Folk Dance Society'. Age - 70s. *We talked about the cultural scene of the Isle of Man in the 1950s, her memories of Mona Douglas and Leighton Stowell and her involvement with the Manx Folk Dance Society.*

Sue Ling Jaques

Ramsey, Isle of Man

19/05/1999

Sue Ling is of Chinese descent, but was born in the Isle of Man. She is currently a primary schoolteacher and a founding member of the youth festival 'Shennaghys Jiu'. Having been taught traditional music by Mike Boulton at Albert Road School, Sue Ling has played guitar, banjo and whistle for 'Moonjey Veggey', 'Bwoie Doal', 'Mactullagh Vannin' and 'Ny Fannee'. Age - 30s. *Sue Ling spoke about her involvement in Manx traditional music since Albert Road School, and the impact of Mactullagh Vannin on the current music scene.*



Map of the Isle of Man, showing the capital, Douglas, and the other main towns.

Transcriptions of "Bock Kilkany" by W.H. Gill and Clague

Song "Bock Kilkany or Inneen Kilkany" Taken down by W.H. Gill from Mrs Lawson, Karrow Croge, or Ballachung, July East - 11 Oct 1898

O. 95

Mr Lawson says this song is about going to Douglas with buttermilk. On the way the cart is capsized & the milk spilt.

J.F. Gill Collection:49

Bock Kilkany . or Inneen Kilkenny Mrs Lawson, Ballachung, Durby

Cart going to Douglas with buttermilk and spilt.

Clague Collection Book C:42

"Bock Kilkany" or "Inneen Kilkenny"- A melody that was attributed to Clague until the rediscovery of the *J.F. Gill Collection* in 2000. Due to the extra details, it seems quite clear that it was Gill who collected this melody and not Clague.

THE WRECK OF THE HERRING FLEET. 13

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment features a consistent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics include *cres.* and *ff*. There are triplets marked with a '3' in the piano part. The lyrics are as follows:

3. In the
4. The.....

roar - - of the Like a
lev - - in bolt crash'd, The.....

reed rock'd the..... mast; Ev - 'ry
blue light - - ning..... flash'd Thro' the

plank it was strain - - ing and.....
black - - ness so deaf - - 'ning and.....

H. 1515.

An excerpt from W.H. Gill's "The Wreck of the Herring Fleet" *Manx National Songs* 1896:13 displaying the style of piano accompaniment employed by Gill.

The Cruise of the "Tiger."

Words adapted by A. P. GRAVES, from the original ballad of John Moore, formerly of Camlork in Braddan, one of the crew of the Manx privateer "Tiger," during the war with France and America.

Air, "Marrinys yn Tiger."
(Cruise of the "Tiger.")

PIANO. $\text{♩} = 84.$

Allegro.

f *p*

1. The pat-riot sons of
2. "Oh! pi-ty for our

F C G7

Mo - na, Great Buo-na-parte to whip. Sub-scrib'd to buy the "Ti - ger," An an-cient bat-tle
daughters," The far-mers all did say: "If cru - el Bo - ney slaugh-ters Their lo - vers far a -

C C7 C

ship. Big Har - ry Qual-trough vo - ted The Cap-tain of her crew, And fierce-ly from her
- way!" "Cheer up, cheer up, sad sweethearts, And fear not for our lives; For soon with gold and

F C

top - mast Our three-legg'd en - sign flew.
glo - ry We're back to make you wives."

Copyright 1896 by Boosey & Co.

H. 1515.

In "The Cruise of the "Tiger"", W.H. Gill stays close to the original collected melody (see Appendix 5), with a simple accompaniment incorporating "Rule Britannia".
From *Manx National Songs* 1896:4.

Appendix 5

MARRINYS YN ~~F#E~~ TIGER " [Privateer] W.H.G. from Wm Corlett, Minorca, Laxey 19 c/o 1895. 109

W.H. Gill's version of "Marrinys Yn Tiger" in the J.F. Gill Collection:109

The Tiger - (Ship) W.H. Gill

Dr. Clague's copy of "The Tiger" in Book 4/D:26

291. The Tiger (Ship) W. Corlett.

"The Tiger" in Jerry 1991: no. 291 transcribed (and transposed) from the Clague Collection.

The original versions of "The Cruise of the Tiger" from the *J.F. Gill Collection*, *Clague Collection* and transcribed version in *Jerry (1991)*. It seems likely that W.H. Gill collected this melody from William Corlett of Laxey, and that Clague duplicated it in his manuscripts. (Appendix 5 updated by C. Woolley 2008)

Marrinys Yn Tiger (Voyage Of The Tiger). ²⁴⁴

Slow.

Ren

dein - oy - sey - roy Van - nin, Ayns yr - gld stayd as moyrn, Nyn

bin - gyn cheau dy chell - ley, As chlon - nes ad shenn lhong.

“Marrinys Yn Tiger” from Moore’s *Manx Ballads and Music* 1896:244. Music collected from Thomas Crellin in Peel. Arranged by Miss M.L. Wood. Words 1896:158-165.



Collector and revivalist, Mona Douglas photographed at Yn Chruinnaght in the 1980s.
Private source.

Appendix 8



The Manx Folk Dance Society photographed during the 1950s.
Top: 'A Rare Oul Manx Wedding' performance at Kirk Maughold, July 1957.
Middle: Dancing display at Tynwald Fair [no date].
Bottom: MFDS performing at the National Union of Teachers' Conference at the Villa Marina, Douglas, 1959. (Original photographs belong to Sheila Corkill).

58.—THE ARBORY CRADLE SONG.

[ARRANE Y CLEAN-LHIANNOD.]

Noted from a *sol-fa* copy by A. G. Gilchrist.

SUNG BY MR. WILLIAM CUBBON.

1. In the... Glion of... Bal - la... Co - mish The Lhon - doo will

REFRAIN.

build her nest, Sleep thee, my ba - by. Sleep thee, my [graih-agh] ba - by,

Sleep thee, my ba - by, And thou'll get the bir - die

This is a traditional cradle-song of the Parish of Arbory.—W. Cubbon.

NOTES.

- Arrane y Clean-Lhiannod = Song of the Cradle.
- Glion = Glen.
- Lhon-dhoo = Blackbird.
- Graihagh = loving.

—W. CUBBON.

Mr. Cubbon does not know how the *sol-fa* manuscript copy sent to me through Miss Mary Morrison was obtained, but thinks it was probably made by a "musically clever" maid who was in his household at the period when he used to sing the lullaby to his children, and who "could record a tune in *sol-fa* very quickly and accurately." In any case, he says that the tune as noted above is a correct version. Miss Mona Douglas has noted and sent me, from a Peel singer, almost the same version, and probably derived from the same source, but in triple time. There was a word missing in the refrain, which Mr. Cubbon thinks was "graihagh." He learnt the tune and verse attached to it from an elder sister.—A. G. G.

Anne Gilchrist's innocent analysis of "The Arbory Cradle Song" in the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 1924-6:164. It is very likely that this song was fabricated by William Cubbon and Mona Douglas.

Fin as Oshin

The melody as collected
by Mona Douglas
from Jack Kermode
in Jerry 1991: no. 317.



Hie Fin as Oshin magh dy helg,
Fal, lal, lo, as fal, lal, la.
Lesh sheshaght trean as moddee elg,
Fal, lal, lo, as fal, lal, la.
Cha row un dooinney sloo ny keead,
Fal, lal, lo, as fal, lal, la...

[First few lines from Moore's version of "Fin as Oshin" in
Manx Ballads and Music 1896:2-4.

Douglas' melody collected from Jack Kermode appears
to correspond to Moore's lyrics which were collected in
1789 and donated to the British Museum.

The song "Fin as Oshin" as it is known today - Mona Douglas' melody paired with Moore's lyrics.

When I was Young and in my Prime

J.F. Gill Collection: 23 and Clague Collection A:38. In Jerry 1991: no. 138

* Jerry has added
an extra bar

This melody stays in the dorian mode, yet
by extracting the passing 2nd and 6th notes (*in brackets*)
it comfortably becomes pentatonic.

“When I was Young and in my Prime” - An example of a melody that could be pentatonic if the passing notes were omitted. Gill and Clague claimed that there was no evidence of the pentatonic mode when they were collecting music in the 1890s, whereas Mona Douglas collected a substantial number of examples thirty years later.

THE SEA INVOCATION

GEAY JEH'N AER

Translated by
MONA DOUGLAS

Arranged by
ARNOLD FOSTER

Moderato

VOICE

PIANO

p misterioso e legato

p

Em p cresc. *Bm* *Em Bm* *Em mf pesante*

Wind of the air, my love's on the sea, — Ho ro y
 Geay jeh'n aer, ta my ghraih er y cheayn, —

p cresc.

Em *C* *G* *Em*

ree y ro, Ho ro y ree y ro!

p *B* *G* *Em Bm* *Em mf*

Make the wea - ther calm and as fine, — Ho ro y
 Jean yn ear - ish kiune as meen,

p *mp dolce*

Douglas collected "The Sea Invocation" in 1921 from Mrs. Shimmin of Foxdale. Its Hebridean character is unusual when compared to other songs collected in the Isle of Man.

From *Twelve Manx Folk-songs Set 1*. 1928, by Mona Douglas and Arnold Foster. Published by Stainer & Bell. Republished in *The Manx National Song Book Vol. 2*, compiled by Guard 1980.



Bwoie Doal members sketched in the late 1970s.
From bottom left clockwise: Cristl Jerry, Simon Capelan, Mike Boulton, David Fisher, Bob Carswell, Phil Kelly and Colin Jerry.
From *Kiaull yn Theay* 2 1979.



L-R: David Fisher, Colin Jerry, Cristl Jerry, Phil Gorry, George Broderick and Bob Carswell.

Some of the original members of Bwoie Doal during the late 1970s.
Photograph taken from *Yn Chruinnaght* Programme 1992:43.



“Nationalists in Protest over the Finance Sector”, Tynwald Day ceremony in 1976. Photographs from *Millennium Milestones*, January 4th 2000:16.



Cartoons from *Fo Halloo - Free Manx Press* no. 19, July 1976, satirizing the Isle of Man Government's New Resident Policy.

Appendix 17

Please fill in &
return to
Entrance Desk

**MANX FOLK MUSIC SURVEY - Isle of Man Residents
(including Manx Students)**

Please tick box/es that apply and feel free to add further comments

Gender: Male Female
Age: 0-9 10-14 15-19 20-29 30-39
 40-49 50-59 60-69 70-79 80+

Nationality? _____

Were you born in the Isle of Man? Yes No

Do you have Manx Ancestry? Yes No

If you were not born here, how long have you lived on the Island? _____ Years

Which town/village/area do you live in? _____

Occupation: _____

Your attendance at events that involve folk music (tick box/es):

	Often	Sometimes	I used to	Never	As an Performer	As an audience Member
--	-------	-----------	-----------	-------	-----------------	-----------------------

Dances/Ceilis Sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Folk Concerts	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Folk Clubs/Singarounds	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Folk Festivals (Isle of Man)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Folk Festivals (Across)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Manx Music Festival (Guild)	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Isle of Music Festival	<input type="checkbox"/>					

In which of the following (if any) do you participate?

Manx Instrumental Folk Music <input type="checkbox"/>	Manx Folk Singing (solo) <input type="checkbox"/>	Manx Folk Singing (choral) <input type="checkbox"/>
Manx Dancing <input type="checkbox"/>	Manx Gaelic Language <input type="checkbox"/>	Manx Dialect <input type="checkbox"/>
Mec Vannin <input type="checkbox"/>	Manx Arts & Crafts <input type="checkbox"/>	Manx Heritage/ Historical Societies <input type="checkbox"/>

Name Groups or Societies if applicable _____

Which instrument/s (if any) do you play? _____

What are your opinions of current Manx folk music in general?

It is excellent It is good It is okay There is room for improvement
Comments _____

Appendix 18

Do you have a preference for any of the following types of Manx folk music?

Informal Session Music for Dancing Other/Examples	<input type="checkbox"/>	Folk Groups with singing Experimental Folk Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	Instrumental Folk Groups Solo Singing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Solo Instrumental Music Choral Singing	<input type="checkbox"/>
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What was your prime reason/s for joining or supporting the Manx folk scene?

For the social aspect Interested in general folk music etc. To contribute to the welfare of Manx culture Other Reasons	<input type="checkbox"/>	For political reasons	<input type="checkbox"/>	Search for Manx identity To revive Manx traditions For academic reasons	<input type="checkbox"/>
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When did you become involved in the Manx folk scene?

Pre-1950s 1950s 1960s 1970s 1980s 1990s 2000+

How were you introduced to the Manx folk scene?

Family Mona Douglas School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friends I joined of my own accord Other reasons	<input type="checkbox"/>	Links with other elements of Manx culture Academic Interest	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Which statement would best describe your involvement in the Manx folk scene?

It is part of my lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is a pastime/hobby	<input type="checkbox"/>	It is my career	<input type="checkbox"/>
I only attend for the entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>	I support it, but do not take an active role	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am not particularly involved/interested in it	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments _____

Are you interested in Roots/World Music? Yes No

Are you interested in the current folk scenes of other countries? Yes No

If so, how do you keep up to date?

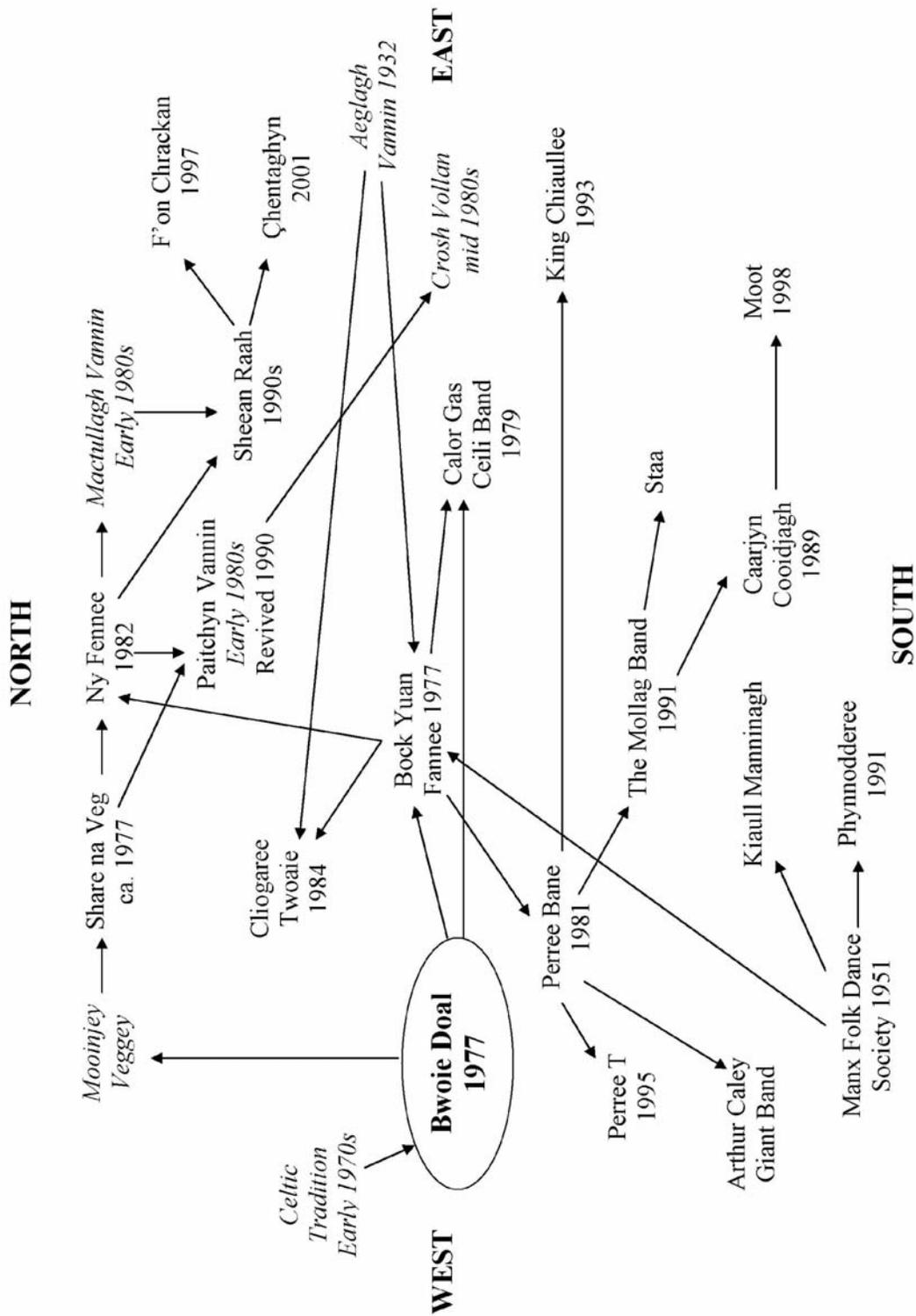
Folk music magazines (e.g. Living Tradition)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Radio and TV	<input type="checkbox"/>
By attending inter-Celtic festivals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contacts in other countries	<input type="checkbox"/>		
I am a member of a folk club	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	_____		

Do/did you go to University/College? Yes No

If you have lived off the Island, did you attend folk clubs/folk gigs/local sessions?

Yes No Sometimes

Manx Folk Music Survey distributed at Yn Chruinnaght 2002.



A 'family tree' denoting the links between contemporary Manx music and dance groups to Bwoie Doal in 1977. [Italics - disbanded groups].

Appendix 20



Revivalist dance team, Bock Yuan Fannee.

Top photograph from the *Manx Star*, Friday 6th July 1979:10.
Bottom photograph: Bock Yuan Fannee at Yn Chruinnaght [no date]



Andrew Hannan (1971-1998) of Perree Bane performing the “Dirk Dance” [no date].

Appendix 22



Top photograph: Musicians playing at Yn Chruinnacht [no date].
L-R: Anne Kissack, Greg Joughin, David Collister and David Speers.
Bottom photograph: Anne Kissack and Phil Gawne during a session in Castletown, Christmas 1997.

Appendix 23



'Stalwarts' of the revival.
Top left clockwise: Brian Stowell, Bob Carswell and Greg Joughin.
Session in Castletown, Christmas 1997.