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FOLK ON TYNE:
TYNESIDE CULTURE AND
THE SECOND FOLK REVIVAL,
1950-1975

JUDITH ANNE MURPHY

PhD

2007

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Abstract

This thesis explores the nature of the second folk revival in the North East of England. While there have been several major studies of the various national folk revivals during the 1950s, '60s and '70s, there is a paucity of scholarly accounts viewed through a regional lens. This study therefore builds on a common perception of North Eastern regional particularity to establish the ways in which the folk revival as experienced by its members within the region was distinct from that detailed in the literature on the wider (inter-)national folk scene. Using comparative examples drawn from the regional and international folk movements, the thesis contextualizes and differentiates the general trends within the second revival as a whole and its North Eastern manifestation. There are some evident discrepancies relating, for example, to levels of political involvement in the respective folk scenes but also broad similarities in chronological developments.

These trends are explored through a number of themes, beginning with the weaving of a constructed regional folk-cultural identity out of a diversity of ethnic, local and occupational strands. Secondly, the common assumption that the North East is a region with a rare continuity of traditions is interrogated, alongside an acknowledgement that this was a time of rapid social change, mobility and dislocation from older cultural practices. The basic dichotomy of 'mediator' and 'mediated' is questioned and found wanting, particularly in a region where young revivalists were rarely far – temporally, geographically or socially - from the source of their tradition. The ways in which the media represented and altered folk traditions, and how these representations were used to build regional consciousness is considered, as are the 1960s developments in heritage and tourism which saw vernacular culture taking on a much greater significance in the region's economy. Further, celebratory imagery is shown to have a long history in musical representations of the region, but with a contemporary focus on stoicism in the face of decline. Finally, the reasons behind the folklorists' imperative to locate the 'authentic' are sought in relative degrees of alienation from contemporary society, resulting in a dissolution of the barriers between 'genuine' and 'invented' tradition.

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*

Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. The work was undertaken with the support of the AHRC.

Name: JUDITH ANNE MURPHY

Signature: 

Date: 24/10/07

FOLK ON TYNE: **Tyneside Culture and the** **Second Folk Revival, 1950 – 1975**

Introduction

In all the scholarly accounts of the so-called ‘second folk revival’, there appears to be a sizeable North-Eastern-shaped hole.¹ Events on the national scale have been comparatively well-documented by historians and some of the revival’s actual participants, yet there has so far been little attempt to study the interaction between this wider folk revival and the Tyneside folk scene which grew up within (or alongside) it.² This is surprising, as the region boasts some of the oldest and most feted of folk clubs, and the general perception is that here was a rare continuity of tradition. Further, the music and performers of nineteenth century Tyneside have come under such scrutiny that it is puzzling that this has not extended into an understanding of the latter half of the twentieth century.³

This thesis aims to correct this, and to assess the points of convergence and difference between the second revival on Tyneside and the wider (inter-)national phenomenon. Focusing on a smaller geographical unit allows for a relatively nuanced account of folk revival – addressing not just the general trends but also the quirks and paradoxes that might find no place in a larger scale survey. For example, much of the industrial song which became a mainstay of London-based revivalists

¹ For convenience, the ‘second folk revival’ will appear without quotation marks throughout the rest of the thesis: it is noted thus here to emphasize that it was a construct, named to distinguish it from the ‘first folk revival’ at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which was considered to have different precepts. This is further discussed in Chapter One.

² Such accounts include E MacColl, *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1990); A L Lloyd, *Folk Song in England* (London, 1967); H Henderson, *Alias MacAlias – Writings on Songs, Folk and Literature* (Polygon, Edinburgh, 1992); A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Queen’s University of Belfast, May 1993.

³ Regarding the nineteenth century, see R Colls, *The Collier's Rant: Song and Culture in the Industrial Village* (Croom Helm, London, 1977); D Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British 'folksong' 1700 to the present day*, (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1985); J Collingwood

like A L Lloyd and Ewan MacColl derived from the North East, and these aspects have been considered by scholars such as Boyes, Harker, and Brocken.⁴ However, despite the obvious merits of these studies, the analysis of the mechanisms of revival – the clubs, performers, organizers, media, and heritage projects – has tended to be ‘metro-centric’, with regional input being viewed through a London-based lens, and often with a particular theoretical slant that leaves little space for anomalies. Harker’s approach is explicitly linked with his Trotskyite affinities; Boyes places considerable emphasis on patriarchy; and Brocken’s leanings toward popular music studies lead to a concentration on perceived slights against folk-rock. The dangers of determinism haunt any particular perspective and regionalism is no exception to this, but at the very least it serves as a corrective against the more generalized ideas that dominate histories of the folk revival when viewed as an organic whole. Regional particularity has so far been little exploited as a lens through which to view the second English folk revival. Hamish Henderson and Ailie Munro have produced work relating to Scotland; and there have been surveys of music scenes other than folk in relation to 1990s Tyneside by Andy Bennett; and other English regions, notably by Sara Cohen and Ruth Finnegan.⁵ But existing studies of folk revival highlight the North East only insofar as it impacted on the national scene, with little study being made of the regional circuit and the interplay of national and local performers or mediators.⁶ It could be argued that the national scene itself was illusory and that what actually occurred was a patchwork of local revivals whose leading exponents gravitated towards the most publicized clubs in London. Meantime, the continued influence of national bodies such as English Folk Dance and Song Society (even if its impact was reduced by the greater power of the folk

Bruce and J Stokoe (eds), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy: A Collection of the Ballads, Melodies and Small-Pipe Tunes of Northumbria* (Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle, 1882).

⁴ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993); D Harker, 1985, *ibid.*; M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003).

⁵ H Henderson, *Alias MacAlias - Writings on Songs, Folk and Literature* (Polygon, Edinburgh, 1992); A Munro, *Folk Music Revival in Scotland: The Democratic Muse* (Scottish Cultural Press, Aberdeen, 1996); A Bennett, *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place* (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2000); S Cohen, *Rock Culture in Liverpool: Popular Music in the Making* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991); R Finnegan, *The hidden musicians – music-making in an English town*, (Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁶ M Brocken, *ibid.*, pp62-66; also T L Fisher, *The Radical Revival: A History of the Folksong Revival, and other counter-cultural movements in Britain and America from the 1930s to the early 1970s*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Birmingham, 1973: both deal with the impact of North Eastern performers on Topic Records and the Centre 42 project. See also considerations of the

clubs) would imply that there was at least some overarching meta-narrative of English folk culture against which regional differences could be viewed. This question - whether regional particularity was a general facet of the era or only of certain localities – will underpin much of this thesis as it tries to ascertain via comparative examples whether there indeed were unique features within the North Eastern revival.

Of course, throughout Britain the cultural mutations that brought about the new social event that was an evening at the folk club were hardly sudden and all-encompassing. As Chapter One suggests, historians such as Harker and particularly Sandbrook have called into question the ‘cultural revolution’ of the 1960s, emphasizing instead the considerable elements of continuity and gradual change which were the reality of the decade for many people beyond the reach of influential cliques.⁷ While working people on Tyneside might well attend the local folk club (and this thesis demonstrates that such clubs were not simply the middle-class enclave so beloved of the conspiracy theorists), far more of them were enjoying more mainstream showbusiness in CIU concert rooms. For the majority, Sandbrook argues, the cultural revolution of the 1960s was not evidently radical. What is obvious from so many later commentaries is, however, the fact that the people who were closest to and who drove the changes rather than the continuities were those who were in the position to document and debate them. The dislocation between the perceptions of the less vocal majority and those of the influential mediators like the ‘Studentry’ is more closely discussed in Chapters Four and Eight. Suffice it to note here that the folk revival was just one minority aspect in a variety of cultural changes that did not reach everyone with uniform force. What is clear is that it did matter – intensely – to those who did choose to participate. In this sense, this study is an attempt to view in microcosm some particular aspects of more widespread preoccupations: regionalism, modernity, the balance of decline and affluence, and, above all, the search for authenticity.

MacColl/Parker/Seeger “Radio Ballads”, such as A Howkins, ‘History and the Radio Ballads’, *Oral History*, 28/2, Autumn 2000, 89-93.

⁷ D Harker, ‘Still Crazy After All These Years: What was popular music in the 1960s?’, in B Moore-Gilbert and J Seed (eds), *Cultural Revolution? The challenge of the arts in the 1960s* (Routledge,

As for the mechanism and infrastructure of revival, the folk clubs themselves have come under considerable study, but, again, mostly with only passing reference to the North East. The 1980s saw some small-scale contemporary studies of particular clubs, such as MacKinnon's account of Linden Hall Folk Club and John Smith's participant observation of Sunderland's Glebe Live Music Club, but these were used to illustrate approaches that could be extrapolated to any club anywhere.⁸ Again, there seems to be a clear gap in scholarship in specifically local studies which assess whether a regional folk revival (in this case, North East England) was distinctive from the wider national, or even international, folk movement and, if so, why.

In order to do this, it is first essential to contextualize the regional scene against what occurred (inter-)nationally. Chapter One provides an account of the general themes and trends within the wider folk revivals in Britain and USA, while Chapter Two is a largely narrative account of the developments in the North East. These serve to highlight points of comparison (for instance, the chronology of particular trends) and contrast (for example, the level of party political involvement) between the general folk experience and that which occurred regionally. These narrative accounts introduce several themes that recur throughout the thesis - such as ideologies, continuity, and authenticity - which form the basis of the chapters that follow.

Among these themes, there is the understanding that the folk culture of North East of England was not (any more than that of the British Isles) a homogeneous entity. The term 'regional' is in itself problematic. Many would argue that the North East of England is merely a sub-region within a wider North, however, given the distinctiveness of North Eastern musical traditions and for ease of reading, I have opted to designate the North East a region.⁹ Chapter Three delineates the wide

London, 1992), 236-254, p251, also p241. D Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A history of Britain from Suez to The Beatles* (Little Brown, London, 2005), p(xix).

⁸ N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene – Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1993), pp40-49; J L Smith, 'The Ethogenics of Music Performance: A Case Study of the Glebe Live Music Club', in M Pickering and T Green, (Eds), *Everyday Culture: Popular Song and the Vernacular Milieu* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987), 150-172. For example, such approaches involve: assessing the influence of performance presentation and style; attitudes to audience participation; audience age and social class; the layout of the room into areas that demarcated an "inner circle" of experts; and the use of amplification.

⁹ For instance, see D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), pp273-275; also D Russell, 'Music and Northern Identity, 1890-c1965', 23-46, p24, and M Huggins, 'Sport and the construction of social identity in north-

variety of separate groups that coalesced into this regional identity and emphasizes that each experienced and expressed folk music (both traditional and revived) in their own individual ways. There were ‘traditions within traditions’: musical expressions of various geographical, occupational or ethnic identities and affiliations within the region that co-existed with and influenced North Eastern folk music. Throughout the folk scene, while some accepted imported forms as new facets to introduce almost seamlessly into the old forms, others resisted change vehemently. This chapter explores the possibility that the North East, with its long history of cultural cross-fertilization, was less prescriptive in this regard than elsewhere. And there were parallel ‘revivals within the revival’: diverse ways of experiencing the folk scene of the time that were shaped by, for example, performance genre (blues, folk-rock, and comedy were all distinct strands) or gender.

A key division within the folk scene lay between what was considered a continuous tradition and one which had apparently died out, to be revived with the help of influential mediators. Chapter Four explores these two aspects by first considering the North East’s much-vaunted continuity of folk traditions, then those cultural discontinuities that rendered the period 1950-1975 distinct, before assessing those who mediated the tradition during the revival. A key suggestion in this chapter is that the divide between mediators and mediated was far more permeable than is usually supposed. Any sense of bourgeois expropriation of workers’ culture appears to simplify the far more complex and cyclical process which I attempt to unravel throughout the second part of the chapter. While this would imply that some previous criticisms of folk mediation may have been overstated, it is emphasized that the North East’s peculiar social make-up may have been a determining factor in this case. The blurring at the edges of continuous tradition and revival was therefore an indicator of regional particularity.

This regional specialness was also evident from the long and comfortable association of folk traditions with patronage and publications. Chapter Five discusses this by examining the relationship between the folk scene and the media. It concentrates

east England, 1800-1914’, both in N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical interpretations of ‘The North’ and ‘Northernness’* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), 132-162, p133.

particularly on the newer means of dissemination, radio, television and records, which in effect extended the reach of oral tradition (and widened the pool of available influences) beyond the boundaries of an immediate 'live' performance, but which also brought new strictures and compromises. Folk artists had an uneasy relationship with the media: they needed the distribution and publicity that records, radio and television afforded, but they were inherently suspicious of what was certainly a part of the cash nexus and what was often considered a powerful arm of hegemony. The chapter, then, considers these fears, alongside the ways in which regional culture was portrayed within the media, thus shaping the image of the region both at home and externally.

Chapter Six examines the construction of the imagined community by way of its past. Folk culture was a foundation stone beneath the edifice of North Eastern heritage. From the border ballads and the piping tradition to the industrial and music hall songs, music provided an affective soundtrack to the imagery of North-Easternness that developed throughout the 1960s as an unusually early tool of regional regeneration. The era under study was one of great flux and perceived democratization, where meaning was avidly sought, and where the political entered new arenas, particularly culture and lifestyle. This was partly the kind of thinking which linked vernacular culture with the town planning of Newcastle-Brasilia (T Dan Smith's grand project to raise a completely redesigned and reconstructed modern city from the dilapidation of post-war Tyneside). Chapter Six demonstrates that this reconstruction encouraged a parallel growth in nostalgia and a perceived need to retain the artefacts that were in danger of disappearing. What may appear simply the replacement of real industry with heritage - where the tourist destination is less another country than another time - is a complex phenomenon and requires a framework built on more general studies of the heritage industry.¹⁰ This chapter contends that heritage events and sites such as Beamish Museum and the Allendale Tar Barls festival were more than pragmatic facets of regeneration: they were also expressions of the need to retain cultural capital. External tourists were not

¹⁰ See, for example, R Weight, and A Beach (eds), *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (Tauris, London, 1998). A more full discussion of scholarship on the heritage industry is given in Chapter Six.

necessarily the target audience: the effect was more powerful in encouraging an internal sense of belonging.

Chapter Seven continues from the premise that folk music and its associated texts had long been a part of the constructed identity and collective memory of the North East. This was an identity built upon images of pride, but also images of decline (and a paradoxical pride in being able to withstand poverty, disaster and Depression). The imagery itself is brought under scrutiny in this chapter, which attempts to deconstruct texts in terms of the 'cultural cringe' and the 'cultural strut'.¹¹ Naturally, it would be wrong to assume a straightforward correlation between social base and cultural superstructure and this chapter suggests that there was also traffic in the reverse direction where the culture helped to shape expectations that impacted upon society.

The final chapter draws together previous strands and interrogates the concepts of authenticity that underpinned all the other debates, from ethnic and local identities, through the need to prove continuity of tradition; from hand-wringing over the role of the media to the need to retain heritage. Whether or not music was 'authentic' was a key debate throughout the folk revival and Chapter Eight considers some of the reasons why this was such a vital issue at this particular moment in history. Using a framework borrowed from tourism studies and from the scholarship on consumerism, it demonstrates that authenticity is a relative construct, which can change over time and which can be sought at a variety of levels.¹² In this way, various forms of folk music placed diverse participants into a self-defined liminal space that linked the 1950s-1970s with a 'simpler', more 'natural' past, where participants could be lifted out of their everyday existence and become (or at least honour), for a few hours a week, pitmen and shepherds. This was expressed in a general rejection of the 'artificial' and in the very particular practice of 'de-staging'. And for some traditional performers the cult of authenticity became something they were able and willing to exploit in order to further their own interests. Once again there were some significant regional particularities in readings of 'the authentic', not

¹¹ This terminology is borrowed from K Wrightson, 'Northern Identities: The Longe Durée', *Northern Review*, Vol 2, Winter 1995, 25 – 34, who in turn borrowed the categories from Robert Hughes' pathology of Australian identity.

least the North East's smudged boundaries between 'folk' and 'popular' music, and these are discussed in some detail.

Once again, the historical context of the North East during a time of great change is of importance here, but the study requires more subtle analysis than a simple derogation of 'invented tradition'.¹³ Though important in assessing the 'glue' which sticks regional identity together, (the concept of invented tradition was largely used to understand how governments can operate hegemonically), there is also the question of why individual agents seek out an alternative reality which might have been less palatable had they experienced a traditional life as their whole existence. Here, ideas normally associated with tourism studies are of particular use, as they have moved past simple polarities of 'staged authenticity' -versus- 'reality' into a more complex understanding of the way in which what is considered 'authentic' shifts over time: how, for instance, a revived snatch of Geordie song might re-enter the vocabulary in a staged piece of almost "Uncle Tom" caricature, but be adopted back into everyday usage and acknowledged by local people as their own.¹⁴ Ultimately, rather than simply accepting existing arguments that the search for authenticity in folk music is a bogus and divisive red herring, I hope to suggest some of the reasons why we chase this mirage.

By the end of this chapter, and certainly by the end of the thesis, it should be evident that authenticity, tradition, heritage, the folk community, and the region are constructs of considerable power but are also utterly relative to historical circumstance, personal opinion and perceived need.

¹² See, for example, E Cohen, *Traditions in the Qualitative Sociology of Tourism*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 15, 1988, 29-46, D McCannell, 'Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 79/3, November 1973, 589-603, and C Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1987).

¹³ Naturally, studies of the impact of major socio-cultural changes in the post-war environment is significant here: see for example B Moore-Gilbert and J Seed (Eds), *Cultural Revolution? – the challenge of the arts in the 1970s* (RKP, London, 1992). And see particularly E Hobsbawm and T Ranger (Eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, Canto edition, 1992).

¹⁴ E Cohen, 'Traditions in the Qualitative Sociology of Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 15, 1988, 29-46.

Methodology

The scope of the enquiry has been framed by two borderlines: of folk music and of the region. Throughout this thesis (which, after, all, aims to study the self-defined boundaries that people place around their cultural activity) I refer to ‘folk music’ in its most general and flexible definition – the music that people chose to perform in folk clubs or that was referred to by the general public as ‘folk’. ‘Tradition’ is much more specific to the styles, texts and forms handed down through generations. Encompassing both sides of this distinction has allowed for the inclusion of music that might fall outside the remit of studies of tradition, but clearly belonged to ‘the folk’. Even the folk clubs alone had considerable reach within the region. By the 1970s, as Appendix Two demonstrates, there was one folk club for approximately every 17,500 people. This does not fall far short of Russell’s calculation relating to a more evidently popular activity, which showed that in England in 1913 there was one brass band for approximately every 15,500 people.¹⁵ (These figures are striking but their impact must be qualified by the different nature of the two institutions: one person might attend several folk clubs whereas a single individual was likely to remain faithful to a particular brass band).

As for the region, the map on page 105 is broadly representative of what I argue as the culturally distinctive area of the North East of England, bounded approximately by the Tweed in the North, the Tees in the South, and the Pennines in the West. An alternative appellation beloved of planners in the 1950s and 1960s was *The Land of Three Rivers* (Tyne, Wear and Tees) – again, clearly indicative of the perception that the North East has special and distinct qualities.¹⁶ This is further discussed in Chapter Six. Some thinkers, such as Russell, would argue that the North East is viewed, at least externally, as a sub-region of a wider ‘North’ that was ‘other’ to the metropolitan norm, but internal definitions seem to point to sufficient coherence and shared experience within this smaller area to argue for the North East as – at least at

¹⁵ D Russell, ‘“What is Wrong with Brass Bands?”: Cultural Change and the Band Movement, 1918-c1964’, in T Herbert (Ed), *The British Brass Band: A Musical and Social History* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 68-121, pp69-70.

¹⁶ H G Bowling, L C Coombes and R Walker, *The Land of Three Rivers* (Macmillan, London, 1958). Dan Smith specifically referred to the concept of ‘Three Rivers Country’, T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle, 1970), p105. Tyne Tees Television ran a Saturday morning children’s show, *The Three Rivers Club* during 1964-66 and it featured a regular heritage slot by Frank Atkinson: F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p90 and p202.

times – an entity in its own right. Levine and Wrightson highlighted the early proletarianization created by carboniferous capitalism in the Great Northern Coalfield (albeit including parts of Cumberland and the Pennines).¹⁷ Colls has documented cultural particularity in the colliery village but has also demonstrated a link between the region's industrial and rural cultures via the nineteenth century awakening of antiquarian interest in a Borders identity among the 'New Northumbrians'.¹⁸ Meanwhile, Lancaster has argued for 'the region' as a dynamic construct, subject to change over time, with boundaries and symbolic representations that shift according to dominant agendas. Sometimes regional identity is contested between these agendas, be they political, economic, spatial, cultural, or derived from patterns of consumption. But the North East of England provides historical moments (during the Victorian period, the 1930s and the 1960s) in which these diverse versions of regional particularity coalesced into a notable consensus identity, though one only designated as 'the North East' after the 1930s.¹⁹ That in all these cases dialect and musical culture were considered major signifiers of this identity is persuasive that the geographical perimeters of this thesis are reasonably secure.

Once these boundaries have been established, much of the analysis of the primary source material has been driven by attempts to test various hypotheses: does the North East folk revival fit the patterns outlined in previous national studies; and does it fit existing concepts of mediation or authenticity or popular culture? The fact that in every respect there are aspects of the North Eastern experience that do not accord with more general theories provides clear issues to explain and this is a recurring theme throughout the thesis. This approach has necessitated the adoption of a

¹⁷ D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), pp273-275; also D Russell, 'Music and Northern Identity, 1890-c1965', 23-46, p24, and M Huggins, 'Sport and the construction of social identity in north-east England, 1800-1914', both in N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), 132-162; K Wrightson, 'Northern Identities: The Longe Durée', *Northern Review*, Vol 2, Winter 1995, 25-34; D Levine and K Wrightson, *The Making of an Industrial Society – Whickham 1560-1765* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1991).

¹⁸ R Colls, *The Collier's Rant: Song and Culture in the Industrial Village* (Croom Helm, London, 1977); R Colls, 'Born-again Geordies' in R Colls and B Lancaster (Eds), *Geordies: Roots of Regionalism* (Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 1-34.

¹⁹ B Lancaster, 'Newcastle - Capital of What?', in R Colls, and B Lancaster, (Eds), *Geordies: Roots of Regionalism* (Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 53-70; B Lancaster, 'The North East, England's Most Distinctive Region?', in B Lancaster, D Newton and N Vall (Eds), *Agendas for Regional History* (Northumbria University Press, Newcastle, 2007). Lancaster attributes the shift from 'Northern Counties' and a gentrified revisiting of 'Northumbria' to the 'North East' to Depression era special measures appellations and to a growing sense of a media identity.

pluralist methodology in an area of scholarship that has traditionally been a battleground for theorists of particular ideological standpoints, from the followers of Tylor to those of Marx and beyond. There has been considerable emphasis on the structural factors that have shaped the trajectory of the folk revival. But culture does not simply reflect society, nor can it absolutely determine societal change – the traffic has been shown to be two-way.²⁰ Therefore, I have tried to place more weight on agency than might otherwise be expected – simply, when existing studies tend so firmly towards one social concept or another, to allow for anomalies based on individual experiences is distinctive in itself. However, such empiricism has to be balanced against a backdrop of wider social trends: I have used this understanding to bring together various strands of context and theory to ascertain how the second folk revival on Tyneside affected and was in turn shaped by wider cultural and social changes.

Placing the Tyneside folk scene within a variety of such contexts has helped build a picture of the interplay between different cultural and social movements, to see how they reflected and subtly altered one another. To do this, I have drawn on the work of folklore and popular music theorists and historians, and attempted to compare and contrast their assessment with social and cultural histories of the North East; of nineteenth century Tyneside music; and of ‘Northern-ness’ in general.²¹ Many of

²⁰ M S Archer, *Culture and Agency – The Place of Culture in Social Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1996). This argues that dominant ideology theories are rooted in studies of simple communities and cannot withstand analysis in more complex societies, in which conflation either upwards – from the societal layer to the socio-cultural layer – or vice versa, fails to take account of the internal tensions within these layers and of individual agency.

²¹ Some of the folklorists/popular music theorists are listed above: others include:- S Richards, *Sonic Harvest – Towards Musical Democracy* (Amber Lane Press, Oxford, 1992); I Russell and D Atkinson (Eds), *Folk Song – Tradition, Revival and Re-Creation* (Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, 2004); E D Gregory, ‘Lomax in London, Alan Lomax, the BBC and the Folk-Song Revival in England, 1950-1958’, *Folk Music Journal*, Vol 8 No 2, 2002, 136-169, V Gammon, ‘A L Lloyd and History: A Reconsideration of Aspects of “Folk Song in England” and Some of His Other Writings’, in I Russell (Ed), *Singer, Song and Scholar* (Sheffield, 1986), 146-164; S Frith, *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford University Press, 1998); R D Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The folk music revival and American Society, 1940-1970* (Boston, 2002); F Woods, *Folk Revival: The rediscovery of a national music* (Blandford, Poole, 1979); R A Peterson, *Creating Country Music – Fabricating Authenticity*, (University of Chicago Press, 1997); D Laing, R Deneslow, K Dallas, and R Shelton, *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock* (Methuen, London, 1975); P J Martin, *Sounds and Society: Themes in the sociology of music* (Manchester University Press, 1995). Regarding North Eastern history, see R Colls and B Lancaster, B (Eds), *Geordies* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1992); also by same authors: *Newcastle upon Tyne - A Modern History* (Phillimore & Co, Chichester, 2001); N McCord, *North East England - The Region's Development 1760-1960*, (Batsford Academic, London, 1979); B Williamson, *Class, Culture and Community: A Biographical Study of Social Change in Mining* (RKP, London, 1982);

these studies deal with issues of regeneration through heritage during an era in which former mainstays of industry were struggling.²² They exemplify ways of assessing the odd relationship within this region between modernization projects and the nostalgia for an imagined golden age on which they built. It is therefore important to understand how local folk music became a small but significant facet of the constructed North Eastern identity which was increasingly celebrated throughout the period. Therefore, placing ideas about the folk revival against a backdrop of a region in flux produces a rich context in which to place my primary source material.

Naturally, when considering the juxtaposition of culture and society, an awareness of Gramscian ideas of hegemony is necessary – the belief that folk revivals reinforced the dominant ideology has been deeply influential on many studies - but I have opted to be cautious regarding their application to a fairly small sub-culture.²³ And even this sub-culture can be subdivided: I remain mindful of the fact that identities are contested and that there are several competing narratives at work: different approaches to tradition; different concepts of regional identity, as well as of ethnicity, class and gender. Chapter Three shows that feminist perspectives are also an important facet (in this case, only a facet, because to take more full account of these would require a thesis of its own). Theories relating to collective memory are vitally important in answering questions on regional identity, and the use of music in creating these collective memories can be explained by applying some techniques

D Levine and K Wrightson, *The Making of an Industrial Society – Whickham 1560-1765* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1991); also, K Wrightson, 'Northern Identities: The Longue Duree', *Northern Review*, Vol 2, Winter 1995, 25-34. Significant studies of nineteenth century Tyneside music include K Gregson, *Corvan* (Kemble Press, Banbury, 1983); R Colls, *The Collier's Rant* (ibid); D Harker, *Fakesong*, ibid; W G Whittaker, *Collected Essays* (London, 1940, US reprint, 1970). Regarding 'Northernness' in general, see D Russell, *Looking North – Northern England and the national imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004); also D Russell, 'Selling Bradford: Tourism and Northern Image in the Late Twentieth Century', *Contemporary British History*, 17/2, Summer 2003, 49-68; R Samuel, *Theatres of Memory, Vol I: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (Verso, London, 1994, paperback edition 1996); N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'* (London, Ashgate, 2000) - especially S J Rawnsley 'Constructing 'The North': Space and a Sense of Place' and D Russell, 'Music and northern identity, 1890-c1965'; also R Samuel, (ed A Light, with S Alexander and G Stedman Jones), *Island Stories, Unravelling Britain: Theatres of Memory Vol II*, (Verso, London, 1998).

²² See J Corner and S Harvey (Eds), *Enterprise and Heritage: crosscurrents of national culture* (RKP, London, 1991).

²³ This is without taking into account more generalized skepticism about the "myth of upwards conflation", as outlined by M S Archer, *Culture and Agency: The place of culture in social theory*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996). Among those studies which presume that folk revival was a tool of hegemony, the most striking example is D Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British 'folksong' 1700 to the present day*, (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1985).

drawn from musical geographers (in Appendix One, I have listed folk clubs by location, type and over time to ascertain whether certain parts of the region favoured particular types of club).

I have also utilized methods used by historians of marginalized regions, whereby local cultures are contrasted with those of other regions and those in the mainstream, so that a picture of specific traits appears in relief.²⁴ This has paid dividends, confirming regional particularity in some respects but in others, challenging assumptions which are often stated but rarely analysed. For instance, the continuity of Northumbrian instrumental and dance music emerges in Chapter Four, not as the unique phenomenon often touted by promoters of the region's heritage, but as merely unusual: the traditions of Sussex, Norfolk and Devon-Cornwall demonstrate similar continuities. A more interesting particularity is the fact that what was a rural tradition that elsewhere relied for survival on relative backwaters retained at least some foothold in the North East's urban industrial centres. However, by the time of the period under study, what could be considered unbroken tradition and what might be viewed as nostalgia were blurred. Popular music approaches, which allow for a musicological study of sounds and texts but always against a backdrop of social context, are clearly of use here, and I have attempted to produce this type of analysis regarding some key texts in Chapter Seven. As already discussed, further approaches have been borrowed from studies of tourism and consumer behaviour.

Apart from a pluralistic approach to methodology and the available secondary literature, my practical research has involved archival work, correspondence with key participants, oral history interviews and listening to contemporary recordings. Secondary sources considered include books, journal articles, theses and well-researched audio compilations. This provided substantiation that the research project was indeed distinctive enough to represent a clear addition to scholarship. Some of

²⁴ D Russell, *Looking North – Northern England and the national imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004); also D Russell, 'Selling Bradford: Tourism and Northern Image in the Late Twentieth Century', *Contemporary British History*, 17/2, Summer 2003, 49-68; R Samuel, *Theatres of Memory, Vol I: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (Verso, London, 1994, paperback edition 1996); also R Samuel (ed Light, A, with Alexander, S, and Stedman Jones, G), *Island Stories, Unravelling Britain: Theatres of Memory Vol II*, (Verso, London, 1998); J Belchem, "An accent exceedingly rare": scouse and the inflexion of class', in J Belchem and N Kirk (eds), *Languages of Labour* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 1997), pp99-130.

the principal published secondary sources are given above, however, some very important insights have also been gained from unpublished theses, such as those by Allan Taylor; Tom Brown; and T L Fisher.²⁵ Taylor's assessment of the process of performing and songwriting, of conscious 'de-staging', and of the financial implications of turning professional is a particularly valuable 'insider's' view, which demonstrates how often ideals are subordinated to pragmatic needs.²⁶ The basic imperative of making a living in a professionalized musical milieu is often overlooked when reasons for cultural change (such as the sudden marketability of the 'authentic' Northerner) are sought.

Published primary sources include collections of regional music; the autobiographies of T Dan Smith and Ewan MacColl; and a large number of contemporary journal articles on folk music collecting.²⁷ Archives consulted include Newcastle Central Library's Local Studies collection, which is an excellent source for newspaper articles (particularly important in their coverage of the small-scale, *ad hoc*, unofficial events promoted by the folk scene which would otherwise go unrecorded), ephemera such as theatre programmes and press coverage (of, for example, *Close the Coalhouse Door* at Newcastle's University Theatre), and radio scripts, such as those for *Wot Cheor Geordie*.²⁸ I systematically worked through the folk music columns in the local press (such as the Friday column in *The Journal*, which began in 1971): however, the coverage of these columns is patchy and largely limited to the latter years of the period under study. This shortfall was compensated by another

²⁵ A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival* (unpublished PhD Thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, May 1993). T Brown, *English Vernacular Performing Arts in the late twentieth century: Aspects of trends, influences and management style in organisation and performance* (The City University, London, 2000). T L Fisher, *The Radical Revival: A History of the Folksong Revival, and other counter-cultural movements in Britain and America from the 1930s to the early 1970s*, (unpublished MA thesis, University of Birmingham, 1973).

²⁶ Though this actual terminology appears not in his thesis, but in MacKinnon.

²⁷ Some examples of these recordings are:- Various Artists, *The Northumbria Anthology* (20 CD boxed-set; MWMCDSP31/50, Newcastle, 2002); A L Lloyd, (ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners: Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, Revised Edition, 1978); J Purdon, *Songs of the Durham Coalfield* (Pit Lamp Press, Durham, 1977); E Boswell, *Eric Boswell's Songs of the North East Book 1* (Newcastle, 1975). See also T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1970); E MacColl, *Journeyman - An Autobiography*, (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1990); D Kennedy, 'The Hexham Festival - A Landmark', *English Dance and Song*, Vol XIII, No4, July 1949, pp56-58; A L Lloyd, 'Who Owns What in Folk Song?', *English Dance and Song*, Special Edition, New Year, 1961, 15-18; M Slocombe, 'Round Britain with a Recording Machine - The BBC as Collector', *English Dance and Song*, Vol XVII No 1, August/September 1952, 12-13.

²⁸ For example 'Coalhouse Door has 'opened' up a new future', *Whitley Bay Guardian*, (Friday May 3rd 1968).

systematic search through the *Live Music* classified advertisements in order to track the activities of the more established clubs and performers. A similar process applied to back issues of *English Dance and Song*, the magazine of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, though it tells mostly the story of those affiliated to an organization which was closer in spirit to the first folk revival than the second.²⁹ I further worked through the Arts Ephemera in Durham's Clayport Library and North Shields Library's Local Studies section, the latter of which, having had Phil Ranson (a leading figure in the local folk scene) as Librarian, has proved a rich seam of posters and programmes relating to clubs and festivals on North Tyneside. In all these cases, I have remained vigilant for and taken account of relevant pieces of more general local history, relating to urban regeneration, local media and publishing, and arts funding. Meanwhile, at the English Folk Dance and Song Society's Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, I located several further newsprint sources relating to the folk revival in general, notably complete runs of major British folk magazines such as *Sing* and *Spin*.

The records of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society, a strand of revival which differed from the mainstream and was also distinctive to the North East, are spread throughout various collections, including Central Library as above, Tyne and Wear Archives Service (which holds much of the Society's correspondence), and Morpeth's Chantry Bagpipe Museum. A pattern emerges of a Society brought to the brink of bankruptcy by declining interest and one expensive project only to gain greater popularity and buoyancy than ever, albeit with several years' lag behind the main thrust of the folk revival.³⁰

The Northumberland and Durham Records Offices have both provided valuable nineteenth century material, which has helped contextualize the later upsurge of interest in regional folk music. Additional contextual material has been consulted in Newcastle University's Bell-White Collection. There are only a few contemporary records available at Durham County Records Office, but the Beamish Collection holds pamphlets by Pete Elliott, manuscript tune-books from the nineteenth century onwards, a mid-1970s catalogue for Topic records, and a highly significant set of

²⁹ *English Dance and Song, Special Edition: The Folk Music of Northumbria*, Spring 1970.

articles from Coal Magazine, as well as several sound recordings, including an invaluable broadcast on *Songs of the Durham Miners* by A L Lloyd.³¹ I accessed further digitized sources via the FARNE website (which includes commercially unavailable recorded interviews and farmhouse music sessions featuring long-deceased performers such as Jack Armstrong, Billy Pigg and Jack Elliott), and from Ray Stephenson's recent compilations of vernacular recordings from 78rpm discs.³² A significant primary source is the 1967 BBC broadcast, *Death of a Miner*, which is closely discussed in Chapter Five.³³ Further broadcast material includes transmission dates, related correspondence and some 'Programme As Broadcast' notes (PasBs) for relevant editions of *Barn Dance*, *Wot Cheor Geordie*, *The Northern Drift* and *As I Roved Out*, mostly gathered from the BBC's Written Archives Centre at Caversham Park.

Commercial recordings, either on the original vinyl or on CD reissue, are clearly relevant both to understand performance style and instrumentation and to examine the packaging and sleeve-notes for indications of contemporary attitudes and prejudices: an example of this is given in Figure 6 in the main body of the thesis. What is particularly of interest is the iconic presentation and packaging within the context of what were presumed to be recordings of 'authentic' performances.

Listening to such recordings is a window into an era when stylistic battles were considered vital to the health of the revival. The full-throated vocal attack of Bob Davenport or Jack Elliott can be contrasted with the more theatrical renditions of the self-appointed guardian of authenticity, Ewan MacColl. These differences point to a

³⁰ This was the publication of the Charlton Memorial Tunebook, in memory of the Society's first president: A Hall, and W J Stafford (eds), *The Charlton Memorial Tune Book*, (NPS, Newcastle, 1956).

³¹ Most notably among Durham CRO's recordings are D/X 1288/1: Sound recording of County Durham folksongs, mostly in the local Weardale dialect, 1947 and late 20th century: *Recording made at the High Force Hotel, Teesdale, 1947*. Other sources cited above: P Elliott, *Little Chance for Little Chance* (Newcastle, 1980); A L Lloyd, 'Folk-Songs of the Coalfields', *Coal*, May 1951, pp26-27; A L Lloyd, 'All The Winners', *Coal*, October 1951, pp22-23; A L Lloyd (produced by Douglas Cleverden), *Songs of the Durham Miners, Episode 1: The Older Stratum*, BBC Third Programme, September 18th 1963.

³² The FARNE website is an invaluable resource. The acronym stands for Folk Archive Resource North East, which explains its purpose quite clearly: <http://www.asaplive.com/FARNE/RadioFARNE.cfm?ccs=150&cs=773>. Also Various Artists, *Geordie Heritage Series*, (privately produced CDs of digitized 78rpm recordings, available from ray@sedumray.ndo.co.uk).

³³ P Donnellan, (prod/writer), *Death of a Miner: In memory of a man, a pit, a community*, BBC1 television, 27th October 1968.

novel feature of this thesis: the emphasis placed upon the agency of individual actors. Meanwhile, hangovers from Skiffle and American protest song can be heard in *clawhammer* and *rocking bass* guitar and banjo accompaniments – but, interestingly, perhaps less commonly than in recordings from the folk revival elsewhere in the UK.³⁴ Instead, variations of instrumental style from the stately pace of Jack Armstrong’s piping to the rapid flurries of notes produced by Billy Pigg, or the subtleties of regional phrasing (to suit regional steps) among country dance musicians are perceptible. There are notable *a capella* songs from performers like Louis Killen, Maureen Craik, and Jack Elliott. Alex Glasgow’s use of brass band sounds in fairly theatrical or art-song arrangements serves as a reminder of another strong vernacular music tradition within the North East, while Bob Davenport’s recordings with the Boldon Banjos highlight the presence of banjo and concertina orchestras in the musical life of the North East long before the second revival.³⁵ Original recordings have therefore been vital to understanding both the diversity and the cohesion that made the local revival distinctive.

Anecdote is used liberally throughout this thesis without qualification or apology. Wherever possible, it has been mapped against documented facts (and this has highlighted some inconsistencies in personal chronologies). But it is a vital component in that it deals with motivation, justification and personal myth: the way in which the construct of the North Eastern folk revival was negotiated among its members, and the stories people tell about themselves. The folk revivalist’s animus is deeply subjective: therefore to approach the core of their values, it is essential to learn about their subjective views. Further, the underlying ‘folk’ construct is

³⁴ *Clawhammer* - a typically American style of fingerpicking – drawn from old-time banjo techniques and - is thoroughly explained on several websites, notably http://www.angelfire.com/folk/stadler/clawhammer_guitar/Clawhammer_Guitar_Basics.html. The *rocking bass* fingerpick was another almost ubiquitous pattern heard in the early work of most of the American folk revival performers such as Pete Seeger, Paul Simon, Joan Baez and Tom Paxton. This is not to claim that these accompaniments were more rare on the North East folk scene: their ubiquity around the contemporary and blues clubs is not in doubt, and some performers, such as Vin Garbutt – and, later, Jez Lowe - recorded using such guitar styles. Even Louis Killen, best known for unaccompanied song or concertina, and Johnny Handle, more usually associated with accordion and piano, both used guitars in their early folk-singing days. However, it seems significant that both these singers reached personal epiphanies regarding instrumentation and a large amount of the music from this area that was disseminated throughout the rest of Britain via recordings used a distinctive instrumental accompaniment, or no accompaniment at all.

³⁵ See Alex Glasgow, *Geordie the Professional*, and *The Sunsets, Bonny Lad*, compiled in Alex Glasgow, *Now and Then* (MWM CDSP21); Bob Davenport and the Rakes with the Boldon Banjos, *Pal of My Cradle Days* (Trailer, LER 2088, 1973).

motivated and moulded by a profound belief in the value of oral culture, and is thus frequently most aptly expressed via the spoken word.

Oral history interviews and questionnaires have therefore been important in the research, and I conducted several interviews, each of approximately two hours duration, with leading figures (as well as some of the ‘foot-soldiers’) in the local folk music revival.³⁶ I gained access to further recorded interviews conducted by other researchers (including my second supervisor, Mike Sutton), which helped to broaden the picture.³⁷ Brief biographical sketches of those interviewed are provided in Appendix Five. I attended Whitby Folk Week in August 2004 and was able to discuss some aspects of the revival with Doc Rowe. Additionally, from January to March 2005 I attended a weekly discussion group on Northumbrian music at The Sage Gateshead, which allowed access to other leading figures in the local folk revival.

A key problem in relation to this kind of research, where much of the primary source material is sketchy, is to be aware of the unreliability of oral testimony and wherever possible to check details against documentary evidence or other oral history accounts. But this type of evidence provides far more than a mere triangulation of sources in order to establish facts: the subjectivity inherent in oral history is one of its most vital components.³⁸ Even where the account is inaccurate, the reasons and way in which it is misremembered can itself be instructive.³⁹ As testimonies from those who experienced fascism demonstrate, forgetting can be a self-defence mechanism to protect the individual from painful memories. In the case of recollections of the folk revival, however, forgetting or mis-remembering is more likely to highlight the

³⁶ Interviews: Tom Gilfellon; Benny Graham; Patricia Jennings; Johnny Handle; Alistair Anderson; Keith Gregson; Kim Bibby-Wilson; Louis Killen; Jean Spence (who had been an occasional visitor to Seaham Folk Club, and who agreed to act as a “control” subject who would explain why she did not remain involved); Doreen and Bryan Henderson (of the Elliott family); Lance Robson; Hannah Hutton; Colin Ross and Ray Fisher; Joe Crane; and Bob Davenport. Telephone interview: Brian Mawson (of Mawson and Wareham Records).

³⁷ These are with: Johnny Handle; Benny Graham; and Carol Fyffe.

³⁸ See L Passerini, ‘Work Ideology and Consensus Under Italian Fascism’, *History Workshop Journal* 8, 1979, 84-92.

³⁹ At one point, I fell into the trap of taking the word of an interviewee that they had listened to Scottish radio in the Tyne Valley during the inter-war years, something which I later discovered was an impossibility given the transmitter coverage at the time. Thus, the interviewee told me less about their real experience than about their need to justify a bias towards Scottish style in their own playing.

perceived focal points in each individual's personal life story, to 'illuminate systems of thinking and of belief'.⁴⁰ As discussed below, where these focal points diverge is indicative of useful faultlines in the collective myth of the regional folk revival: these, then are the points of controversy that demonstrate how the region's folk music identity was negotiated and contested.⁴¹ I have therefore – both in the name of uniformity and in order to establish significant discrepancies in accounts - tried to base interviews and correspondence around the itemized questionnaire shown in Appendix Four. However, interviews can lose momentum if this format is applied too rigidly, and I opted to favour flexibility over frequent interruptions to the narrative flow.⁴² The continuance of narrative flow was particularly important when dealing with interviewees who (contrary to the more usual oral history subject who is, until the point of interview, unaware that their recollections are considered noteworthy) are experienced at providing 'soundbites' for specialist magazines and the local press.⁴³ Allowing space for the speaker to stop, to think, to expand on a topic can bring to the fore something usually overlooked or 'glossed over' in a more conventional press interview. Combining the results obtained from interviews and primary source documents has provided a map of the points of agreement (over the influence of wider movements such as 'Trad' jazz, Skiffle, and the 1944 Education Act) and of ideological dispute (over authenticity; performance style and presentation) to be viewed in each chapter against a different thematic context.

I gathered further reminiscences via correspondence and the aforementioned questionnaire detailed in Appendix Four. This has also been valuable in collecting information from those who do not feel able to be interviewed in person due to time constraints or illness.⁴⁴ Survey responses inevitably produced less detailed replies,

⁴⁰ L M Ballard, 'Awk, but Maybe it's only a Load of Aul' Lies – An Opinion on Oral Tradition', *Oral History Journal*, 14/2, 1986, 39-45, p45.

⁴¹ For the importance of juxtaposing interviews from contrasting sources, see P Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁴² Keeping questions open-ended also helped in this respect. See C T Morrissey, 'On Oral History Interviewing', in R Perks and A Thomson, *The Oral History Reader*, (Routledge, London, 1998), 107-113. With regard to the ethical use and dissemination of these recordings I have complied with the UK Data Service's deposit requirements. See <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/esrccontent/researchfunding/sec17.asp>.

⁴³ For the more usual surprise at being considered historically significant, see A Exell, 'The Experience of Being Interviewed', *Oral History Journal*, 14/2, 1986, 66-67.

⁴⁴ Questionnaires or related correspondence have been returned by: Laurie Charlton; Brian Pandrich; Bob Fox; Norman Shiel (of the Shiremoor Marrars and the Northumbrian Traditional Group); Stefan Sobell; Terri Freeman; Terry Conway and Liz Law; Fred Lewis; Michael Ridley; David

but still helped to build the overall picture. I have been in regular correspondence with a former secretary of the North East Federation of Folk Clubs, Dave Sutherland, and the former organizer of Shotley Bridge Folk Club, Bill Sables, both of whom now live outside the North East. In some regards, their recollections are likely to be more accurate in that they are less likely to conflate more recent events and ideas into the time period under study than those who have been a part of the North East scene continuously.

This collection of primary material via oral history and questionnaire has proved invaluable in a field where so much of the record is held in personal recollection rather than documentary evidence. Nevertheless, as each successive interview revealed some broad areas of consensus I opted to concentrate on a smaller number of lengthy interviews rather than on a large number of similar discussions. The interviews therefore represent key participants along the faultlines of this consensus, faultlines which rapidly became evident from all the primary sources. Their existence has concentrated the subsequent discussion into some recurring areas of study that could provide significant comparisons and contrasts. Clubs in the North East tended to derive their origins and ethos either from Folksong and Ballad or from the Elliott Family's Birtley Folk Club, so these were two focal points. There were clear discrepancies also with the Northumbrian traditional music scene and so this was to be another area to be considered closely. Finally, the experience of the purists needed to be contrasted with the more populist world of the wider Geordie renaissance: from Alex Glasgow's political *chansonnier* ballads to Balmbra's Music Hall to the folk rock of Lindsfarne.

Thus, the scope of the project has been partly shaped by the need to understand the diverse musical philosophies that contested the narratives of regional folk, but it has also been shaped by the perception of the years 1950-1975 as a distinct era. What began as fairly arbitrary cut-off dates now seem quite appropriate. The 1958 foundation of the Folksong and Ballad club was representative of a period when the folk movement was reaching critical mass. However, the growth in interest in vernacular culture, especially through influences drawn from American culture - of

Holmes; David Oliver; John Bentham; Allen Crawford; Dave Sutherland; Riggy Rackin; Vin Garbutt; and Roy Hartnell of Morton Sound Studios.

‘Trad’ Jazz, Skiffle and protest song - began around 1950. The earlier date also permits inclusion of relevant aspects of the Festival of Britain. As for the concluding date of 1975, close as this was to a numerical zenith of folk clubs, the following chapter will demonstrate that the roots of the decline of the revival’s popularity were already in place by this time.

Here, it is also essential to situate myself in relation to the topic. I was involved in the North Eastern folk scene during the mid-1980s as a singer of ‘contemporary’ material and it was the gulf that I observed between my own practice and that of the more traditional musicians which first alerted me to issues of authenticity and performance style.⁴⁵ Subsequently, my professional musical output moved into different genres, but I retained an interest in folk music, both as an audience member and occasional performer. This clearly falls short of the level of immersion required by participant observation, and, conversely, of the detachment possible in a more externalized study. The advantages are that I am not sufficiently involved to be purely partisan and not sufficiently distanced to ignore pragmatic explanations for what might otherwise appear to be ideological decisions. (For instance, I am aware of some clubs that decided against booking guest musicians not through a philosophical attachment to the concept of the ‘singaround’ but simply through lack of funds).

In summary, the distinctiveness of my approach is that it is an attempt to marry a variety of perspectives – including those of folklore theorists; regional and cultural historians; local folklorists; theorists of authenticity; and also music geographers in order to assess what, if anything, was peculiar to the Tyneside folk revival. This precludes an overriding theoretical approach which can give the ongoing project a clear cohesion, however, one key method is retained throughout: juxtaposing individual agency (quite often overlooked in studies of folk revival) with wider regional issues and social movements. This is the main common thread that draws together the disparate strands, and the chapters that follow will consider the revival

⁴⁵ In folk-club terms, “contemporary” material is the product of fairly recent known songwriters (examples from both sides of the Atlantic include: Ralph McTell, Allan Taylor, Bob Dylan, and Joni Mitchell) most usually in the “folk” or acoustic idiom with occasional forays into pop (Buddy Holly and The Beatles being popular “crowd-pleasers”).

through the prisms of various social and historical themes, beginning with an overview of the second revival as a whole.

Chapter One

Re-imagining the Folk: The Second Folk Revival

This thesis argues that there were particularities that rendered the North Eastern folk revival distinct from those more familiar accounts based upon “national” or “international” scenes. Therefore, in order to establish points of similarity and divergence, it is necessary to understand the salient features of the wider revival. This chapter outlines the narrative of these events and highlights some of the controversies and trends that will be thrown into relief by subsequent chapters’ analysis of the North Eastern experience. Broadly, it will explain how the second folk revival in England followed an arc of political engagement and belief in the democratic virtues of folk culture through a flowering of, on the one hand, neo-traditionalism, and on the other, an artistic and counter-cultural journey of self-discovery. This continued onwards to a rapprochement with pop and rock, and ultimately a retreat back into the established boundaries surrounding a community of like minds. Further, it will demonstrate that an engine of change to be found throughout the folk movement of this time was the constantly perceived threat of hybridity and/or commercialism, which spurred regular cycles of innovation, consolidation and regression in policy, style and infrastructure.

A L Lloyd’s 1961 prediction for folk song’s future progress succinctly encapsulated these issues:-

Folk-Song in Britain is in an interesting condition. Indeed, the condition is so far advanced that she is already in travail. Some say she’s brought to bed of a monster, and others that she’s about to lay a golden egg. The offspring will surely be a hybrid, but perhaps none the worse for that.¹

¹ A L Lloyd, ‘The Folk-Song Revival’, *Marxism Today*, June 1961, 170-173, p170.

By the time Lloyd published this comment, the so-called ‘second folk revival’ had been in gestation for several years, and it certainly appeared an uneasy blend of cultures: British and American; traditional and modern; student and shepherd.² Whether it produced a monster or a golden egg was hotly debated then and remains controversial today, with a major re-evaluation of the meaning of folk revival occurring on average every ten years, often coincidentally with an upsurge in popular preoccupation with the nature of “Britishness” or “Englishness”.³

A complex tussle for ownership of folk music began in the 1950s. Through this, a vibrant young movement mutated (at least partially) away from the original revival that was led by Cecil Sharp in the early years of the twentieth century.⁴ The legacy of Sharp, Broadwood and Baring-Gould has been well documented, and tarnished by reasonable concerns that it was a facet of the rise of more general nationalism; of middle-class expropriation and tinkering; of social engineering and social Darwinism, particularly the Tylorian doctrine of primitive survivals.⁵ The revival had enjoyed a brief flurry of acceptance during the early years of the twentieth century, but this had receded into the realms of a specialist, almost ‘crank’, pastime. By the 1940s folk music, particularly that mediated by EFDSS, was popularly viewed as a world of sedate social dances and concerts, with ‘all those vicars’

² The “first folk revival” is generally accepted to have occurred between c1890-1914 and centred around the collecting activity of Cecil Sharp and the Folk Song Society.

³ Since the 1960s, there has been at least one major book each decade, as follows:- A L Lloyd, *Folk Song in England* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1967); Fred Woods, *Folk Revival: The Rediscovery of a National Music* (Poole, 1979); Dave Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British ‘folksong’, 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes, 1985); Michael Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Aldershot, 2003).

⁴ Georgina Boyes in particular views the second revival as being indelibly tainted by the ideologies of the first. Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester, 1993), p241.

⁵ For nationalism, see V Gammon, ‘Folk Song Collecting in Sussex and Surrey, 1843-1914’, *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 10, Autumn 1980, 61-89; also J Onderdonk, J, ‘Vaughan Williams and the Modes’, *Folk Music Journal*, 7/5, 1999, 609-626. For social engineering, see R Judge, ‘Mary Neal and the Esperance Morris’, *Folk Music Journal*, 5/5, (1989), 545-591 for a mostly positive account of folk music as social work within the settlement houses. Regarding Tylor and primitive survivals, see M T Hodgen, ‘The Doctrine of Survivals: The History of an Idea’, *American Anthropologist*, Vol 33, 1931, 307-324. This theory suggested that folklore and superstition were survivors from a more “savage” stage in society’s evolution - a gift to those obsessed with ethnicity, and to those who would preserve traditions as museum pieces and forbid any development or modernization. Folklorists such as Sharp and even Lomax, with his “cantometrics” theory (types of song reflect types of society in particular stages of development), have adopted aspects of this idea. See C J Sharp, *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions* (Simpkin/Novello, Taunton/London, 1907), pp16-31; A Lomax, ‘Song Structure and Social Structure’, *Ethnology*, Vol I, 1962, 425-451; and A Lomax, *Folk Song Style and Culture* (Washington, 1968).

expropriating the music of “the folk” and re-arranging, beautifying and bowdlerizing it till it was safe for school and concert platform: -

For too many people for too long a time, an English folksong has implied a group of slightly eccentric people – the women with glasses, out-of-fashion dresses and incredible buns of hair, the men with a slightly glassy-eyed, dedicated look – trolling out inferior late Victorian verse adaptations to a tinkly piano accompaniment.⁶

And these were typically the versions that found their way onto the school curriculum.⁷ Consequently, after years of schoolchildren being force-fed a gentrified version of their heritage, most of “the folk” would far rather listen to Frank Sinatra or, if they wanted their music English, George Formby and Gracie Fields. The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) had become heavily dance-oriented, with a tendency to favour genteel Playford dances⁸. However, members of a new breed of folklorist were emerging out of organizations such as the BBC and the Workers’ Music Association who clearly had their own agendas and ideals (sometimes Reithian, sometimes communist, always with an eye to general “betterment”) as dearly held as Sharp’s notional “Englishness”.⁹

Peter Kennedy, son of the Director of EFDSS, was making (admittedly variable) efforts to improve the Society’s outreach into the community, particularly in his role

⁶ Brunner, J, “*Shakespeare Spake: Review of James Reeves, ‘The Idiom of the People’*”, *Keynote*, 1/1 (January 1959), p4, quoted in Boyes, G, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), pp226-227. The comment regarding ‘all those vicars’ comes from Bill Leader, quoted in P Heywood, ‘Bill Leader: 50 years in the recording industry part 1’, *Living Tradition*, 68, May/June 2006, 26-30, p28. See also V Gammon, ‘Folk Song Collecting in Sussex and Surrey, 1843-1914’, *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 10, Autumn, 1980, 61-89 for a balanced account of this process. And for a contemporary analysis of what was at fault in Sharp’s approach to folk music in schools, see H Sims, ‘Cecil Sharp in 1954’, *Sing*, 1/4, November/December 1954, 74-75.

⁷ See G Cox, ‘The Legacy of Folk Song : The Influence of Cecil Sharp on Music Education’, *British Journal of Music Education*, 7/2, (1990), 89-97.

⁸ Not that the executive committee were unaware that this might be a problem: see ‘The Policy of the Executive Committee’, *English Dance and Song*, XII/3, June 1948, p35.

⁹ Both Boyes and Brocken place considerable weight on the WMA’s influence. See, G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), pp234-236, particularly in relation to the WMA’s role as a training ground for the revivalists of the 1950s; and M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), pp43-61.

as North-East regional organizer as Chapter Four will demonstrate.¹⁰ His approach could be controversial, especially with regard to his use of copyright on traditional material and his addition of often unsympathetic instrumental accompaniments.¹¹ Though neither of these were unique phenomena, this was surprising behaviour from a supposed champion of source musicians. He may have given many traditional musicians an outlet, but it was one over which the performers themselves had little control: Kennedy published his collecting efforts via the BBC's *As I Roved Out* series, thereby taking the product of one form of mediation and disseminating it via another.¹²

Kennedy, an 'Establishment' figure, was something of an oddity in this new wave of collection and mediation, as most of the other leading figures derived from the political left. Edinburgh University's School of Scottish Studies was founded by Hamish Henderson, a leading socialist and translator of Gramsci. The School began their People's Festival Ceilidhs in 1951, bringing to a new audience previously overlooked performers like Jeannie Robertson, Jimmy MacBeath and The Stewarts of Blair.¹³ These were artists from within the tradition whose social status as 'travelling people' aligned them more closely with Woody Guthrie and the "Okies" than with Sharp's or Baring-Gould's settled, more deferential peasantry. Moreover, their powerful delivery gave no concessions to the first revival's 'beautification'. This was the thread which bound mediators as disparate as Kennedy and Henderson into the same movement: a new commitment to retaining at least some of the original context and spirit of performance rather than words or notes on a page. The North East of England provides something of an anomaly in this regard. Tom Clough, a coalminer, judged the piping contests at the North of England Musical Tournament

¹⁰ For better or worse, Douglas Kennedy was the towering figure in EFDSS immediately post-war. Karl Dallas has described Peter Kennedy's approach to dance as 'full of [EFDSS derived] wrong-headed preconceptions' and says that one can only 'wince at the heavy-footed insensitivity' of some of the dance records he made for HMV in the 1950s. K Dallas, 'The Roots of Tradition', in D Laing, R Deneslow, K Dallas, and R Shelton, *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock* (Methuen, London, 1975), 83-136, p89.

¹¹ See D Schofield, 'Peter Kennedy Remembered', *English Dance and Song*, 68/3, Autumn 2006, 20-21, p21.

¹² See E D Gregory, 'Roving Out: Peter Kennedy and the BBC Folk Music and Dialect Recording Scheme, 1952-1957', in I Russell and D Atkinson (Eds), *Folk Song: Tradition, Revival, and Re-Creation* (Elphinstone Institute, Aberdeen, 2004), 218-240.

¹³ A Munro, *The Democratic Muse: Folk Music Revival in Scotland* (Scottish Cultural Press, Aberdeen, revised edition, 1996), p28. One of the first bookings at the 1951 People's Festival was

during the 1920s, one of several earlier instances when North Eastern traditional musicians were viewed as providing definitive performances of their own material, and similar occurrences will be further highlighted in Chapters Four and Five.¹⁴ Even nationally, there had been some attempts, like Percy Grainger's phonograph recordings of Joseph Taylor, to document individual performance, but in the 1940s and '50s enough such single instances had coalesced to generate a sea change.¹⁵ Collectors could no longer simply collect songs or dances as impersonal artefacts.

Politics was a key factor in generating a new wave of folk music mediators. A democratizing urge born out of the discourses of the 1930s and encouraged by comradeship with the Soviets during World War II was to come to fruition through a vanguard of highly persuasive communist or fellow-traveller artists who, following wider trends, shaped conceptions of folk music away from the expression of the symbolic and impersonal *volk* (a notion already tainted by association with Hitler's Aryan mythologizing) and towards a more dynamic 'voice of the people'.¹⁶

Among this new breed of folklorists, Albert Lancaster Lloyd was a towering figure. A CPGB member and a polymath who translated and researched East European and Australian folksongs, he was also a singer of the big ballads and a member of EFDSS, the organization that was effectively Sharp's legacy. Nevertheless, he held the conviction that folk song was precisely that: song of "the folk" and by 1944 he had published a bluntly polemic pamphlet entitled *The Singing Englishman*.¹⁷ This publication has received much criticism for its naïve romanticization of pre-industrial

Theatre Workshop performing Ewan MacColl's anti-war play, *Uranium 235*. See also P Heywood, 'Hamish Henderson', *The Living Tradition*, 32, April/May 1999.

¹⁴ See J Murphy, *Heritage and Harmony: Case Studies in Folk/Popular Music and the construction of historical identities within the North-East of England, 1877-1988* (MA dissertation, University of Sunderland, 2003), p31.

¹⁵ Joseph Taylor et al, *Unto Brigg Fair: Joseph Taylor and Other Lincolnshire Singers recorded in 1908 by Percy Grainger* (Leader LEA 4050, mono LP, 1972). See also P Grainger, 'Collecting with the Phonograph', *Journal of the Folk Song Society*, Vol 3 (1908), 147-162.

¹⁶ The concept of the *volk*/'the folk' had been a vital part of the construction of national identities. See E Hobsbawm and T Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983); A D Smith, *National Identity* (Penguin, London, 1991), especially pp12-15; B Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1983). This can be contrasted with the more active notion of mid-twentieth-century citizenship as described in R Weight and A Beach (eds), *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (Tauris, London, 1998).

¹⁷ Georgina Boyes is just one of the many who have commented on its 'doctrinaire political commentary and unsubstantiated historical generalisations'. G Boyes, 'The Singing Englishman: An Introduction and Commentary', *Musical Traditions*, Article MT134, <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/tse.htm>.

life, but his analysis of society and culture was also fascinating in its present-centredness.¹⁸ It viewed the processes of making folksong through the prism of Lloyd's own experience of Britain at war, and his description of the class-blind camaraderie of embattled medieval Border settlements is evocative of contemporary film representations of 'toffs' mucking in with chirpy Cockneys during the Blitz.¹⁹ Lloyd argued that folk song was part of a process of class formation, bound deep into the dialectic that defined "the folk" as other than the ruling class:-

What we nowadays call English folksong is something that came out of social upheaval. That is no random remark, but a statement of what happened in history. It grew up with a class just establishing itself in society with sticks, if necessary, and rusty swords and bows discoloured with smoke and age. While that class flourished, the folksong flourished, too, through all the changing circumstances that the lowborn lived in from the Middle Ages to the Industrial Revolution. And when that class declined, the folksong withered away and died.²⁰

Not long after this, as the post-war trend towards democratization continued, Lloyd came to acknowledge that these folk did not after all disappear with the industrial revolution, commenting that among folklorists, 'nobody, to my knowledge, has been around the mines and the mills and among the fettleers and the professional footballers',²¹ Even EFDSS made a contribution to the newly nationalized National Coal Board's Festival of Music at Harringay on May Day 1948, featuring three dance teams: The Bacup Coconut Dancers, The Royal Earsdon Rapper Team, and The Lingdale Sword Team.²² But, despite being traditions from the industrial north,

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ A L Lloyd, *The Singing Englishman: An Introduction to Folksong* (WMA, London, 1944), p12.

²⁰ Ibid, p4.

²¹ This sense of democratization, of course, had begun at least during the war: See Nicholas, S, "From *John Bull to John Citizen: images of national identity and citizenship on the wartime BBC*", in Weight, R, and Beach, A, (eds), *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (Tauris, London, 1998); H Hopkins, *The New Look: A Social History of the Forties and Fifties* (London, 1963), pp17-26; and G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), pp199: after 'the People's War', 'the peace was therefore consciously 'the People's' too.' The quotation comes from A L Lloyd, 'This Folk Business: Review of *The American People* by B A Botkin', *Our Time*, Sept 1946, 44-46.

²² 'National Colliery Music Festival', *English Dance and Song*, XII/2, May 1948, p32. The coal industry was nationalized in 1947.

these were dances that had already met with approval from the revival's old guard.²³ However, in 1951 – and doubtless influenced by the work of US folklorist George Korson - Lloyd began in earnest to search for a fresh kind of mining material – song - to represent the Coal Board at the Festival of Britain.²⁴ The aim bore implicit links with the international workers' movement, in that it was not just to collect songs but to 'stimulate British miners to return to making up their own songs. They have as much imagination, and as much to sing about, as the Americans or the Russians!'²⁵

This search for songs which reflected a wider English people than the bucolic idyll perpetuated by EFDSS coincided in the early 1950s with Lloyd finding a like-mind in a fellow communist and folklorist.²⁶ Ewan MacColl had developed his own approach to the music via his years writing and performing Brechtian *agit-prop* theatre with his then-wife Joan Littlewood.²⁷ Lloyd's and MacColl's combination of folksong and ideology has proven a resilient factor within the revival and it was aided by the arrival in Britain around 1950 of some hugely influential American visitors. Folk-blues singers like Josh White and Big Bill Broonzy were evidence that the folk revival in America had been buoyant for some time, and they brought with them new instrumentation (especially the guitar), new informality, and new material of the type that would lead to the Skiffle boom.

The American revival rode a wave begun by the New Deal collection programmes overseen by John and Alan Lomax which recorded a wealth of blues and country material, not least from the state penitentiaries where they discovered Leadbelly.²⁸

²³ For instance, the Earsdon dance had been annotated by Cecil Sharp as early as 1912, see C J Sharp, *The Sword Dances of Northern England* (London, 1912, reprint E P Publishing, Wakefield, 1977), pp82-102.

²⁴ See G Korson, *Minstrels of the Mine Patch* (Pennsylvania, 1938); and G Korson, *Coal Dust on the Fiddle* (Pennsylvania, 1943). For the influence of American folklorists on A L Lloyd, see E D Gregory, 'Starting Over: A L Lloyd and the Search for a New Folk Music, 1945-49', *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music*, 1999/2000, 20-43.

²⁵ A L Lloyd, 'Folksongs of the Coalfields', *Coal*, May 1951, 26-27, p27. For the influence of American folklorists on A L Lloyd, see E D Gregory, 'Starting Over: A L Lloyd and the Search for a New Folk Music, 1945-49', *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music*, 1999/2000, 20-43.

²⁶ The Scots were somewhat advanced in this kind of research, courtesy of Gordon Greig, Hamish Henderson and the School of Scottish Studies.

²⁷ Further details of MacColl's collaboration with Lloyd, and their meeting with Alan Lomax are given in the following chapter outlining the North Eastern revival.

²⁸ Leadbelly's real name was Huddie William Ledbetter. I have opted, for the sake of clarity, to retain the later version of his nickname as the one most likely to have been adopted by most English folk fans. Ronald D Cohen's history of the American revival, however, holds true to the original

Political engagement had been strong in the early years of the US movement. Pete Seeger's Almanac Singers and later the more commercially successful Weavers were simply the most obvious grouping of communists and fellow travellers to attach themselves to the handy proletarian collectivism of folk singing, but they carried many other performers along with them, most notably Burl Ives, Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly.²⁹ Not only did this provide a politicized template for the nascent British revival and its publications (folk journal *Sing* was clearly influenced by its American counterpart, *Sing Out!*), it would also bring several leading figures to Europe for temporary respite as the House Un-American Activities Committee attempted to whittle away their careers in the USA.³⁰ The offer for Alan Lomax to collect a World Library of Primitive Musics for Columbia Records could not have come at a more fortuitous time and in the autumn of 1950 he arrived in London.³¹ He brought with him techniques derived from the work he had done with his father – particularly the use of tape machines in field recordings of source singers (which, until only very recently the UK had been slow to adopt) and he made an immediate impact on like-minded folklorists such as Lloyd and MacColl.³²

The following section will demonstrate how musical democratization was not driven simply an ideological impulse but also by technological advances, by a post-war society in flux, by newly influential and affluent agents such as the teenager and the provincial artist, and by an underlying fear that commercial culture would swamp all that had gone before.

The BBC were developing similar techniques to those that had already succeeded in New Deal America, moving towards a more direct broadcast representation of “the

spelling as known in America of the time: Lead Belly. See R D Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The folk music revival and American Society, 1940-1970* (Boston, 2002).

²⁹ The Almanac Singers were named after the apartment building where many of the participants were based.

³⁰ See R Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival* (Harvard University Press, 1996), pp80-82; R D Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Music Revival and American Society. 1940-1970* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), pp67-92. Also, C Harper, *Dazzling Stranger: Bert Jansch and the British folk and blues revival*, (Bloomsbury, London, 2000), p72 recounts how only the efforts of the British Left in booking a 1961 concert at the Royal Albert Hall were enough to regain Pete Seeger his passport.

³¹ E D Gregory, 'Lomax in London: Alan Lomax, the BBC and the Folk-Song Revival in England, 1950-1958', *Folk Music Journal*, 8/2, 2002, 136-169, p137.

people”, and in 1952 they launched a Music and Dialect Recording Scheme (further discussed in Chapter 4) using collectors such as Séamus Ennis, Bob Copper, Peter Kennedy and, unsurprisingly, Alan Lomax. Though the majority of televisual contact with any kind of traditional music came via the Scottish vaudeville of *The White Heather Club*, the folk revival also found its way onto television via the *Tonight* show, which featured short spots by the likes of Robin Hall & Jimmy McGregor and Cy Grant. The apex of this new trend towards the vernacular is generally given as the *Radio Ballads*, created through a collaboration between radio producer Charles Parker, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger.³³ These provided a revolutionary montage of spoken actuality interviews, sound effects, background music (with the frequent use of Seeger’s characteristically American banjo playing) and original songs. It is perhaps ironic that this most influential series of broadcasts featured mostly original compositions by a Brechtian playwright and few traditional songs, but the impact of recordings and broadcasts upon the revival’s reach was clear.

Goldstein has argued that “each major technological advance ... in mass communication media”, from moveable type onwards, “helped to produce a folksong revival”.³⁴ The previously impossible flexibility afforded by lightweight tape recorders - coupled with long-playing records capable of pairing the already popular tunes (which would likely have been released on 78rpm discs) with the obscure – opened up a wider repertoire garnered directly from field recordings of source singers. This “fed rather than swallowed, the oral tradition”, as people discovered a new way of learning songs without the interference of a transcriber (though this ignores the selectivity of collectors and performers, and – as will be discussed below - simple factors such as nerves).³⁵ Whatever, this new availability of traditional sounds was significant in that the presence of some highly motivated mediators was not alone sufficient to spur a major revival: an audience was also necessary. The

³² Regarding the slow adoption of sound recordings in Britain, there were notable exceptions to this: see Grainger, P, ‘Collecting with the Phonograph’, *Journal of the Folk Song Society*, Vol 3, 1908, 147-162.

³³ The first Radio Ballad, *The Ballad of John Axon*, was transmitted on the BBC’s Home Service on 2nd July 1958.

³⁴ Goldstein, K S, ‘The Impact of Recording Technology on the British Folksong Revival’, in Ferris, W and Hart, M L, (eds), *Folk Music and Modern Sound*, (University Press of Mississippi, 1982), 3-13, p4

³⁵ *ibid*, p4

1950s had seen rapid growth in the popularity of “trad” jazz and blues. As discussed above, British youth’s search for “roots” music seemed to initially look across the Atlantic, even though American roots were just as contested and constructed as those at home.³⁶

Britain was just beginning to rebuild after the War and the depression which preceded it. The widespread conviction that these events must never happen again was reflected not only in the massive legislative programmes that were put into action while the consensus favoured government intervention: it also forced a demographic shift, where the old values dictated from above were challenged. Just as politics moved out of the era of Eden and into that of Macmillan and Wilson, the “angry young men” – Hoggart, Williams, Osborne, Sillitoe, Larkin and Amis – were challenging old intellectual elites, and (Ewan MacColl’s ex-wife) Joan Littlewood was breaking down the distinctions between performer/expert and audience.³⁷ Music similarly needed a new, more demotic voice. This impulse, along with the inspiration of Americans who had reached this point a decade or two earlier, was the catalyst for the fascination with ‘authentic’ music. British bandleaders such as Ken Colyer and Chris Barber took up the cause and became more self-consciously “primitive” than their American counterparts.³⁸ The acoustic interval sets performed by a sub-group of the Chris Barber band led to a new offshoot, the “Skiffle” craze, which particularly affected Britain. Towards the end of 1955 a version of a Leadbelly song was lifted from one of Barber’s LPs to be released as a novelty solo single for the group’s banjo player, Lonnie Donegan.³⁹ The unexpected chart success of *Rock Island Line* was the first shot across the bows of the professionalized

³⁶ See M Hamilton, ‘The Voice of the Blues’, *History Workshop Journal*, 54/ 1, 2002, 123-143, which argues that the definitive Delta blues now so revered as the fount of Afro-American authenticity was in actual fact a highly selective construct created by a New York-based group of obsessive “race” record collectors.

³⁷ For ‘angry young men’ see D Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (Little Brown, London, 2005), pp138-166. For the dissolving distinctions between performer and audience, see R Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p367.

³⁸ Here the word “primitive” is used in a non-derogatory way, to imply a sense of artless connection to the original source.

³⁹ Chris Barber’s Jazz Band and Skiffle Group, *New Orleans Joys* (Decca 10” LP, LF 1198, 1954). Interestingly, this LP also features a New Orleans rendition of *Bobby Shaftoe* that was released as a single. See C Harper, *Dazzling Stranger: Bert Jansch and the British Folk and Blues Revival* (Bloomsbury, 2000), pp16-21.

British music industry.⁴⁰ A generation of young people in the responsibility-free zone between school or National Service and jobs or domesticity, realized that – with very little money, training or talent - they could make their own music.⁴¹ Better still, it did not have to be a poor imitation of the mass entertainment they saw as ‘musical pap sung in an old-fashioned way by singers old enough to their fathers’.⁴²

Skiffle was a peculiarly British refraction of American culture: deliberately, almost dogmatically unpolished, with none of the concessions to musical arrangement and development evident in American groups like the Weavers and the Limelites. Skiffle had a different impetus, and introduced many people into the movement whose interests were more in keeping with “the folk” than erstwhile CPGB members (though it should not be forgotten that Alan Lomax led a skiffle group which featured - prior to his conversion to cultural purity – Ewan MacColl.⁴³) This was a broad-based movement, a “craze”. It seems fitting that the Skiffle boom and the teenager-as-concept arrived in the Britain of 1956. The Suez crisis, the slow erosion of Empire, and the ever-present dread of nuclear annihilation confirmed the death of old certainties but paradoxically there was a simultaneous perception that a new era of classless affluence and technology, of leisure and consumption was dawning. Osgerby likens popular perceptions of youth culture to ‘a canvas on which debates about more general patterns of social change are elaborated’ – especially at times like the 1950s and ‘60s when society is in flux.⁴⁴ As the media increasingly spent column inches and air time on youth culture as a metaphor for social change the added publicity drew ever more young people towards these new modes of expression.

⁴⁰ L Donegan, *Rock Island Line* (45 rpm single, Decca F10647, 1955) – remained in the charts for nineteen weeks from January 1956, and sold a reported 3 million copies. (Source: P Gambaccini, T Rice, J Rice, *British Hit Singles* (Guinness, London, 1993), p90; C Harper, *Dazzling Stranger: Bert Jansch and the British Folk and Blues Revival* (Bloomsbury, 2000), p21. Other skiffle hits included the Vipers’ version of Leadbelly’s *Pick a Bale of Cotton* and Nancy Whiskey and Chas McDevitt’s version of the Elizabeth Cotton song *Freight Train*. For a fuller account of Skiffle, see M Sutton, ‘Skiffle – Past, Present ... and Future?’, *Living Tradition*, 73, March/April 2007, 20-22.

⁴¹ Skiffle instrumentation meant that finances were little impediment to young players: a tea-chest bass hardly represented a major outlay in setting up a group.

⁴² F Woods, *Folk Revival: The rediscovery of a national music* (Blandford, Poole, 1979), p52.

⁴³ Alan Lomax and the Ramblers, *Alan Lomax and the Ramblers* (DECCA DFE 6367, 1957).

⁴⁴ B Osgerby, ‘The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Post-war media representations of youth’, in A Briggs and P Cobley (Eds), *The Media: An Introduction* (Longman, Harlow, 1998), 319-334, pp326-327. It should be noted that Osgerby does not see the 1950s moral panic about youth as

For a couple of years Skiffle's impact was huge: Woods notes that "both the All Scotland Skiffle championship of 1957 and the East Anglian championship of 1958 attracted over a hundred groups".⁴⁵ The Skiffle club represented an informal space where like-minded individuals could gather regularly to hear and – above all – participate in their favoured music. And it dictated the type of music they were likely to favour, with many future folk enthusiasts finding their way into the music via Skiffle, then researching its African-American roots, and finally seeking out their own musical traditions. The foundations of the folk club scene were laid in the coffee bars around which these Skiffle clubs were centred, and this was another early point where the North East of England diverged from the rest of the country. As the following chapter will detail, Newcastle boasted as many "trad" jazz and Skiffle enthusiasts as elsewhere, but most of their activity remained in pubs and clubs rather than coffee bars.⁴⁶ Perhaps this was due to the prevalence of the local beer culture or the need to attract new clientele, but (as with the emphasis on performance discussed earlier) the template for the North Eastern folk scene appeared to pre-empt national developments.⁴⁷ As the revival progressed, the pubs would become such a locus for folk music throughout Britain that Frankie Armstrong suggested this explained the divergence between the British and American folk scenes.⁴⁸

It is clear that folk music was adapting to new forms of dissemination. The following paragraphs will show how the folk club represented an innovative performance venue, deriving on the one hand from the old public houses and back-room music halls, and on the other from learned societies and political clubs; how record labels and magazines publicized ideology alongside songs; and how technology had opened up a new form of oral transmission, no longer solely reliant upon personal contact.

anything new: similar concerns appeared at least as early as the late nineteenth century and have continued to appear periodically ever since.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p53.

⁴⁶ See G Pearson, *Sex, Brown Ale and Rhythm and Blues: The Life that Gave Birth to the Animals* (snagaP, Darlington, 1998), which provides a litany of the music bars around 1950s/60s Tyneside.

⁴⁷ With a declining population, the North East offered a receding pool of potential customers for the large number of pubs that were open in the region: music might be considered an added attraction.

⁴⁸ F Armstrong and B Pearson, 'Some Reflections on the English Folk Revival', *History Workshop* 7, Spring 1979, 95-100, p95.

Even before the Skiffle boom, the infrastructure of the folk revival had begun to move away from the old EFDSS template of church hall tea dances and tightly-programmed contests to the more informal atmosphere found in the coffee bars and pub back-rooms described above. In 1954 at the Princess Louise in High Holborn, Ewan McColl and Bert Lloyd opened the Ballads and Blues Club.⁴⁹ This club was born out of the 1953 concerts and BBC broadcasts organized with fellow WMA Vice-President Humphrey Lyttleton and featuring visitors such as Big Bill Broonzy. The aim of these projects was to promote English traditional music via an eclectic blend of all the ‘authentic’ forms: traditional jazz, blues and folk.⁵⁰ In the same year Harry Boardman began a similar project in Manchester.⁵¹ This new type of organization became increasingly acknowledged as the “folk club” throughout the late 1950s as new clubs opened up with increasing pace. Bradford’s Topic Folk Club was formed in 1956 when Alex Eaton and friends decided to continue singing after they disbanded their Young Communist League choir in disillusionment at the Soviet handling of Hungary.⁵² This was followed by Rotherham Folk Club in 1957, and 1958 proved a watershed year, with the opening of several highly influential clubs including Ian Campbell’s Birmingham Folk Club, the Spinners’ club in Liverpool, and Newcastle’s Folksong and Ballad club.⁵³

As will be discussed in Chapter Four, these clubs were populated by a combination of contemporary social groups. The political left were inspired by touring folk groups from behind the Iron Curtain and sought ways of linking lifestyle with ideology. There were bohemians and beatniks; and the youth who were motivated by the excitement of a new music played in venues that their parents would not like. As with the previous revival, it was only occasionally that those who had been defined as “the folk” (source musicians from a continuous tradition) entered into the equation. Such traditional artists were feted, and their performance styles fetishized,

⁴⁹ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p231. It should be noted that the Princess Louise club also became one of the homes of Irish music in London – another external factor that had considerable bearing on the development of traditional music clubs.

⁵⁰ <http://www.wcml.org.uk/people/em/radio.htm>.

⁵¹ Within two years Johnny Handle was providing an interval spot on a similar theme at Newcastle’s New Orleans club. See Chapter One below; Handle, J, interviewed by Sutton, M, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

⁵² ‘History of the Topic Folk Club’, <http://www.topic-folk-club.org.uk/>.

⁵³ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p233.

but they rarely controlled the direction in which the revival developed. Some maintained an influential presence: just as William Kimber had had some bearing upon Cecil Sharp's morris dance revival, Séamus Ennis and Bob Copper straddled the roles of source and collector within the BBC. Chapter Four will demonstrate that Jack Elliott held a similar (if less powerful) dual role within the North East.⁵⁴ It could also be argued that, even if they did not organize the clubs, the presence of some performers from within the tradition moulded the perceptions and expectations of some revivalists. At The Bedford, an Irish pub in Camden Town, Margaret Barry and Michael Gorman held considerable sway over young enthusiasts such as Reg Hall and Bob Davenport. More sporadically, Jimmy White, Billy Pigg and Tommy Edmondson visited Newcastle's Folksong and Ballad, or the club's residents travelled out to find them. Despite such pockets of influence, though, the main thrust of the revival's development lay in the hands of the new aficionados and this was evident beyond the folk clubs themselves.

The recorded sounds of traditional music were becoming increasingly available, again via mediators with their own agendas. Topic Records, an offshoot of the WMA, who had once produced recordings of the Unity Theatre and the Red Army Choir, was beginning to restrict its role to the recording of traditional music.⁵⁵ Bill Leader, emerging as a significant presence from 1956 as a recording engineer and organizer, was instrumental in the specialization towards folk forms and was especially evangelical about distributing the work of source musicians.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, according to Brocken, since 1950 "the astute Lloyd and MacColl" had been moulding the label's profile to suit their aims:

Rather than having to compromise their own specialised material in order to please a larger record company, it was far more judicious to co-opt the politically correct yet rather wayward and naive Topic record label ... as their delegated disseminator.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Regarding Sharp's "source", Kimber was leader of the Headington Quarry morris team that inspired Sharp to begin collecting dances. The two men became lifelong friends and correspondents, though perhaps with Kimber in the deferential role of social inferior.

⁵⁵ Unity Theatre, *Here We Come* (Topic Records, TRC3, c1939-40); USSR Red Banner Ensemble of the Red Army, *The Tractor Song* (Topic Records, TRC21, c1943-45).

⁵⁶ See P Heywood, 'Bill Leader: 50 years in the recording industry', Part 2, *Living Tradition*, 70, Sept/Oct 2006, 60-62, p62. Also M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), p58.

⁵⁷ Brocken, *Ibid*, p58.

Thus the slightly awkward relationship between tradition and revival seen in the folk clubs was reiterated within Topic. The company's association with traditional music was reinforced with the 1956 launch of its Blue Label: this provided 'models of performance' that shaped the sense of what was approved and authentic, all the while influenced by continuing ideological ties to the Workers' Music Association and the varying editorial interests of Leader, Lloyd and MacColl.⁵⁸ This may have differed from EFDSS in tone and purpose, but not in terms of structure: there was still a group of experts publishing, explaining and defining the music of the people to the people.

While Topic Records and the output of BBC broadcasts like *As I Roved Out* were reasonably widely disseminated (and their impact on the North Eastern scene will be more closely discussed in Chapter Five), some of the early revival singers were also able to make use of the more obscure recordings in EFDSS's Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.⁵⁹ Clearly, A L Lloyd was a great researcher of this material, but later artists like Martin Carthy, Peter Bellamy and the Watsons would also draw on these sounds to shape their own performance styles. At times this produced controversial results, such as in the revival approach to words: something Allan Taylor has dubbed 'the a-dialectic dialect'.⁶⁰ Revival singers aped recordings often made by people in their last years of life, full of vibrato and the nerves of facing a new-fangled recording machine. Singers might pick up vocal mannerisms from the ageing performer's flaws rather than their usual approach. And if, for example, a London-based performer (like Carthy) was sufficiently influenced by a regional accent (say, Lincolnshire's Joseph Taylor), then a composite accent developed that was self-perpetuating through the revivalist's own recordings which inspired a later generation still.⁶¹ Once again, this process differed slightly in the North East, where matters of dialect and style were more rooted within the region, and this will be

⁵⁸ The comment regarding "models of performance" derives from G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p234.

⁵⁹ Some of these broadcasts are more closely discussed in Chapter Five.

⁶⁰ A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival* (unpublished PhD thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, May 1993), p19.

⁶¹ In the example given, this applies to Carthy's early recordings, as the obvious Joseph Taylor influence in Carthy's vocal style had dissipated by the 1970s.

discussed further in Chapter Eight. For much of England, though, the revivalists concerned with authenticity could only derive their style from material that was already selected and preserved at the behest of a mediator.⁶²

The relative wealth of material and performance spaces available to folk musicians meant that choices were now a necessity: if they could not perform all of the known folk repertoire and if their audience pool was widening, how would they select their repertoire and how – and to whom – would they choose to perform it? The first major schism in the second revival was looming and the following pages will chart the shifting balance between eclecticism and traditional fundamentalism, both of which offered their own definitions of authenticity.

The traditional approach was far from the only branch of the second folk revival. As some enthusiasts sought authentic English roots music, others borrowed and adapted imported American styles with a sophistication far beyond Skiffle. The acoustic guitar had become established within a great many clubs as a pragmatic choice of instrument: portable, adaptable, capable of generating a relatively effortless accompaniment. It also provided a link with rock'n'roll, the blues and the dustbowl ballads. Burt Weedon's *Play in a Day* was published in 1957, and the late 1950s saw an upsurge in guitar sales and classes significant enough to attract media attention.⁶³ The early 1960s saw the emergence of new techniques introduced by young guitarists such as Davy Graham, John Renbourn, Bert Jansch and Martin Carthy.⁶⁴ They distilled a variety of styles from American folk and country to blues, jazz and – later – Asian music and adapted them to suit their own compositions and British traditional music. Graham was the chief innovator: his instrumental piece, *Anji* became a “standard” of the 1960s generation, and he devised non-standard guitar tunings to mimic oriental instruments.⁶⁵ Musically eclectic and sartorially distinctive

⁶² Scotland, Ireland and Wales had rather different patterns of transmission and mediation.

⁶³ *Monitor* (BBC, 1959), compiled in *Folk at the BBC* (BBC4, 3rd February 2006). See also M Harding, ‘The Music of the People – The Manchester Folk Scene: A very personal and perhaps coloured memoir’, *North West Labour History*, 26, 2001, 44-46, p44.

⁶⁴ Jansch's influence on the young Rod Clements is specifically stated in Clements' website: <http://www.rodcléments.com/bj.html>

⁶⁵ D Graham, *Angie*, on A Korner and D Graham, *3/4 A D* (Topic EP, TOP 70, 1962). This subsequently had countless “cover” versions, two of the most famous being on Bert Jansch, *Bert Jansch* (Transatlantic, 1965), and on Simon & Garfunkel, *Sounds of Silence* (CBS, 1966). Although originally titled *Angie*, I have given the spelling as it is now generally rendered (certainly since Paul Simon recorded the tune), even on reissues of Davy Graham's original

(wearing sharp suits more associated with modern jazz fans), Graham challenged pre-conceived notions of any stereotypically “folkie” identity. This suggests that, if the interpretation was good enough, then stylistic constraints appeared not to matter - or at least to matter less. The developments surrounding these new guitar-virtuosi appeared to generate their own opposition as a growing number of hard-line traditional clubs discouraged or even banned the use of this apparently non-indigenous instrument, despite usually being willing to accept the concertina, which was another alien innovation dating back only to the close of the previous century.⁶⁶

The battle over authenticity had begun. The infamous and controversial “policy” was set in motion at the eclectic Ballads and Blues club by Peggy Seeger’s hilarity at hearing cockneys singing Leadbelly songs. From this initial impetus to stop such ersatz Americans, MacColl’s club changed its name to *The Singer’s Club* and became a place that frowned on anyone performing a piece from a culture to which they were alien. MacColl later defended this decision:

It wasn’t that we were hostile to so-called ‘foreign’ songs. On the contrary, we were eager to attract foreign performers to the club. Our problem was English, Scots, Welsh, Irish and American performers singing songs whose idiom, whose language, they did not understand, hence mishandling the songs.⁶⁷

It did not seem to matter how spurious such ascribed notions of ‘purity’ may have been (as Middleton has it, no genre of music could ‘walk on to the historical stage in uncontaminated form’⁶⁸). The policy failed to take account of the fact that songs had always travelled: that there were strong traces (even whole songs) of Scottish and Irish traditions in the Appalachians; that MacColl himself should have understood clearly that it is possible to be born in Salford but understand the idiom of Scottish song via family influence, and to perform that music with the accompaniment of one’s American partner. But MacColl was also drawing on the

recording. The most famous of these is his DADGAD tuning, which has become a standard folk tuning used almost to the exclusion of standard tuning by artists such as Pierre Bensusan.

⁶⁶ F Armstrong and B Pearson, ‘Some Reflections on the English Folk Revival’, *History Workshop* 7, Spring 1979, 95-100, p96. Also G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p238.

⁶⁷ E MacColl, *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1990), p288.

⁶⁸ R Middleton, *Studying Popular Music* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1990), p6.

left's doctrinaire Cold War suspicions, that all commercial culture from the US was a form of creeping capitalism that had begun with the coming of the GIs in World War II.⁶⁹ As Frankie Armstrong put it, 'verbally, ... the vanguard is usually behind the times, fighting the last revolution rather than the next one'.⁷⁰ Though his insularity may have originated from old tensions, there remained a widespread understanding that nothing so monolithic, so widely disseminated had ever existed to compete with American popular culture in the age of mass communications.⁷¹ MacColl's approach suggested that, just as the first revival sought to counter German musical dominance through the rediscovery of the quintessentially English, then the second wished to revivify indigenous music based on the personal freedom embodied in the 'home-made' and thus save it from being swamped by Americanized 'canned entertainment and packeted provision'.⁷²

Naturally, "there was murmuring ... about dictatorship and censors", but MacColl felt himself vindicated by his estimation that by the early 1970s there were "upwards of 2,500 folk clubs in Britain, and that a large majority of them tended to concentrate on English, Irish and Scots traditional music".⁷³ To this end, the club distributed song sheets so that everyone could participate in learning the new material. Peggy Seeger claims that both Louis Killen and Harry Boardman rediscovered the roots of their home areas (of Tyneside and Manchester respectively) as a direct result of the policy, though this may be self-justification (Killen, for one, appears to disagree, crediting his rediscovery of North Eastern music not to the restrictions imposed by the Singer's Club, but to the inspiration of other singers of English material at Oxford University's Heritage Society⁷⁴). MacColl and Seeger further disseminated their views via the publications they edited, such as the WMA's *Songs for the*

⁶⁹ See E MacColl, *The Second Front Song* (c1943/4, © London, 1978). A less politically-charged criticism of encroaching quasi-Americanism is found in R Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1957), p248, which speaks of this phenomenon as 'a peculiarly thin and pallid form of dissipation, a sort of spiritual dry-rot.'

⁷⁰ F Armstrong and B Pearson, 'Some Reflections on the English Folk Revival', *History Workshop* 7, Spring 1979, 95-100, p99.

⁷¹ Mass communications themselves were seen as a threat to existing culture, see M Donnelly, *Sixties Britain* (Pearson, Harlow, 2005), p79, which deals with the Pilkington Committee's investigation into the impact of television.

⁷² These derogatory terms are Hoggart's. R Hoggart, *Ibid*, p326.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p288.

⁷⁴ See the following chapter detailing the North Eastern Revival's history.

'Sixties, a selection of songs which clearly implies that contemporary original compositions should also derive from native styles.⁷⁵

A further element of the policy was its emphasis on excellence in performance, which in 1964 coalesced into a firm “school”, known as the Critics Group. This was the acknowledgement of a paradigm shift. Until this point, many in the folk revival (among them the regulars at the Elliotts’ club in Birtley, to be discussed in the following chapters), had viewed the mere act of participation – of making one’s own entertainment - as sufficient. MacColl and Seeger were now working upon the assumption that the old performance styles really had died out: it was therefore imperative to train the next generation of folk singers into the techniques and performance skills that MacColl had learned as a theatre actor and Seeger had learned from being born into a family of musicologists. Their workshops on how to become a folk singer became a template for similar projects in clubs throughout the country (including Newcastle’s Folksong and Ballad) and they involved coupling performance skills with intense sessions of listening to recordings of source singers.⁷⁶ Once again, this was highly controversial: for some, the Critics’ Group functioned as a democratic workshop (just like those found in radical theatre) in which performers of equal status would voluntarily and constructively assess each others’ performances; for others, it was a continuation (albeit in different hands) of the kind of tutelage that had long been a part of transmitting traditional performance style even though the critical approach did have the effect of demoralizing some source singers; still others viewed it as MacColl’s attempt to control and define authenticity.⁷⁷ Whatever its ideological underpinning, it had some practical implications, reinforcing the roles of ‘expert’ elements within the typical folk club, such as the committee, and the team of resident singers who could be relied upon to deliver a solid performance.⁷⁸ MacColl’s ideas, attitude and training shaped several

⁷⁵ E MacColl and P Seeger (Eds), *Songs for the 'Sixties* (WMA, London, 1962). The songs included Johnny Handle’s ‘Farewell to the Monty’, and Stan Kelly’s ‘I Wish I Was Back in Liverpool’, several of the songs were set to folk tunes, while the original tunes were praised by A L Lloyd for containing ‘echoes of trad pieces’: A L Lloyd, ‘Voices of the Present’, *Sing*, 6/8, April 1962, p83.

⁷⁶ See Chapters Two, Four and Eight of this thesis for further discussion of this controversy.

⁷⁷ See Chapters Four and Eight of this thesis. For an overview of the debate which continues to this day, see the ongoing discussion on folk forum The Mudcat Cafe: <http://www.mudcat.org/thread.cfm?threadid=92901&messages=84>.

⁷⁸ See N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1994), p26.

of the next generation of performers as he ‘gathered around him like-minded or suitably impressionable individuals’ and a range of equally influential fellow travellers such as Dominic Behan, Stan Kelly, Isla Cameron, and journalists Karl Dallas and Eric Winter, whose editorials would help mould the revival’s vocabulary.⁷⁹

MacColl was powerful, but his ideas were not all-encompassing: Karl Dallas retrospectively regarded the controversy over the policy as ‘mainly a paper battle’: as the rest of this chapter will demonstrate, the 1960s encouraged a sophisticated level of eclecticism that was a much less easy target than the Stratford (East) cowboys that had sparked the debate.⁸⁰ Shirley Collins, perhaps the most quintessentially English of folk performers, was an early member of MacColl’s circle, yet her career provides evidence of the revival’s broadening interests and appeal. She had been a member of the WMA-sponsored London Youth Choir visited the Kremlin with MacColl and, through her involvement (both as a folklorist and romantically) with Alan Lomax, had travelled to America in 1959 on one of his collecting trips.⁸¹ As the 1960s developed, her collaborations – with artists as diverse as the jazz-tinged Davy Graham, the early music virtuoso David Munrow, and the folk-rock of the Albion Band - would prove to be a barometer of the styles available within the folk revival, and an example of how it was possible to absorb MacColl’s knowledge and energy without becoming an unquestioning disciple.⁸²

Besides, even at the outset, the “policy” did not affect every club. Others, such as Alexis Korner’s Barrelhouse Blues Club moved further towards Americana, while there were singers like Alex Campbell (whose platonic marriage to Peggy Seeger saved her from deportation and ironically kept her with Ewan MacColl) who were as

⁷⁹ The comment about impressionable individuals is by C Harper, *Dazzling Stranger: Bert Jansch and the British Folk and Blues Revival*, (Bloomsbury, London, 2000), p33. For instance, Sandra Kerr was influenced by MacColl’s early singing workshops and to the present day retains ideas drawn from him.

⁸⁰ K Dallas, ‘The Roots of Tradition’, in D Laing, R Deneslow, K Dallas, and R Shelton, *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock* (Methuen, London, 1975), 83-136, p91.

⁸¹ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p234. S Collins, interviewed for *Folk Britannia Part I* (BBC4, 3rd February 2006).

⁸² S Collins and The Albion Country Dance Band, *No Roses* (Pegasus Records, PEG 7, 1971).

comfortable singing blues and cowboy songs as their native traditional material.⁸³ Within a few years, Jake Thackray, Leon Rosselson and Alex Glasgow would be creating satirical songs drawing on the sophisticated *chansonnier* styles of the continent rather than cleaving to a strict definition of English tradition. And MacColl's political affiliations did not hold universal sway: songwriters like Cyril Tawney and Sydney Carter, as well as folk club organizers like those in Newcastle's Folksong and Ballad at least partly disassociated themselves from the political messages to which folk music was being adapted.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, as the following pages will demonstrate, a great number of other clubs would derive from broad-left political roots, and this typified another post-war shift in which the personal became politicized.⁸⁵ Single issue political movements coupled with wider choices in lifestyle and leisure meant that older party or class affiliations were giving way to philosophies that could be easily expressed via culture. The 'folk boom' was representative of this *zeitgeist*, with 'the people's music' reaching numerically more of 'the people' than it had for most of the previous century.

As regards the single issue organizations, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Anti-Apartheid Movement were particularly beneficial the folk scene's development. CND's musical propaganda was a powerful catalyst, and the first Aldermaston March in 1958 proved to be a focal point of two particular versions of authentic music: "Trad" jazz and folk. Tapping into the emerging blend of the cultural and political, as well as a general British left tradition of encouraging mobilization through music,

CND realised that bands were springing up spontaneously along the march, and so thought they'd use them. Flyers sent out to prospective marchers ...

⁸³ See C Harper, *Dazzling Stranger: Bert Jansch and the British Folk and Blues Revival*, (Bloomsbury, London, 2000), p30.

⁸⁴ Not only did Tawney distance himself from overt political messages, he also provided a blend of styles that borrowed from a variety of traditions, notably the seamless "English-blues" of *Sally Free and Easy*. The statement on the Folksong and Ballad club's membership card was quite explicit in this regard: see Chapter Two.

⁸⁵ See A Louvre, 'The new radicalism: the politics of culture in Britain, America and France, 1958-73' in B Moore-Gilbert and J Seed (eds), *Cultural Revolution? The challenge of the arts in the 1960s* (Routledge, London, 1992), 45-71.

had a line for people to complete: 'I can play _____ and am willing to be in a band'.⁸⁶

This coalition of musicians would continue away from the marches, as CND fundraising concerts developed into regular clubs and protest songs were compiled in Topic's *Songs Against the Bomb*.⁸⁷ Aldermaston may have increased the momentum of this branch of protest song, but it had existed prior to 1958. The 1956 first issue of *Sing* featured songs like Leon Fung's *The Atom Bomb and the Hydrogen* and *Talking Rearmament* by Music Editor John Hasted. *Sing* explicitly associated itself with the broad left through anti-colonial songs as well as editorials linking the magazine with the WMA and the World Youth Festivals for Peace and Friendship.⁸⁸ Not only does this demonstrate the fact that protest song and single issue politics clearly predated the early '60s boom of Dylan, Baez and the "New Left", it also suggests that there were aspects of the ideological folk music movement that were not hidebound by conceptions of tradition.

Taking all these disparate strands into account it is clear that from the outset there was more than one definition of folk music. This proved to be the source of continued debate throughout the following decades.⁸⁹ The controversy itself helped to shape the language in which the revival was couched and, in turn, its praxis. By the end of the 1950s the elements of the folk boom were in place: infrastructure; source material; stylistic innovations; ideology; and a generation of young people seeking music in which they could participate (but music that differed from the previous generations' choral societies and brass bands). This would receive a new impetus from across the Atlantic with another cultural shift that saw the bohemians, beats and existentialists of Greenwich Village's Café Wha? and Gaslight Club shift

⁸⁶ J Minnion, quoted in G Mackay, 'Just a Closer Walk With Thee: New Orleans-style jazz and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1950s Britain', *Popular Music*, 22/3, 2003, 261-281, p269. Mobilization through music is evidenced in events like the Durham Miners' Gala

⁸⁷ Regarding CND as a wellspring of clubs, see N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1994), pp24-25. Various Artists (MacColl, Seeger, Rosselson, Dallas, *et al*), *Songs Against the Bomb*, (Topic Records 12001, 1960).

⁸⁸ *Sing*, 1/1, May-June 1956. See particularly the Editorial on p2 and 'The Ballad of Jomo Kenyatta' on p7. The magazine's chief editor was Eric Winter.

⁸⁹ See, for example, B Pegg, 'Rise up Jock and Sing a Song', *Club Folk*, 2/4, July-August 1969, 8-9; and A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival*, Unpublished

the folk revival out of the (still rumbling) discourse of the old left and into a more introspective mode.⁹⁰ This “scene” retained political affiliations, for example with the old guard exemplified by Woody Guthrie or in its espousal of the Civil Rights movement, but it also contained new elements of personal and artistic transcendence. As Bob Dylan put it, ‘Folk songs were the way I explored the universe’.⁹¹ Ironically, it was this new individualized ideology that in summer 1968 would culminate in the West’s closest post-war brush with the revolution so long sought by the old collectivist left, as students questioned all kinds of inequality, Vietnam, and above all any ideas that had gone before.⁹² Throughout most of the 1960s, the inspiration behind the ‘boho’ artists and their followers remained a conviction that ‘mainstream culture’ was ‘lame as hell and a big trick’, and this alienation was another motive that prompted the search for authenticity that will be discussed in Chapter Eight.⁹³

In early 1960s Britain, some of the more bohemian folk musicians were already following a European equivalent of Woody Guthrie’s hobo trail (or Kerouac’s road trip), with the likes of Alex Campbell and Roy Harper busking their way around France, while others such as Wizz Jones dropped out to live a beatnik existence on the Cornish coast.⁹⁴ All of this tapped into the new decade’s *zeitgeist* so strongly that it rendered some of the music - particularly the American output - commercially viable, launching the careers of Dave van Ronk, Ramblin’ Jack Elliott and (especially) Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and Peter, Paul and Mary.⁹⁵ By the mid-1960s, this meant that counter-culture was available literally over the counter at *Woolworths*

PhD Thesis, Queen’s University of Belfast, May 1993, p16; and Editorial, ‘Saying What We Mean’, *Folk Music*, 1/1, November 1963, pp2-3, and pp17-18.

⁹⁰ Regarding the still rumbling discourse of the old left, some of the old battle lines were still drawn as McCarthyism continued in spirit if not in name: Pete Seeger was convicted of contempt of Congress in 1961, due to his refusal to answer questions regarding his political affiliations. See ‘O Freedom! (after a while)’, *Sing*, 6/10, June 1962, p1.

⁹¹ B Dylan, *Chronicles Volume One* (Simon & Schuster, London, 2004), p18.

⁹² To illustrate the breadth of this rebellion, among those involved in the “sit-in” at Hornsey College of Art was folklorist David “Doc” Rowe, who, as chronicler of events such as the Padstow May Day, would ordinarily be expected to value continuity over change (<http://www.docrowe.org.uk/about/index.html>).

⁹³ B Dylan, *Chronicles Volume One* (Simon & Schuster, London, 2004), p35.

⁹⁴ R Harper, interview in *Folk Britannia Part II* (BBC4, 10th February 2006). Harper specifically stated this connection: ‘You were suddenly able to enact Kerouac’s dream in Europe on the roads’. See also ‘A Folksinger’s Paris’, *Sing*, 6/11, July 1962, p1.

⁹⁵ Interestingly, Ramblin’ Jack was not in actual fact the cowboy of popular imagination but the Jewish son of a surgeon and a schoolteacher. For the parallels between Jimmie Miller/Ewan MacColl and Robert Zimmerman/Bob Dylan, see R Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p370-371. These parallels will be further discussed in the chapters on Mediators and on Authenticity.

as well as at specialist stores like Collet's.⁹⁶ Even with this surge in popularity, the participants in this subculture remained an admittedly influential minority compared to the vast numbers within a more conservative mainstream. The folk revivalists were undoubtedly a part of the era's drive to find authenticity and meaning in a world where religion and mainstream politics were rendered suspect, but any cultural revolution that did come about was far more partial and gradual than many commentators would allow.

Nonetheless, it is clear that by the early 1960s the folk revival was reaching greater numbers than ever before.⁹⁷ As the music's popularity expanded in Britain, so too did the number of available outlets. Folk clubs (mostly of the type described above – in the upstairs or back room of a pub, run on the basis of amateur floor-spots bolstered by the efforts of club residents and of paid guests) were opening in increasing numbers. By 1961, *Sing* recorded at least 45 clubs, and by 1962, this had almost doubled, with 80 clubs listed in *Sing*'s directory.⁹⁸ By 1965, Rory McEwan reckoned on there being 300 clubs in the UK.⁹⁹ This provided a circuit not just for the mostly semi-professional British performers but also for the youthful Paul Simon and Bob Dylan both of whom inspired and in turn drew inspiration from British folk artists, particularly Martin Carthy's characteristically English guitar style.¹⁰⁰ Dylan visited the UK folk clubs during 1962 and evidently found a thriving scene already in place. Tom Paxton recalls every club he visited in the 1960s as being packed (though, naturally, this perception may have been skewed due to Paxton's star status attracting large audiences).¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Collet's was itself an arm of the WMA.

⁹⁷ See Appendix One – 'The Folk Revival's Reach'

⁹⁸ R Stubbs, 'A Singer's Notebook: Birmingham Scene', *Sing*, 6/1, September 1961, p15. The later estimate is from *Sing*, 6/9, May 1962, p1.

⁹⁹ R McEwan, quoted in N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1994), p27.

¹⁰⁰ This is particularly clear from Carthy's arrangement of *Scarborough Fair*, itself developed out of a Davy Graham version, which found its way (in Dylan's case as a textual reference in *Girl from the North Country*) into both their repertoires. Also, the sleeve notes to the album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (Columbia LP CL1986, 1963) also credited Carthy with providing the tune (*Lord Franklin*) for *Bob Dylan's Dream*. As discussed above, Davy Graham's *Anji* also appeared on Simon & Garfunkel's *Sounds of Silence* LP (CBS, 1966).

¹⁰¹ Tom Paxton, interview, *Folk Britannia Part II* (BBC4, 10th February 2006). Though, naturally, Paxton's star status would help to fill the clubs.

Meanwhile, supplanting the old ‘contests-and-preservation’ ethos of EFDSS festivals and the eisteddfods, the more informal folk festival was becoming another engine of revival. Some of the impetus had derived from American festivals such as Newport and the Folk Camp movement, but several British festivals had equally long histories. Sidmouth had begun as early as 1955, and the Alnwick Gathering in 1949, but the 1960s saw the establishment of many more such events, with Billingham and Towersey both launched in 1964, and Cambridge and Whitby in 1965. What largely drew these developments together was the nature of the events: decentralized, participatory, non-commercial, and run by enthusiasts regardless of financial gain.¹⁰² They provided set periods of time when the like-minded gathered in a single space: here, the virtual folk community could at least temporarily become actual.

New media outlets, such as Eric Winter’s weekly column in *Melody Maker*, developed alongside the clubs and festivals. *Spin* magazine, an offshoot of the Spinners’ Liverpool folk club, began in 1961 as a provincial counterpart to *Sing*.¹⁰³ Further magazines would launch throughout the 1960s, notably *Club Folk*¹⁰⁴ and Karl Dallas’ *Folk Music*.¹⁰⁵ Topic Records was developing into new and eclectic areas with Alexis Korner and Davy Graham, while Nat Joseph’s Transatlantic Records, established in 1961, was further opening the field to new talents such as Bert Jansch and The Dubliners.¹⁰⁶ And, even before Peter, Paul and Mary found success in Britain, The Springfields were providing a somewhat diluted populist version of folk in the British charts from 1961-63.¹⁰⁷ Although Ewan MacColl’s pre-eminence within the folk clubs was increasingly challenged by the children of skiffle and the blues, his BBC *Radio Ballads* continued into the 1960s, including probably the most famous of them all, *Singing the Fishing*.¹⁰⁸ And, just as record companies and broadcasters were increasingly drawing on folk music, the 1959 publication of the cheap and widely available *Penguin Book of English Folksongs* supplemented the

¹⁰² See *Sing*, 6/7, March 1962, p1, which outlines a folk school to be held in Barry during August, with the emphasis on ‘Participation, not performance’.

¹⁰³ *Spin*, 1/1, October 1961; *Spin*, 1/2, 1961.

¹⁰⁴ *Club Folk*, 1/1, May 1967.

¹⁰⁵ *Folk Music*’s first edition was published to cover the months November 1963 – February 1964.

¹⁰⁶ A Korner and D Graham, *3/4 A D* (Topic EP, TOP 70, 1962).

¹⁰⁷ Their biggest hit was *Island of Dreams*, (Philips 326557 BF, 1962), which stayed in the UK charts for 6 months between 1962 and 1963.

¹⁰⁸ E MacColl, C Parker, P Seeger, et al, *Singing the Fishing*, (BBC Home Service, 16th August 1960, Topic TSCD 803). The final *Radio Ballad* was broadcast in 1964: *The Travelling People*, (BBC Home Service, 17th April 1964, Topic TSCD 808).

printed material disseminated through the folk magazines and folk club songsheets, and formed the basis of a standard repertoire for several years to come.¹⁰⁹

As the revival's profile was in the ascendancy, the old left began utilizing folk music in new ways. The 1960 Trades Union Congress had approved Article 42, which recognized the gains in leisure time achieved by the unions and so called for greater inclusivity in the arts.¹¹⁰ Playwright Arnold Wesker thus launched his Centre 42 'arts for the people' project, which had a base at London's Roundhouse but also toured the working-class areas of Britain with several folk artists on its roster, notably MacColl and Lloyd.¹¹¹ The project's success in bringing art to the working-class is debatable, but Centre 42 had consequences for the folk revival. In 1962, the tour arrived in Nottingham, where a very young singer, Anne Briggs, successfully auditioned to join the company. Briggs' still, quiet, focused delivery of unaccompanied songs such as *Let No Man Steal Your Thyme* created an image of the singer as almost a passive vessel, channelling songs from the past. She thus set a precedent for one particular version of acceptable female folk performance, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, which touches on the experience of women within the revival. Centre 42 was to have another direct impact on the folk revival in that its touring schedule provided folk artists with a shifting forum in which they could interact and learn about folk clubs in London, Scotland, Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle, thus consolidating the regional clubs into what could be perceived as a national scene.

The following paragraphs will discuss how two different senses of community derived from the same social changes. Hybrid pop music forms showed that identity was far more fluid than old nationalist discourses had implied. And this fluidity, in turn, allowed for a flowering of older, smaller-scale identities, as some young people who would have shied away from adherence to the 'top-down' iconography of the

¹⁰⁹ R Vaughan Williams and A L Lloyd (Eds), *The Penguin Book of English Folk Songs* (Penguin, London, 1959).

¹¹⁰ C Harper, *Dazzling Stranger: Bert Jansch and the British Folk and Blues Revival*, (Bloomsbury, London, 2000), pp101-2; also Daily Telegraph online obituary of Tommy Watt, 29th May 2006. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/core/Content/displayPrintable.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/05/29/db2902.xml&site=5>., See also <http://www1.roundhouse.org.uk/about/history/>. Centre 42 eventually ceased to be due to lack of funds in 1983.

¹¹¹ Other notable participants included Ian Campbell, Roy Bailey and Louis Killen. See D Jeffries, 'Man of the Centre', *Songbook*, Summer 2006, 4-10.

British Empire came to acknowledge the richer varieties of indigenous British culture.

The development of a national circuit within the narrower confines of the folk scene coincided with Britain's more widespread exploration of the blues. Not only were artists such as Korner, Jansch and Graham drawing on the Mississippi Delta, home-grown 'beat' groups like The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Animals were providing youth culture with widely disseminated versions of American music that provided alternative definitions of Britishness. These were people for whom cross-fertilization with the blues and American folk could be as authentically British as a Child ballad. In establishing their own hybrid culture they were, as Colls has it, 'increasing the number of points of origin, and loosening the terms of tenure'.¹¹² Popular music's tendency towards eclecticism – which had been evident even before the days of broadside ballads and Irish immigration – was again shown in sharp focus by these innovators, and others who followed a more obviously British path were becoming less prescriptive regarding material. Enthusiasts like Reg Hall, Melvyn Plunkett and Bob Davenport were travelling out from the capital to East Anglia and Sussex in search of living traditional musicians, and this pattern was paralleled – even exceeded - in Northumberland, as the following chapter analysing the North East revival will demonstrate.¹¹³ The performers they sought entertained within a traditional context but nevertheless included in their repertoires music hall and Tin Pan Alley songs that clashed with Sharpian definitions of folk. As with the first wave of interest in vocal and instrumental styles, the focus was on people rather than artefacts (songs and tunes) of which living exponents had once merely been considered "the source". Now, this extended beyond idiom into a more generalized sense of the music's utility.

More obviously traditional musical technique and repertoire remained important within the Revival: both The Watsons and The Young Tradition sought to recreate part-singing in an English folkloric style, while Louis Killen continued his exploration not just of his north eastern roots (as will be discussed in the chapters to

¹¹² R Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p370.

follow) but also the big ballads and shanties of the wider British tradition. Soon, the two streams of purist traditionalism and eclecticism were to collide in Graham's and Jansch's reworkings of British and Irish folksongs such as *Blackwaterside* (which Jansch learned from Anne Briggs), and *Folk Roots, New Routes*, the 1964 Shirley Collins/Davy Graham collaboration which applied improvisational freedom to traditional songs such as *Nottamun Town*.¹¹⁴ Not commercially successful, these innovations were nonetheless influential among musicians, and the logical conclusion of this would be the hybridized work of bands such as Pentangle and Fairport Convention.

Much of this experimentation was based in London clubs that served a similar purpose to the coffee houses and bars of Greenwich Village in that they epitomized a new intellectual youth culture which was not always clearly marked into Boyes' dichotomy of "ethnic" and "pop" (although this remained an influential and divisive element of the revival as a whole).¹¹⁵ As the following pages demonstrate, particular artistic enclaves allowed for such innovation, where performers could flirt with rock style or instrumentation, but it took time for the implications of these developments to reverberate throughout the provinces.

Among the famous clubs of the 1960s, the Scots' Hoose exemplified the range of material on offer. Opened by promoter Bruce Dunnet to capitalize on the Celtic talent in London, it was also a regular haunt of blues aficionados and eventually became the home of the Young Tradition, defenders of a distinctively English style of part-singing. Another club, Les Cousins provided a venue for more traditional artists such as The Watersons, but is most commonly viewed as 'the very cradle of the singer-songwriter-guitarist explosion', providing 'a virtual roll-call [Jansch, Renbourn, Graham, Paul Simon, Al Stewart, Ralph McTell, Roy Harper, Donovan,

¹¹³ See Walter and Daisy Bulwer et al, *English Country Music* (Topic LP 12T 296, 1965), and Reg Hall, *I Never Played to Many Posh Dances: Scan Tester, Sussex Musician, 1887-1972* (Musical Traditions supplement no 2, Rochford, 1990).

¹¹⁴ Jimmy Page would in turn learn *Blackwaterside* from Jansch – Led Zeppelin released the song as *Black Mountain Side* on the album *Led Zeppelin* (Atlantic, London, 1969). *Nottamun Town* was released on S Collins and D Graham, *Folk Roots, New Routes* (Decca Records LK 4652, 1964).

¹¹⁵ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p239.

Julie Felix] of folk music's contribution to the 'Swinging 'Sixties''.¹¹⁶ 'The Cousins' was also significant in that its all-nighters allowed folk enthusiasts from a fair distance out of the capital (though, significantly, rarely from as far as Newcastle) to travel in to London safe in the knowledge that they had somewhere to spend the night, and to experiment with psychedelic drugs.¹¹⁷ The cross-fertilization of contemporary and traditional was taken a stage further by what Karl Dallas refers to as 'a sort of commune in Somali Road, Hampstead', through which passed the Young Tradition, Davy Graham, Bert Jansch and John Renbourn, Louis Killen, Anne Briggs and Donovan.¹¹⁸ Despite the stridency within the 'policy' clubs, it is clear that, in the Revival's more bohemian enclaves, musicians and audiences were frequently comfortable with eclecticism.

However, these developments - towards innovation or "policy" purity - were influential at a distance but they did not encompass the folk scene as most participants experienced it first-hand. Historians as diverse as Dave Harker and Dominic Sandbrook have emphasized the importance of understanding that the 1960s cultural developments which seem so abrupt and revolutionary in retrospect were in reality gradual and partial. In a world where, arguably, 'the people have been left out of popular music studies', it is easy to forget that *The Sound of Music* soundtrack outsold the Beatles' albums.¹¹⁹ London might have been "swinging", but mostly within the circumference of a few West End streets, and in the country as a whole there were many people 'for whom mention of the sixties might conjure up memories not of *Lady Chatterley*, the Pill and the Rolling Stones, but of bingo, Blackpool and Berni Inns'.¹²⁰ This implies that "the folk" favoured many cultural outlets other than folk music, but even within the scene, change was not as pervasive as it might have appeared from the capital. In provincial folk clubs, guests of either the ultra-traditional or the ultra-experimental bent were occasional visitors rather

¹¹⁶ Known as "lez cuzzins" rather than its original French conception of "lay cousin", the club spanned the years 1965-1970.

¹¹⁷ C Harper, *Dazzling Stranger: Bert Jansch and the British Folk and Blues Revival*, (Bloomsbury, London, 2000), pp175-179, the direct quotations are taken from p176.

¹¹⁸ K Dallas, 'The Roots of Tradition', in D Laing, R Deneslow, K Dallas, and R Shelton, *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock* (Methuen, London, 1975), 83-136, p91.

¹¹⁹ D Harker, 'Still Crazy After All These Years: What was popular music in the 1960s?', in B Moore-Gilbert and J Seed (eds), *Cultural Revolution? The challenge of the arts in the 1960s* (Routledge, London, 1992), 236-254, p251 and p241.

¹²⁰ D Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A history of Britain from Suez to The Beatles* (Little Brown, London, 2005), p(xix).

than the norm. It was easier for the enthusiast to cleave to an ideological absolute, be it purist or innovative, in the midst of London's diverse wealth of venues than in towns where only one or two clubs had to serve the full range of interests.

For most, there was one key divide that mattered more than any finer fissures – that touched on above, between the *ethniks* and the pop enthusiasts.¹²¹ There was a suspicion among the traditional fraternity that the folk clubs had become the only venue where would-be popular entertainers could hone their craft. As Woods put it, 'fledgling pop stars and songwriters batten on to the Revival and the clubs as a means of furthering their own careers elsewhere'.¹²² Boyes refers to Donovan's apparent hijacking of the movement's political agenda by taking the opportunity of a protest meeting in Trafalgar Square to plug his latest single.¹²³ Although clearly a Woody Guthrie or Bob Dylan acolyte, Donovan was primarily seen as a pop star. This sense of being used as a mere tool of commercial career-building was clearly not going to sit well with a movement that was rooted in anti-commercialism. Some clubs banned singer-songwriters, leading even songwriters entirely sympathetic with the tradition, such as Pete Coe and Peter Bellamy, to pass off their own compositions as traditional merely to ensure they were allowed a hearing.¹²⁴

Divisive as earlier stylistic innovations such as skiffle may have been, very little could have prepared the folk scene for the shock of Bob Dylan strapping on an electric guitar. What had once been gentle mutterings that Dylan was in danger of becoming too introspective had turned to full-scale cat-calls.¹²⁵ The god of the 1964 Newport Folk Festival was, by 1965 its antichrist, with Pete Seeger allegedly threatening to cut the power cables with an axe, and the controversy dogged Dylan and the Hawks' 1966 tour culminating in the infamous cry of "Judas" at the Manchester Trades Hall.¹²⁶ The impact of Newport 1965 had a particular

¹²¹ *Ethniks* is a Karl Dallas term that aptly contracts the ethnic and the beatnik.

¹²² F Woods, *Folk Revival: the rediscovery of a national music* (Blandford, Poole, 1979), p107.

¹²³ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p240.

¹²⁴ See A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, May 1993), p18.

¹²⁵ I Silber, 'An Open Letter to Bob Dylan', *Sing Out*, 14/5, November 1964, 22-23.

¹²⁶ J Boyd, *White Bicycles: making music in the 1960s* (Serpent's Tail, London, 2005), 92-108, especially 103-105. R Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival* (Harvard University Press, 1996), p309. It is not clear from the various available accounts whether Seeger objected to electric folk music *per se*, or to the decibel level and poor quality of amplification at this particular

significance for the British folk scene, in that the festival's young production manager, Joe Boyd, had found inspiration in amplified folk and sought to replicate it elsewhere.¹²⁷ He travelled to Britain and helped develop the psychedelic meanderings of the Scottish folk group The Incredible String Band, who raided the traditions of Scotland and several continents as well as the medicine chest in order to produce their version of 'flower power'.¹²⁸ They were not alone in this exploration. Clearly, The Byrds had developed a fusion of rock and folk via their cover versions of Bob Dylan songs and *The Bells of Rhymney*, and the term "folk-rock" appeared current in the USA as early as 1966.¹²⁹ Pentangle, as discussed above, were blending folk-blues sensibilities with Danny Thompson's jazz bass and Jacqui Mcshee's crystalline voice into a complex synthesis of folk song with quirky time signatures and lengthy improvised solos.¹³⁰ Irish group, Sweeney's Men were perhaps the first truly electric folk band in the British Isles, although they would not achieve the impact of later acoustic Irish bands, as will be discussed below.¹³¹ But it was Boyd who acted as midwife at the birth of English folk-rock proper when he restructured the line-up of Fairport Convention (then a band heavily influenced by west-coast American rock music), hiring two stalwarts of the British folk scene, Dave Swarbrick and Sandy Denny, to complement Richard Thompson's developing individual style. Presumably aware that The Band were adapting the sounds of Americana to an electric beat, Fairport set about doing much the same for Anglicana. The resulting 1969 record, *Liege and Lief* was a groundbreaking meld of fiddle and backbeat, Border Ballad and Hendrix-influenced guitar.¹³² A folk-rock boom of sorts (as with the previous "booms", it involved relatively few incursions into the mainstream) ensued, as Martin Carthy opted to play electric guitar with a new group called

event. Seeger's most recent comments imply the latter, though they are made with the benefit of hindsight. P Seeger, interviewed in M Scorsese (producer), *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan* (PBS, USA, 2005).

¹²⁷ J Boyd, *White Bicycles: making music in the 1960s* (Serpent's Tail, London, 2005), 92-108, p108.

¹²⁸ Boyd also worked with psychedelic rock bands like the early Pink Floyd.

¹²⁹ Advertisement for Hagstrom electric guitars and basses, 'The Free-Ridin' Beat of Folk-Rock', *Sing Out!*, 16/1, February/March 1966, p88. *Bells of Rhymney* was released on The Byrds, *Mr Tambourine Man* (Columbia LP CS 9172, 1965).

¹³⁰ Pentangle, *The Pentangle* (Transatlantic LP, TRA 162, 1965). This formula of acoustic free improvisation would be developed still further by Danny Thompson's later collaboration with John Martyn.

¹³¹ M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), pp96-97.

¹³² For example, *Tam Lin*, Fairport Convention, *Liege and Lief* (Island LP, ILPS 9115, 1969). Regarding The Band, they were formerly Bob Dylan's backing band, The Hawks, and their reworking of Americana is typified by The Band, *Music from Big Pink* (Capitol LP, SKAO 2955, 1968).

Steeleye Span, while Lindisfarne reached their largest national audience when *Fog on the Tyne* became one of 1972's biggest selling albums.¹³³

Though Fairport and Boyd were individual catalysts for these developments, the underlying causes that drove folk-rock were social. Brocken has argued that the suburban, educated youth were forming bands that were 'liberalist, idealist and democratic units ... organic assemblages of school friends and siblings'. Their musical instincts had been honed through the same urge to collect obscure material that had driven most revivals, but the rarities available in the 1960s included blues and rock as well as folk. New artistic leaders such as Ashley Hutchings and Richard Thompson were producing a fresh, present-centred 'refraction of British pastoralism' just as EFDSS and the Communist Party had done in turn.¹³⁴ The idea that applying a rock beat to folk music was essentially a bourgeois construct is persuasive. Apparent anomalies like the working-class northern backgrounds of the members of Lindisfarne might suggest a further case for North Eastern particularity.¹³⁵ Even so, as with so many of this generation of mediators, the songwriters' literary inspirations suggested the aspirational effect of the grammar school.¹³⁶ This will be further discussed in Chapter Four. As it is, Brocken does not argue that such mediations had a negative effect, instead stating that folk-rock was

An embodiment of critique *Liege and Lief* implied that folk music could never be simply an object, but was a cultural negotiation, overlaid with the values of a specific historical context and in need of continual arbitration to understand and/or modify the values on offer.¹³⁷

¹³³ Lindisfarne, *Fog on the Tyne* (Charisma LP CAS 1050, 1971). For the success of this record, see D I Hill, *The Fog on the Tyne: The official history of Lindisfarne* (Northdown, Bordon, 1998), pp49-51. However, evidence that folk music's reach into mainstream popular culture was limited can be drawn from its low profile in general histories of the era, otherwise rich in pop culture references: - M Donnelly, *Sixties Britain* (Pearson, Harlow, 2005), cites only the American stars (Dylan, Baez and Joni Mitchell) and their one clear counterpart in Britain, Donovan. A Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (Penguin, London, 1982) does not deal with folk music at all. And D Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (Little, Brown, London, 2005), limits his folk music commentary to contrasting Lonnie Donegan with Ewan MacColl.

¹³⁴ M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), p97.

¹³⁵ For example, Alan Hull was raised in Benwell, in a means-tested social housing project.

¹³⁶ Lindisfarne, *Lady Eleanor* (Charisma single, CB153, 1971) – the lyric draws heavily on Edgar Allan Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher*.

¹³⁷ M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), p101.

While it is arguable that there was nothing new in this kind of contextualization, there is a possibility that folk-rock represented the first time it was self-consciously applied. Cecil Sharp did not appear to be concerned that his parlour-piano arrangements were radical changes of context. For Fairport and those that followed, such changes were part of their manifesto: the choice of electric instruments derived partly from a perception that what had once been a popular movement had lost its mass appeal through self-imposed limitations.¹³⁸

Those who had been involved in delineating the earlier boundaries were uncomfortable with this critique. As discussed above, the spectre of commercialization generated constant fear among the most ardent revivalists. Commercial success, then, led to cyclical correctives that attempted to bring the balance back in favour of the enthusiasts rather than the music corporations, though, as we shall see, these enthusiasts were now less politically engaged than preoccupied with retention of heritage.

Karl Dallas summarizes the defensiveness of many folk club organizers at the time of folk-rock's greatest popularity, who felt that this innovation was 'something quite distinct from the folk club movement which it somehow invalidates and makes obsolete'.¹³⁹ This gave rise to a new form of "policy" in the ultra-acoustic attitudes of some folk clubs who were opposed to amplification of all types. Meantime, some of the singer-songwriters, including Al Stewart and Ralph McTell, were following the folk-rockers, Dylan and Simon & Garfunkel out of the clubs and into city halls, and other performers such as Billy Connolly and Mike Harding were finding their comedic "patter" more lucrative than their musical skills.¹⁴⁰ Professionalization – via record companies and, more recently, booking agencies – was by now an established part of the revival, sometimes merely promoting talent within the folk clubs, but occasionally lifting it beyond their reach.¹⁴¹ The result was a consolidation of the attitude described above, that, paradoxically, folk clubs at the

¹³⁸ R Denselow, 'Folk Rock in Britain', in D Laing, R Denselow, K Dallas, and R Shelton, *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock* (Methuen, London, 1975), 137-174, p164

¹³⁹ K Dallas, 'The Roots of Tradition', in D Laing, R Denselow, K Dallas, and R Shelton, *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock* (Methuen, London, 1975), 83-136, p84.

¹⁴⁰ See A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, May 1993, p24.

¹⁴¹ IMA Agency, Birmingham, Advertisement in *Club Folk*, 1/1, May 1967, p23.

zenith of their popular reach were perceived in some quarters as second best: as training grounds for the apprentice star or the venues where performers stayed if success was elusive.¹⁴²

It stands to reason, then, that those enthusiasts who were the clubs' core applied logical tactics in restricting the influx of electric instruments and singer-songwriters. This attitude was typified by John Kirkpatrick's deliberately inflammatory comments:-

the worst contamination was yet to come, because America also had folk singers. They were people with guitars who wrote their own songs. This was obviously the real thing, not those old fogeys singing songs they'd learned from their grandparents in the pub. I mean, they didn't even play anything! They didn't even think to use a microphone. For the cool and sophisticated, the way forward was to put our deepest thoughts into bland melodies over a bland guitar pattern and work through our angst in a sleepy American drawl.¹⁴³

If the clubs were kept distinct from this perceived dilution of tradition, then they stood a chance of survival on their own terms. MacKinnon suggests there are also pragmatic explanations for this retrenchment: success created an aura of unapproachability around those performers who had gained wider popularity that discouraged clubs from booking them.¹⁴⁴ Whatever the underlying cause, the effect was a consolidation of earlier constructs of tradition.

Frankie Armstrong suggests that, 'the so-called 'purists' largely won the aesthetic side of the argument, but the political commitment they sought to encourage has today all but vanished'.¹⁴⁵ From this it would appear that a movement that had begun largely as a search for peoples' songs had become mesmerized instead by

¹⁴² Ian Anderson quoted in 'Nowt so queer', *The Guardian*, January 31st 2006: 'You got a lot of people who actually weren't that bothered about the roots of the music, who just got into it because, hey, it was a way to become successful. They were interested in getting famous, not in folk music. During that period, the scene really lost its track.'

¹⁴³ Kirkpatrick, J, 'What English Folk Music?', *Direct Roots – the new folk directory and guide*, (Mrs Casey Music, 2001) – reproduced on John Kirkpatrick's own website - http://www.johnkirkpatrick.co.uk/wr_WhatEnglish.htm.

¹⁴⁴ N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity*, (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1994), p72.

another, heritage-driven, object-based definition of authenticity. Certainly, in contrast with expectations based on the turmoil of 1968 and with American publications like *Sing Out!* (still very preoccupied with Vietnam), by the late 1960s the pages of *Sing* demonstrated a reduced political engagement. Once weighted towards songs about nuclear disarmament and political struggle, the magazine appeared to now favour discussions of internal politics – such as the proposed establishment in 1965 of a British Federation of Folk Clubs.¹⁴⁶ This new Federation was a sign – along with the EFDSS-backed Keele Festival in the same year – that the first (represented by EFDSS) and the second (represented by the clubs) folk revivals were reaching some common ground. It is unclear whether this grew out of a pragmatic need to borrow from each other's infrastructure and audience share, out of a modernizing process within EFDSS, or, alternatively, out of a growing conservatism within the folk clubs. Controversially, Boyes views A L Lloyd's 1967 publication, *Folk Song in England* as the culmination of the revisionist return to prescriptive ideologies more in keeping with the first revival and believes that the folk movement as a whole had, despite flirtations with the mindset of the WMA, and later with "pop", never fully escaped Sharpian attitudes:-

Folk clubs were the generators of the Revival in the late 1960s and the culmination of the movement [begun even before the First Revival] to replace the Folk. for all its apparent innovation and variety, the Revival was hidebound by historical theory. Determinedly reproducing a policy of authenticity, it became a more effective vehicle for Sharp's views than the English Folk Dance Society of the 1920s.¹⁴⁷

This, points out Boyes, left a fundamental problem: if "the folk" were the dying breed of rural peasants that Sharp described, then 'the movement had no possibility of development'.¹⁴⁸ Perhaps this provides a partial explanation why the folk scene

¹⁴⁵ F Armstrong and B Pearson, 'Some Reflections on the English Folk Revival', *History Workshop* 7, Spring 1979, 95-100, p96.

¹⁴⁶ 'Federation – that's what we want', *Sing*, 8/2, 1965, p14.

¹⁴⁷ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), pp240-241. A L Lloyd, *Folk Song in England* (London, 1967). This book has been viewed as revisionist because Lloyd, far from rejecting the prescriptions of the first revival, stated on pp 18-19 that Sharp's formula for the definition of folk music (*Continuity; Variation; and Selection*) was 'valuable' and was by 1967 clearly adaptable to Lloyd's own version of the dialectic process.

¹⁴⁸ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p241.

lost its impetus from a numerical peak in the mid-1970s, but it is dangerous to overstate the ideological impact of even those traditionalists who uncritically adopted Sharp's notion of the peasant singer (and, as will be discussed throughout Chapter Four, there were a great many who did not). Ideology was not necessarily the only or even the decisive factor in the revival's waning influence. Youth driven movements tend to decline as their core participants age, and the next generation disassociate themselves from the music of their parents. Besides, the trend towards connoisseurship and conservation existed alongside a great number of "contemporary" clubs and it was probably no stronger than during MacColl's 'policy' putsch a decade previously. It might be considered that this kind of entrenchment represented an almost cyclical corrective to innovation that was part of the nature of folk revival.

As the 1970s continued, folk-rock developed and adopted its own heritage-based stance. In pursuit of his personal vision of folk culture, Ashley Hutchings had moved from Fairport Convention to Steeleye Span, eventually settling in 1972 on the most resolutely English version of this genre, The Albion (Country Dance) Band. In effect, this was the point at which folk-rock receded from the world of pop success back to a smaller, more erudite niche of the revival. As time continued, the folk scene's discontent with amplification changed to acceptance of this offshoot of the tradition, so much so that Hutchings and Thompson are now acknowledged as elder statesmen of the revival, and *Liege and Lief* was voted the most influential folk album of all time in the BBC Folk Awards 2006.¹⁴⁹ It might be argued that one reason for this growing acceptance was found in the contracting commercial success of the genre: if the music business did not find it sufficiently lucrative then the tradition was seen as safe from the pop culture juggernaut. Just as with the previous folk boom of the early 1960s, the moment when folk music was reaching more of 'the folk' than the *cognoscenti* was the point at which the revival retreated from populism. However, it would be wrong to place too much weight on the role of performers and organizers in deciding these matters. As discussed above, it is important to also consider the fluctuations of popular taste – a reduction in record

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/r2music/folk/folkawards2006/winners06.shtml>. It should be noted that the poll, drawn mostly from the Radio 2 audience, might not be representative of the folk scene as a whole, though it will take into account the views of a large subsection.

sales might represent less a wilful retreat from the pop world than a periodical shift in audience expectations: folk-rock must have sounded dowdy and dated in comparison with the new fashion of glam-rock. The question of external success and its implications within the folk scene will be further elaborated in Chapter Eight.

By this time, much of the drive to innovate had returned to the acoustic realm. Planxty, formed in 1970 out of the ashes of Sweeney's Men, combined Christy Moore's singing style, honed in the 1960s folk clubs of mainland Britain, with traditional Irish music and the rhythmic drive of East European instrumentation. These young people were playing old music in a way that acknowledged rock sartorially and in attitude rather than in musical style.¹⁵⁰ This was a seductive combination, especially in an Ireland shaping an ever more confident national identity, but also in Britain where it represented a new departure after the previous decade's rapprochement with pop. As mentioned above, this was far from the first time that the British revival would draw inspiration from the Celtic fringe: Seamus Ennis was one of the influential collectors of the 1950s, the Dubliners achieved chart success in the late 1960s, and the Chieftains featured regularly on John Peel's radio show.¹⁵¹ Meanwhile, the Corries had provided a Scottish counterpart that was influential on instrumental musicians in the 1960s.¹⁵² However, the 1970s would see bands like Planxty, the Bothy Band, and Scotland's Five Hand Reel bringing about the culmination of such influences that had gradually permeated the British folk movement. This helped shape the infrastructure of the revival, adapting instrumental music into a predominantly group activity - "the session", as well as attitudes to instrumentation and arrangement.¹⁵³ The North East of England would be quite powerfully affected, considering the large Tyneside Irish community as well as the region's strong tradition of piping and social dance music (which provided opportunities for similar instrumental innovations), and this will be discussed more fully in Chapter Three.

¹⁵⁰ Des Kelly, the band's manager, described the look of the band as 'three hippies and this civil servant [O'Flynn] who produced absolute magic', interview in documentary 'Planxty Reformed', Planxty, *Planxty Live 2004* (Sony DVD, 2004).

¹⁵¹ <http://www.thechieftains.com/timeline/>.

¹⁵² Alistair Anderson cites seeing The Corries at Newcastle's City Hall as an epiphany. Alistair Anderson, *Interviewed by author*, 5th March 2004, recording in my possession.

The rise of Celtic artists in parallel with a new emphasis on Englishness (as evidenced by the name of The Albion Band or the practice of Peter Bellamy) is telling. The immediate post-war discourse had been internationalist – with an antipathy, born out of experience, to the extremes of nationalism. The folk revival had reflected this in its initial eclecticism and broad consensus over political protest, as well as its search for songs that represented a universal concept - the worker. If smaller units of identification were needed, they could be found in occupational groups – and, in areas full of mono-industrial proletarian communities like North East England, specific localities.¹⁵⁴ As the 1960s ceased “swinging”, and the realities of devaluation, economic recession and industrial decline further diminished the standing of many of the old powers (but particularly Britain) there appeared to be a reclamation of interest in national and/or ethnic heritage.¹⁵⁵ In an uncertain world where revolutions from USSR to China had led to disillusion, the grand narratives of the twentieth century were looking increasingly embattled. By the end of 1975, punk would be poised to steal most of folk’s counter-cultural thunder: this was a new home-made music that undermined the Establishment and appealed to the young. Even prior to this, the previous generation who had populated the folk clubs were settling down and dealing with children and mortgages: the focus of the movement was gradually shifting away from weekly clubs to child-friendly festivals. Those who remained within the folk scene had seen the immediate post-war discourses that originally bound them to folk music challenged. A logical rearguard action appeared to be to return to earlier values and narratives.

The 1970s saw the start of an increasing link between folk culture and heritage, of ‘romantic antiquarianism’ and the ‘formation of a pseudo-community’ within the folk revival ‘that sought its roots in an idealisation of rural village life’.¹⁵⁶ The edifice of the revival (the club circuit, the seasonal festivals, the established heroes of

¹⁵³ See H Fairbairn, ‘Changing Contexts for Traditional Dance Music in Ireland: The Rise of Group Performance Practice’, *Folk Music Journal*, 6/5, 1994, 566-599.

¹⁵⁴ The folk magazines’ and record companies’ interest in the industrial culture of Liverpool docks and North Eastern pit villages appears to have peaked between 1962 and 1965 and waned thereafter.

¹⁵⁵ See R Samuel, *Theatres of Memory, Vol I : Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (Verso, London, 1994), p261, which – though it challenges the academy’s derision of “heritage” - highlights the widespread understanding that 1975 was a pivotal year in its development.

¹⁵⁶ F Armstrong and B Pearson, ‘Some Reflections on the English Folk Revival’, *History Workshop* 7, Spring 1979, 95-100, p97.

the movement) provided the structure and boundaries of this ‘imagined village’.¹⁵⁷ Meanwhile, real village and civic society was also re-imagining itself along heritage lines, with Morris dancers and folk bands an integral part of many village fetes and museum events.¹⁵⁸ And this linked into a new environmental concern that was best exemplified by Pete Seeger’s Clearwater Project in the US, but which had ramifications throughout the revival.¹⁵⁹ This might be seen as a means of salvaging threatened cultural capital but it also provided an economic salve, as tourism became a substitute for manufacturing industry. Whether the folk revival merely reflected these trends or was an active component in the growing heritage industry would involve another complete thesis but I shall discuss those issues of relevance to the North East in Chapter Six.

In summary, much of the literature on the folk revival characterizes the 1970s as the beginning of a retreat into a sealed community, separated from popular or mass culture by particular rituals of connoisseurship and hierarchy, of historicism, of near-enforced ‘destaging and informality’ yet, at the same time, silent reverence for each performance¹⁶⁰. Even the mostly optimistic commentator, Fred Woods, saw the insularity of the scene as problematic.¹⁶¹ Although there are signs (such as the use of folk music in broader-based heritage projects) that this is a sweeping generalization, nevertheless there is sufficient agreement among commentators to assume it is broadly accurate. If so, this is an indicator of a clear divergence between the national trend and that of the North East of England, where the folk clubs themselves may

¹⁵⁷ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993).

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, R Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-making in an English town* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p69.

¹⁵⁹ Pete Seeger’s sloop ‘Clearwater’, launched to clear up the Hudson River in 1969, was surprisingly successful in its environmental reclamation, given that it was staffed by volunteers that made up a ‘floating folk festival’ (including Don MacLean, Louis Killen and Ramblin’ Jack Elliott). R D Cohen, *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Music Revival and American Society, 1940-1970* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), p283.

¹⁶⁰ Regarding connoisseurship, see M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), pp110-123. For historicism, see G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), pp240-241. Also D Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British ‘folksong’, 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes, 1985), which outlines the growth of this particular ‘bourgeois’ brand of historicism. For destaging, see N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1993), pp77-98. Also A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Queen’s University of Belfast, May 1993, pp130-137.

¹⁶¹ F Woods, *Folk Revival: the rediscovery of a national music* (Blandford, Poole, 1979), p125.

have been separate from mainstream culture but, as will be seen in the following chapters (particularly Chapters Five and Six), many participants within the folk scene were actively involved in the wider Geordie renaissance that became a part of the region's popular culture and imagined identity.

The next chapter will map the trajectory of the North Eastern folk revival against this Geordie renaissance and the contemporary regional environment.

Chapter Two

Along (and Beyond) The Coaly Tyne: The Folk Revival in the North East

The search for folk music is typical of the age of democracy. It's part of the myth. It's not surprising that the Americans take it very seriously. Nor that it emerges as a study in Europe in the industrial period, when all was felt to be disappearing and there was uncertainty about what was coming. Precisely.¹

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Sam Richards' analysis of what inspires folk revivals is of direct relevance to the Tyneside scene. The concept of tradition as a defence against encroaching modernity is hardly a new point, but the North East of the 1950s was a particularly fertile ground for this phenomenon. A second folk revival which responded to the cataclysms of the Depression and the War was sure to find a strong foothold in the regional environment of special measures and development areas set up to alleviate the decline of traditional industries. This chapter maps the chronological development of the folk scene on and around Tyneside and argues that, although it absorbed a great deal of influence from the national and international folk movement and followed some broadly similar trends, there were several points of significant divergence. It indicates that, rather than remaining a sub-cultural phenomenon along the lines of the (inter-)national scene, local folk music displayed continuities and acceptance of broader vernacular culture which, along with the social circumstances surrounding the North East, allowed it to occupy a different place within the popular imagination. This linked the revival to a wider resurgence of regional particularity based on nostalgia for a past that many might consider better discarded.

Economics was a major influence. In a post-war national environment of relative affluence, the region suffered less from a decline in living standards than a below average growth - but optimism was far from universal and the regeneration and

change which marked the era was particularly necessary here as industries decimated by the inter-war years saw their export markets collapse throughout the 1950s². The previous chapter highlighted a new post-war emphasis on cultural life and this was sure to be important in a region that had learned the lessons of the 1930s: industrial development was not a panacea. Politicians such as Dan Smith were seeing the potential not only to rebuild but to redefine the North East:

The possibilities had been opened up by Nye Bevan when he made it feasible for local government to contribute in so many new ways to the arts, and prompted those in authority to ensure that education was the rock upon which we built our society.³

It is an interesting paradox, then, that in a period of unprecedented public investment in the arts, education and leisure, much of the region's cultural output was to weigh heavily upon an identity built upon hard graft, pits and shipyards. This recent past was clearly an anchor in the choppy waters of radical change, and the new concept of industrial song could play a significant role in securing it.

That there were local imperatives to encourage folk music is not in doubt, but the general trend in Britain and America towards the folkloric and the earthy noted in the previous chapter was an obvious catalyst. The following pages will address aspects which will be more closely analysed in Chapters Four, Five and Eight, but will here show how external influences shaped the development of the North Eastern folk clubs and subtly altered the discourses which instructed their practice.

Some of the first signs of interest in reviving the North East's industrial song had come from outside of the region. A L Lloyd's 1951 search for miners' songs

¹ S Richards, *Sonic Harvest – Towards Musical Democracy* (Amber Lane Press, Oxford, 1992), p67.

² Regarding less optimistic vision of the future, see B Williamson, *Class, Culture and Community: A Biographical Study of Social Change in Mining* (RKP, London, 1982), p220 - although Williamson's grandfather was excited at the prospect of the 1945 Labour government, this was tempered by an awareness of the depression which had followed the Great War; N McCord, *North East England - The Region's Development 1760-1960* (Batsford Academic, London, 1979), pp228-239, provides a succinct overview of the economic situation of the North East from just prior to World War II into the sixties; See also N Vall, 'The Emergence of the Post-Industrial Economy in Newcastle, 1914-2000', in R Colls, and B Lancaster (eds), *Newcastle upon Tyne : A Modern History* (Phillimore, Chichester, 2001), 47-70.

³ T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1970), p30.

(discussed in the previous chapter) had clearly found a rich seam in the North East, and Lloyd made occasional research trips to the area throughout the 1950s, resulting in his championing of Tommy Armstrong, the Tanfield poet, the publication of *Come All Ye Bold Miners* and (in the early 1960s) two radio broadcasts entitled *Songs of the Durham Miners*.⁴ In 1964, Lloyd informed *Sing Out!*'s largely American readership of the special qualities of North East industrial song:

The miners and ironworkers were used to blackness and smoke; they had it for generations, it was their element. here there was no boredom or futility but plenty of fight. Plenty of songs also. Local songs, drunken, devout, defiant songs.

Throughout the 19th century there wasn't another locality in England that could match the working-class songs of the Newcastle district.⁵

Meanwhile, in the late 1940s and early 1950s Ewan MacColl was still Jimmy Miller, the agit-prop actor touring the country with his ex-wife Joan Littlewood and Theatre Workshop. The company were regular visitors to the North East, and for a brief time were able to use Ormesby Hall as a Northern residential base.⁶ Both MacColl and Littlewood would later note that 'we'd come nearest to realising our aims in the North-East': in a usually bleak environment of half-empty drill halls and community rooms, Newcastle's People's Theatre (with a radical tradition of its own) was a rare venue where they played to full houses.⁷ And it was at Tow Law that MacColl had one of a series of epiphanic moments which led him to abandon the theatre in favour of full-time folksinging. Alan Lomax arrived there unannounced, looking to spend

⁴ A L Lloyd, 'Folk-Songs of the Coalfields', *Coal*, May 1951, pp26-27; A L Lloyd, 'All The Winners', *Coal*, October 1951, pp22-23; A L Lloyd, 'Das Leben Eines Englischen Bergarbeitersängers', *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*, 1965, Vol X, 133-143, p138; A L Lloyd, (ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners: Ballads & Songs of the Coalfield* (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1952; A L Lloyd, produced by Douglas Cleverden, *Songs of the Durham Miners, Part I – The Older Stratum*, and *Songs of the Durham Miners, Part II - The Newer Seam*, (Radio broadcasts, BBC Third Programme, both pre-recorded 18th September 1963).

⁵ A L Lloyd, 'The Hullabaloo at Blaydon: in Story and Song', *Sing Out!*, Vol 14, No 2, Apr-May 1964, 34-37, p34.

⁶ E MacColl, *Journeyman - An Autobiography* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1990), pp 250-254; J Littlewood, *Joan's Book - Joan Littlewood's Peculiar History As She Tells It* (Methuen, London, 1994), pp198-200.

⁷ J Littlewood, *Joan's Book - Joan Littlewood's Peculiar History As She Tells It* (Methuen, London, 1994), p195 and p190; E MacColl, *Journeyman - An Autobiography* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1990), p249.

some time with MacColl, whom he had met briefly at a BBC recording session.⁸ While the company busied themselves rigging the stage, Lomax serenaded them with songs from ‘the coal towns of West Virginia and Kentucky, with chants and hollers learned in the prison camps of Texas and Florida, with blues from Mississippi and Tennessee, with lowdown ballads from Louisiana’.⁹ MacColl's account implies a resonance between the isolated industrial village and the mining songs he heard that day: this was a moment clearly etched on his memory and one that cemented his relationship with the American collector.¹⁰ It was Lomax who introduced MacColl to A L Lloyd, and, as discussed in the previous chapter, it was this triumvirate who effectively stretched the definition of English folk music to include the output of industrial workers.

The new vogue for unearthing industrial song brought North Eastern music fully into the national arena arguably for the first time since Scott romanticized the Border ballads. True, the impact of Gillies Whittaker's *North Countrie Songs for Schools* had extended beyond the Tees and the Tweed, however, the English Folk Dance and Song Society had, by and large, left the North East of England to its own devices.¹¹ Much of the region's music was already collected and published, and a large proportion of that made a poor fit with the ideal of pure, communally composed folk tradition as laid out by Sharp.¹² Folk dances fared better, with the Society's publication, *English Dance and Song* detailing such traditions as the local rapper dances, and the Royal Earsdon and Winlaton rapper teams participating in EFDSS's

⁸ E MacColl, *Journeyman - An Autobiography* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1990), p269; E David Gregory, ‘Lomax in London, Alan Lomax, the BBC and the Folk-Song Revival in England, 1950-1958’, *Folk Music Journal*, 8/2, 2002, 136-169, p138, places this first meeting in 1950.

⁹ E MacColl, *Journeyman - An Autobiography* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1990), p270;

¹⁰ Joan Littlewood would have quite different recollections of Lomax in the North East, as a womanizer with a none-too-sophisticated seduction technique! J Littlewood, *Joan's Book - Joan Littlewood's Peculiar History As She Tells It* (Methuen, London, 1994), pp410-411

¹¹ W Gillies Whittaker, *North Countrie Songs for Schools* (Curwen, London, 1921).

¹² Among the most significant collections are: J Ritson, *The Bishopric Garland* (Newcastle, 1792); J Ritson, *The Northumberland Garland* (Newcastle, 1793); J Bell, *Rhymes of the Northern Bards* (Newcastle, 1812, facsimile edition, Frank Graham, Newcastle, 1971); J Peacock, *Favourite Tunes* (Newcastle c1800, reprinted by Northumbrian Pipes Society); T Allan, *Tyneside Songs* (Newcastle, 1872); J Crawhall, *A Beuk of Newcassel Sangs* (Newcastle, 1888); and J Collingwood Bruce and J Stokoe, (eds), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy: A Collection of the Ballads, Melodies and Small-Pipe Tunes of Northumbria* (Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1882); C E Catcheside-Warrington, , *Tyneside Songs: Volumes I - IV* (Newcastle, 1911-1913).

contribution to the Festival of Britain.¹³ A new EFDSS festival, held at Hexham in 1949 was hailed as ‘a landmark’, and, occasionally, the sound of a Northumbrian dance band (in the shape of Jack Armstrong’s Barnstormers) was present on society-sponsored record releases.¹⁴ More tellingly, though, the Society’s post-war drift towards centralization and professionalization was hotly debated, with correspondents such as Violet Alford citing the exotic nature of dances from England’s extreme regions as a reason why the loss of autonomy in the regional districts was a further step away from the music and dance of “the folk”:-

One effect of centralisation has always been a not very healthy admiration for, even imitation of, HQ staff dancers ... sitting as I have for many years amongst our foreign guests at Festivals. Always the same comments come to my ears: “How alike all the English dances are! Are there no different dances belonging to different regions?” ...No, the English do not dance alike everywhere. What could be more different than the Morpeth Rant danced by Northumbrians and the Welsh Reel danced by Welsh people? The Society has ironed out the differences.¹⁵

Northumberland’s unbroken instrumental tradition had received occasional recognition, such as when “Prince of Pipers” Tom Clough appeared before royalty at home¹⁶ and in the Society’s concerts at the Royal Albert Hall¹⁷, but even then, the sheer remoteness of the area – and the presence of a local organization dedicated to preserving the Northumbrian Pipes - seemed to mitigate against its being brought fully under the EFDSS umbrella. The 1948 arrival of Peter Kennedy in the Northern area office appeared to spur EFDSS into some new exploration of local vernacular music, though the North East still appeared to make an uncomfortable fit with the more quintessentially “English” music favoured by most of the Society.¹⁸ Yet by

¹³ D Kennedy, ‘Notes on the Northumberland Country Dances’, *English Dance and Song*, X/7, Oct 1946, p94; ‘Royal Earsdon Sword Dancers’, *English Dance and Song*, XI/6, Dec 1947-January 1948, p95; Also *English Dance and Song*, XVI/1, July 1951, p186, and p190.

¹⁴ D Kennedy, ‘The Hexham Festival – A Landmark’, *English Dance and Song*, XIII/4, July 1949, pp56-58; Advertisement, ‘A New 45 RPM, Extended Play, Record, 7 EG 8455 [this is an HMV prefix], In answer to popular demand:- Jack Armstrong and his Northumbrian Barnstormers play: Cumberland Square; La Russe; Morpeth Rant; Soldier’s Joy’; *English Dance and Song*, XXIII/2, Apr 1959, p87.

¹⁵ V Alford, letter to Editor, *English Dance and Song*, IX/4, Apr 1945, p40.

¹⁶ ‘Miners and the Royal Visit’, *Northern Weekly Leader*, 14 July 1906.

¹⁷ *North Mail*, 8th December 1928.

¹⁸ ‘North East Area’, *English Dance and Song*, XII/2, May 1948, p26.

1970, the region's music would be considered so influential as to merit its own special edition of *English Dance and Song*, entitled *The Folk Music of Northumbria*:

the first time we have devoted the major part of one magazine to the folk music and song of one region of England.¹⁹

This change in the Society's perceptions of the region's importance is a clear illustration of the pivotal nature of the era under study.

Although they played a role, the impact of external mediators such as Lloyd, MacColl and EFDSS was perhaps less keenly felt in this region than in others more distanced from their past vernacular music: indeed, some of the discussion above highlights the opposite situation, with the mediators themselves influenced by the regional tradition. The following section emphasizes the importance, not only of substantial traditional continuities but also of previous localized folklore revivals, both of which were supported by the relatively early media dissemination of North Eastern folk music. Consequently, this was a region that felt fewer of the extreme oscillations of 1960s folk boom-and-bust, and was able to treat the more grandiose claims of cultural commentators with scepticism.

There can be little doubt that the tradition had survived independently in small pockets throughout the North East. Continuity (which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Four) expressed itself in the music played at dances and in farm kitchens particularly throughout rural Northumberland. Meanwhile, the Northumbrian Pipers' Society continued to nurture players of the one instrument peculiar to an English region. However, the Pipers' Society's Eighth Annual Report in 1936 noted the 'first substantial fall in membership since the foundation of the Society' and only two years later, Lance Robson claimed the Northern Musical Tournament's competitions were 'not helping us very much with the pipes because some of the chief organizers do not like 'pipes''.²⁰ New outlets for Northumbrian traditions were found in events like the first Alnwick Gathering on 25th February

¹⁹ *English Dance and Song, Special Edition: The Folk Music of Northumbria*, Spring 1970, p21.

1949, and in the formation of a new sword dance team attached to Kings College (later to become Newcastle University).²¹

The oral tradition persisted in songs remembered for pub singalongs and charabanc trips: as Tony Wilson put it, ‘Some of our singers actually did learn songs from their Granny’.²² However, interviews with various members of the early revival have shown that significant chunks of the tradition were carried through to the 1950s by virtue of publishing and media. A firm repertoire of Tyneside favourites had been established by recordings dating back to J C Scatter's 1908 rendition of *The Blaydon Races*.²³ And the printed song collections of music hall artiste Ernest Catcheside-Warrington, published by J & G Windows Ltd of Central Arcade, are frequently cited as sources of formative interest in local music. Musical literacy and piano ownership was relatively high in the region, and several key participants in the folk revival recount similar family stories to the following, from Johnny Handle:-

I remember in 1941/'42, creeping downstairs after I'd been sent to bed, sitting on the stairs listening through the wall as they had their sing-songs. And they used to get round the piano, particularly on a Sunday evening when me father was at home, they would sing some hymns and then they would go through the Catcheside-Warrington songbook of Tyneside songs, and I thought that this was very peculiar because they were actually singing in a voice that was much broader than their natural speech patterns and I thought they were putting on this Geordie accent that we thought was most quaint.²⁴

²⁰ Northumbrian Pipers Society, *Eighth Annual Report 1st January – 31st December 1936*, TWA 924/2; L G Robson, letter to Pipe Major Robertson, 30th November 1938, TWA 924/130.

²¹ ‘Team History’, *Newcastle Kingsmen Sword Dancers* website, <http://www.kingsmen.co.uk/team/teamhistory.php>.

²² T Wilson, ‘The Folk Clubs of Tyneside’, *English Dance and Song, Special Edition: The Folk Music of Northumbria*, Spring 1970, 28-29, p28.

²³ J C Scatter, *The Blaydon Races* (80rpm gramophone disc, Jumbo 208, London, 1908).

²⁴ J Handle, , interviewed by Mike Sutton, 25th February 2002; L Killen, , interviewed by author, 9th March 2004, recordings in my possession; P Wood, ‘Brian Watson and Northern Song’, *Living Tradition*, Issue 43, May/June 2001, p20; K Bibby-Wilson, interviewed by author, 26th February 2004, recordings in my possession. For piano ownership in the coalfields, see E de Quieros, edited and translated by A Aiken and A Stevens, *Eca's English Letters* (Carcanet, Manchester, 2000), pp66-67, which explains that the North Eastern coalfield prospered during the closure of European coalfields around the time of the Franco-Prussian War, and many miners spent their newfound wealth on pianos. For personal recollections of piano ownership, see also J Handle interviewed by Mike Sutton, 25th February 2002 recording in my possession.

Within the classroom, *North Countrie Songs for Schools* disseminated a less music-hall biased tradition.²⁵ And, via the airwaves, a new radio programme granted space to regional voices. *Wot Cheor Geordie*, which ran from the mid-1940s until the mid '50s, was a significant reiteration of belonging for people displaced by war, and it featured comics, music hall “turns”, classical performers and some performers of traditional music, such as the great Northumbrian piper Billy Pigg and, more frequently, Jack Armstrong’s Barnstormers – a country dance band led by Northumbrian piper and fiddler Armstrong, which played in the strict tempo Jimmy Shand style. Equally significant, however, was the use of local tunes and songs by non-traditional performers – Owen Brannigan’s or the Barry Sisters’ renditions of Geordie songs, or the orchestra’s use of *Morpeth Rant* as a “play-on”.²⁶ Further, the show permitted ordinary urban people, outside of the rarified reach of the Northumbrian Pipers’ Society, to hear the sound of the pipes, and Alistair Anderson has observed that children of his generation – born too late for *Wot Cheor Geordie* – were unaware of the instrument, while those just a few years older than him were familiar – courtesy of Pigg and Armstrong - with this unique sound. This programme will be more closely discussed in Chapter Five, but here it demonstrates that local songs and tunes already provided a powerful association with regional identity.

Special though this North Eastern legacy was, the nationwide social upheavals of the 1950s discussed in the previous chapter were powerful agents in creating the climate for a youth-driven folk movement. As the following paragraphs demonstrate, the development of teenage music identities was as keenly felt within the North East as in London, especially among several active and influential young people who found within Newcastle a flourishing extant cultural milieu in which to develop.

The North East followed the wider post-war evolution of musical trends from bebop, via traditional jazz, to skiffle. Two of the main progenitors of the Newcastle folk revival followed this well-trodden path: Louis Killen, born in Gateshead, 1934, to first-generation Irish immigrants; and John Pandrich, born in Wallsend, 1935, who

²⁵ W Gillies- Whittaker, *North Countrie Songs for Schools* (Curwen, London, 1921).

²⁶ R Kelly (prod), *Wot Cheor Geordie*, radio script, transmitted North Eastern Home Service, 3rd October 1955, p5.

adopted his schoolboy nickname of Johnny Handle (short for "panhandle" - after a youthful interest in geology).

Jazz appreciation societies, such as the Newcastle Rhythm Club which met at The Bridge Hotel, gave "record recitals" and themed talks: they had been running in Newcastle since the early 1930s, and sixteen-year-old Louis Killen, newly converted from be-bop to Dixieland, joined in 1950.²⁷ Johnny Handle remembers being told by older jazz players of a similar society which met in the Roma Café during the late 1940s, but the scene was already moving towards greater participation and Johnny was a part of this. Picking out tunes on piano from radio programmes such as *Rex Harris and Lord Donegal's Rhythm Section*, he started to practice with some 'like minded souls' at school.²⁸ Soon, another local player, Mighty Joe Young introduced them to a new kind of jazz club:-

some of us went to this jazz club in the Royal Arcade - where Swan House is now – but they were not sitting listening to music like jazz appreciation people, they actually danced to it and we thought this was very exciting and dangerous and naughty. And it was there that I heard Josh White and Big Bill Broonzy this would be sometime about 1950, '51, '52? So I thought this was great music but it seemed to be far away from the pop music that was playing at the time. And the jazz.²⁹

The venue in question was the Newcastle Jazz Club, run by Alan Brown every Tuesday at the Royal Arcade's Celebration Hall.³⁰ It is ironic that this Arcade would soon become one of the first casualties of the Newcastle-Brasilia reconstruction because it had provided a prototype vision of cultural improvement as home to the Socialist Society, and the various Clarion Societies: Choir; Cycling Club; Rambling Club; and Dramatic Society (later the People's Theatre).³¹ The jazz club would have

²⁷ L Killen, , interviewed by author, 9th March 2004, recordings in my possession. The themed talk/record recital approach was continued in the Folksong and Ballad Club, which ran fortnightly talks and record recitals on alternate weeks to the Tuesday Ceilidhs. J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

²⁸ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

²⁹ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

³⁰ G Pearson, *Sex, Brown Ale and Rhythm & Blues: The Life that Gave Birth to the Animals* (snagaP Publishing, Newcastle, 1998), p13. Although this is a fictional account, Pearson's observations of dates and places concur very well with those of other leading participants in the Newcastle scene.

³¹ Regarding Newcastle-Brasilia, see D Byrne, 'The Reconstruction of Newcastle: Planning since 1945', in R Colls, and B Lancaster, (eds), *Newcastle upon Tyne : A Modern History* (Phillimore,

fit snugly into the general counter-cultural feel of the place, and the venue's demise is just one of several examples of how changes to the built environment impacted upon the region's musical life. As it is, youngsters such as Handle - as well as Alan Price and Eric Burdon - were among the vanguard who heard the major American blues players first-hand. The blues was the common denominator between those young 'bohos' who would develop towards rock and those who moved towards folk or jazz: it was the accepted voice of a general disillusion with the Establishment, and some early innovators would dabble in several of the styles deriving from black American music.

Soon Johnny Handle would feature regularly as pianist in outfits such as the Vieux Carré Jazzmen, and Clem Avery's group, while supplementing his income in dance bands (for organizations as diverse as local Scout troops and the Young Communists) and as resident musician in a variety of working men's clubs.³² (The flexibility and aural/improvisational skills required in such venues were to prove useful in later years, as he developed the facility to pen appropriate melodies when his research into Northern songs turned up lyrics with lost tunes.) In 1954, on the top storey of a failing gentlemen's club in Heaton, Handle and Avery set up a new jazz club. This was just one of many such venues to open from the mid-1950s. Mike Jeffreys (later owner of the Downbeat and the Club-A-Go-Go) started the Sunday night University Jazz Club at the Cordwainers Hall, Nelson Street; and the New Orleans Club opened in Shieldfield's Melbourne Street as a kind of musician's co-operative in 1956, hinting at the new infrastructure which would underpin the second revival - the folk clubs.³³

At the same time, the North East experienced the major stylistic shift that was the national skiffle craze, and Louis Killen remembers

Chichester, 2001), 341-360, pp344-350; for the People's Theatre and leftist culture, see C Goulding, *The Story of the People's* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1991), pp13-19; T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1970), pp24-25.

³² J Handle, interviewed by author, 3rd February 2004, recording in my possession

³³ For the University Jazz Club, see G Pearson, , *Sex, Brown Ale and Rhythm & Blues: The Life that Gave Birth to the Animals* (snagaP Publishing, Newcastle, 1998), p37; regarding the New Orleans Club, see J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

a Chris Barber concert at the City Hall ... this was before "The Rock Island Line" hit - in the middle they had the skiffle group of ... Monty Sunshine on guitar, Donegan on banjo, ... and Chris Barber on bass. ... And they were doing these American folksongs, so it was, like, "Wow!", I'd only heard this on radio, I'd never actually seen it live.³⁴

Johnny Handle capitalized on this craze and supplemented his already full calendar by playing guitar and banjo in skiffle groups full of amateur 'hobbyists'.³⁵ Even when skiffle's brief star faded after 1956, jazz clubs would make use of a 'rootsy' interval spot - now favouring the songs of Broonzy and Leadbelly over Donegan - and Handle fulfilled this role in Shieldfield's New Orleans Club. It was here that he would meet and eventually share a platform with Louis Killen, who had been developing his musical interests in a rather more rarified environment.

In his short spell during 1955 as a scholarship student at Oxford's Catholic Workers' College, Killen found a community of like-minded people at the Heritage Society. He remembers 1950s Oxford as being a melting pot of intellectuals who also understood something of the outside world:

Oxford was very funny in those days. National Service was in full flow - so you had people who hadn't just come straight from school, who were kids. These were people who had been out, abroad, doing their national service and came back mature adults. And you could tell: Oxford was thriving in those days.³⁶

Killen's first visit to the Heritage Society proved inspirational, as he heard "Ramblin'" Jack Elliott, who

might have been a New York city lad to begin with but, like a lot of us who got into folk music, he just immersed himself in the whole style of what he wanted to sing, which was Woody Guthrie and western - because he was a mad cowboy freak.³⁷

³⁴ L Killen, interviewed by author, 9th March 2004, recordings in my possession.

³⁵ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

³⁶ L Killen, interviewed by author, 9th March 2004, recordings in my possession.

³⁷ *ibid.*

Killen was no newcomer to folksong: he had sung Tyneside and Irish songs with his family, who were keen harmony singers. He had been introduced to A L Lloyd and Ewan MacColl's first Topic recording by a Northumbrian piper from Fenham whom he had met at a Northumberland Ranger Scout Moot, and he listened to Alan Lomax's radio broadcasts, including those featuring American cowboy songs.³⁸ What appears to have been revelatory on this Oxford evening was the immediacy of the vibrant live performance, which he remembers as having experienced only once before - during the interval set of Chris Barber's City Hall show.

Thus inspired, Killen became a regular visitor to London, mixing from 1955 with folk luminaries such as MacColl at his Ballad and Blues Club. By 1957, he was also spending a good deal of time at The Roundhouse, and receiving guitar tuition from Alexis Korner (a clear example of the cross-fertilization between the nascent folk scene and the blues). On returning to Newcastle, he visited the New Orleans Club in late 1957 and offered to perform during the interval, immediately impressing the local musicians with his *clawhammer* guitar technique, which was a relatively new import even in London, where players such as Korner had learned it from the Americans. Johnny Handle recalls Killen was 'the first one up in the north who could play the rhythm with the thumb and pick the melody with his fingers', though this is anecdotal and may refer only to Handle's admittedly wide musical circle.³⁹ Killen and Handle began to play the interval slots as a double act shortly afterwards, and soon took on a vacant night at the New Orleans Club, dedicating it to:-

blues and sort of folkie things. Louis was by then singing quite a lot of English material and some Geordie material because his family had been doing it. There'd been a sort of choral tradition in his family in Gateshead, you see. So we decided to have a night at the New Orleans Club, free, when we would just sing this, what he called "folk music". And I was very unsure about this because I didn't really want to sing British stuff, I liked just singing me blues and Broonzy and yodelling stuff, however, it built up nicely.⁴⁰

³⁸ E MacColl; A L Lloyd; H H Corbett, *Sailors' Songs and Shanties* (Topic TLP1, London, 1953; A Lomax (comp/presenter), *Folk Songs From Texas* (BBC Third Programme broadcast, 23rd June 1958).

³⁹ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

⁴⁰ *ibid*

It is ironic that, among all the young Geordies performing American roots music, the one who provided the impetus to draw on local material had learned the significance of his family tradition through contact with the metropolitan scene. This pattern of discovery from a distance will be further explored in Chapter Four, but it can be noted here that other leading figures in North Eastern folk-influenced music had also discovered their roots away from home. Gateshead born Bob Davenport, already an aficionado of Irish music, has performed songs from his own area in London's Irish bars since the 1950s. (It was Davenport whose 1964 criticism of the prescriptive "policy" led to the formation - in self-justification - of MacColl's Critics' Group).⁴¹ And in 1959 Alex Glasgow learned the power of performing in his native dialect, not in Newcastle, but on schools broadcasts in Germany, where he worked as an English teacher:

Alex first achieved fame with German audiences with his singing of Geordie songs to his own guitar accompaniment.

"I first tried them with 'Keep Your Feet Still Geordie, Hinney [sic]'", he told me, "and although they cannot understand a word, they love it."⁴²

As the spur towards exploration of American roots music gradually blended with an interest in more indigenous forms, there developed a corresponding need to separate into a more specific 'art world' where a growing community of like-minded individuals could share their interests.⁴³ This required the development of an infrastructure and new institutions to replace those that were now too broad-based to serve these enthusiasms. It required source material, and an understanding that specifically regional music provided a rich seam unavailable to those who relied upon the pages of *Sing Out!* and *Sing* for new repertoire. The following pages will chart this development, along with the first indications that even within a North East

⁴¹ E MacColl, *Journeyman: an autobiography* (Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1990), p305.

⁴² 'Eldon's Gossip: Germans Delight in Geordie Songs as Low Fell lad puts them over', *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, Wednesday 13th January 1960, p8.

⁴³ For 'art worlds', see P J Martin, *Sounds and Society: Themes in the sociology of music* (Manchester University Press, 1995), pp 165-166.

rich in vernacular traditions much of the folk scene *per se* represented a movement born out of meritocratic upward mobility.

When Louis Killen ignited the first spark of interest in local songs around Newcastle's blues and skiffle clubs, this shift away from Americana was a factor in the move to a separate venue. Killen and Handle had decided both to change the night of their residency and to charge money: the audience figures dropped significantly and they were left with a core following of real enthusiasts for whom the New Orleans jazz club seemed an incongruous setting. A new venue seemed the ideal solution. They settled, in late 1958, on a pub in the town centre with a suitable upstairs room. The Barras Bridge Hotel in the Haymarket, had a none-too-salubrious reputation which earned it the nickname of "The Sink", and interviews with club organizers have shown this rather bohemian earthiness to be fondly remembered.⁴⁴

The club, adopting the name of Folksong and Ballad, was the first in the North East, the root from which the region's other clubs grew, and one of the vanguard of what Georgina Boyes identified as a new kind of outlet for traditional song: 'a separate economic and social base for creating, reproducing and disseminating the practice and ideology of performance - the folk club'.⁴⁵

Just as the pre-war infrastructure of EFDSS had moulded folk music to suit its own purposes, so the new clubs would reshape the tradition in their own image. As will be further discussed in Chapters Four and Eight, what became defined in the eyes of the general public as folk music was not what most of "the folk" performed at the time (although sometimes the two did coincide when folk music attained chart

⁴⁴ A programme of events for 1985-1986 printed by the Bridge Folk Club gives Folksong & Ballad's date of inception as 1957, but the consensus gleaned from oral history interviews is that the club proper began the following year. Presumably, the earlier date therefore includes the era of the interval sets at the New Orleans Club. Bridge Folk Club, *Programme 1985-6* (Newcastle, 1985); J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002; L Killen, interviewed by author, 9th March 2003, recordings in my possession.

⁴⁵ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p231; J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession puts this name change contemporaneously with the move to the Barras Bridge, however, T Wilson, 'The Folk Clubs of Tyneside', *English Dance and Song, Special Edition: The Folk Music of Northumbria*, Spring 1970, 28-29, p28, places it at around 1960.

popularity, with skiffle, Bob Dylan, or McTell's *Streets of London*). Nor was it necessarily what Cecil Sharp, or Lloyd, or MacColl stated to be authentic, although this certainly bore considerable weight. What effectively became known as folk music was simply what people in folk clubs chose to perform. The repertoire of the emergent core of Tyneside's folk scene seemed to show little conscious selectivity, yet (very early in terms of the revival as a whole) it was starting to run on parallel tracks with the policy of authenticity which Ewan MacColl was laying down.

Early club regulars included John Brennan and John Reavey, who sang Irish songs from their family traditions; Northumbrian Laurie Charlton, who specialized in Border ballads; and the Elliott family of Birtley who were rich in songs of the Durham miners (although they keenly defended the natural eclecticism of worker-musicians). Sixteen-year-old guitarist and singer Tom Gilfellow, from a Stanley Irish family, was 'the bairn' of the club: having recently undergone the standard conversion from skiffle and "trad", he would soon develop a keen interest in his local "miner bard", Tommy Armstrong.⁴⁶ Louis Killen, though by far the earliest club member to encourage the performance of local songs, retained a broad-based repertoire - based on his extensive travelling - of ballads and shanties from all over Britain. And Johnny Handle was coming to terms - initially via printed music such as *Come All Ye Bold Miners*, *Allan's Tyneside Songs* and old manuscripts held by Newcastle Library - with his own identity as a folksinger:

So our idea was that we would build a repertoire up and entertain and improve and we'd provide a variety of songs. So about this time Louis encouraged me to sing in the dialect. He said, "You work in the coalmines" ... because I'd left school and started to be a mining surveyor by then.⁴⁷

This last comment is illuminating: while schoolmaster's son, Johnny Handle went down the mines (albeit in a technical-managerial position), many of those involved in the nascent North East folk scene (with the notable exception of the Elliott family) were following an opposite trajectory: out of backgrounds rooted in manual, industrial labour and into the white collar world afforded by higher education. These

⁴⁶ T Gilfellow, interviewed by writer, 21st March 2003, notes/recording in my possession.

⁴⁷ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

young people were part of a new national social grouping to be more closely explored in Chapter Four: the young bohemians from unprivileged backgrounds who populated the coffee houses, the grammar schools and universities, the art colleges and the jazz and skiffle clubs and effectively re-shaped the cultural map in a single generation. Among the members of Folksong and Ballad, Tom Gilfellow would shortly go to university in Manchester; and a bridge between the club and what would become Newcastle University came in the form of Colin Ross. Ross was a musician for the Kings College rapper team and soon became a regular at "The Sink".

The input of Ross and Foster Charlton on pipes and fiddle was to forge another distinctive aspect of the club's identity - its unusually early interest in instrumental music and dance while most other clubs would be rooted purely in song for another decade.⁴⁸ The doyens of Newcastle's folk club scene would visit and befriend the traditional musicians of the area's rural hinterland and they had started to do so well in advance of most club and coffee-house goers in the rest of the country.⁴⁹ They made regular bus trips North to hear bands such as the Cheviot Ranters and to attend the Alnwick Gathering, as well as to absorb the more informal aspects of the tradition:-

there was a thing called The Club Hike. Johnny had these things, we used to go off and get the bus, just a service bus, and go off and wander about, and finish at the pub and have a few tunes. ... somebody discovered there were dances up at Cambo which were much more a traditional dance, really. And so some of us would go up to those and they were pretty wild dos ... again, this ... informed our approach to the dancing as being something very, very different to the way the EFDSS were presenting it at the time.⁵⁰

Alistair Anderson, who gave this account, is among the many North Eastern revivalists who state that their attraction to traditional music was reinforced by a

⁴⁸ Foster Charlton was also a leading figure in an older organization, The Northumbrian Pipers' Society, acting as Secretary between 1960 and 1969.

⁴⁹ Though there were exceptions, such as Davenport, Hall and Plunkett, discussed in Chapter One. The North Eastern revivalists were clearly in the vanguard, however.

⁵⁰ A Anderson, interviewed by author, Newcastle University, 5th March 2004, recording in my possession. This is reinforced by comments made by Louis Killen. Regarding Alnwick Gathering,

sense of the elemental enjoyment of life out in the hills.⁵¹ In an article bemoaning the decline in the Northumberland villages of social folk dancing relative to the more widespread Old Time and Modern dances, Grahame Binless and Mike Robson were clear that the responsibility for the continuation of the tradition lay with the revivalists:-

The future for dancing in the area seems to lie in the hands of the "townies" of Tyneside whose task must be to take back the dance to the villages.⁵²

As for these 'townies', a chief motivator to playing folk music would appear to have been the new form of notional community which the folk world provided: those involved in folk music as an institution - of clubs and festivals - were seeking links with folk music as contextual cultural practice. Perhaps this was a surrogate for the village communities of the past, or for the sense of belonging to a working-class industrial community. Even though the clubs were starting to be populated by the new meritocracy, it is therefore evident that regional folk music was not simply a matter of middle-class appropriation. This particular meritocracy derived from "the folk" and there is a far greater sense of acknowledging a working-class background which the new teachers and librarians and engineers knew only too well from childhood, and from which they were now partly dislocated, as will be seen in Chapter Four.⁵³

What is clear is that, contrary to much received wisdom regarding the new youth movements involved in the national revival, politics would appear well down the list of conscious spurs towards unearthing the North Eastern tradition.⁵⁴ The organizers

see L Killen, interviewed by author, 9th March 2003, recording in my possession; J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

⁵¹ Of course, this fascination drew on earlier rediscoveries of wild Northumbria, from Scott, through Bruce & Stokoe to Basil Bunting. For Bunting's Northumbrian-ness, see R Caddel and A Flowers, *Basil Bunting – a northern life*, (Newcastle, 1997), p58.

⁵² G Binless and M Robson, 'The Traditional Social Dance in Northumberland', *English Dance and Song, Special Edition: The Folk Music of Northumbria*, Spring 1970, 11-12, p12.

⁵³ L Killen, questionnaire completed 9th March 2004, question 5.32: 'What kind of audience did your club attract?; [response:] 18-50 year olds, mainly working class or from that origin.' For an account of the even more profound sense of uprootedness amongst slightly earlier scholarship boys, see R Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1957), pp291-304.

⁵⁴ Regarding the political understanding of revival, see D Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British 'folksong' 1700 to the present day* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1985); G

of Folksong and Ballad went so far as to print a disclaimer on their membership cards, stating that the club maintained 'strict impartiality to current politics and to the associated national and international problems'.⁵⁵ This is not to say that the regional revival was apolitical. Overt communism, or participation in CND marches, which shaped the infrastructure of the revival, may have been much less evident in the North East folk scene than that in the south of England, but songs such as *The Coal Owner and the Pitman's Wife* and *The Oakey Strike Evictions* (selected and mediated though they were by MacColl and Lloyd) showed a strong sense of social justice which was transmitted with great conviction by the revivalists.⁵⁶ The output of local contemporary songwriters - notably Handle, Purdon and Pickford - was also clearly a part of the protest tradition, though, tellingly, the most overtly political songwriter on 1960s Tyneside was probably Alex Glasgow, who frequently proclaimed that he was not a folksinger.⁵⁷

Louis Killen clearly acknowledges the role of politics in the regional movement's early years: the fact that he moved between his home town and the more intellectually politicized worlds of Oxford and London may imply that the traffic between folksong and politics was greatest where the regional intersected with the national and international.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Doreen Henderson, daughter of Jack Elliott (a man of firm convictions and rich in tales of the 1926 strike), also maintains that 'it WAS a political movement, whatever anybody else says, in the beginning', especially as so much of the North Eastern sung tradition originated from the industrial proletariat.⁵⁹ It would appear, though, that in the North East the protest was present within the movement, rather than the movement developing out of the protest. Once again, the overt links between the revival's infrastructure and political aims grew from the considerable input and support that came into the local scene

Boyes, *The Imagined Village* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1993); M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003).

⁵⁵ Folksong & Ballad Club, *Membership Card* (Newcastle, c1963). The membership card from which the quote is taken is from the era after the club moved to the Bridge Hotel, however, the organizers and, presumably, their general ethos, carried through from the club's previous incarnations.

⁵⁶ Doreen Henderson recalls that, though sympathetic to CND, she was unable to participate in their marches due to family commitments and the travelling involved.

⁵⁷ J Handle, 'Farewell to the Monty', reprinted in *The Johnny Handle Songbook* (Spin, Newcastle, 1975), p2; J Purdon, 'The Blacklisted Miners', reprinted in J Purdon, *Songs of the Durham Coalfield*, (Pit Lamp Press, Durham, 1977), p24; E Pickford, 'Ee Aye, I Could Hew', in A L Lloyd (comp) *Come All Ye Bold Miners* (2nd edition, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1978), pp146-147.

⁵⁸ L Killen, interviewed by author, 9th March 2003, recording in my possession.

from Lloyd, MacColl and Seeger, the Workers Music Association, *Sing*, and Lawrence and Wishart's publishing house.⁶⁰ Chapter Four will debate the possibility that in this regard a determinedly populist, regional and democratic movement was running along tracks (especially those relating to authenticity) laid down by a metropolitan intellectual elite.

It may also be the case that the revival's local history was depoliticized in hindsight. Brocken contends that

the folk revival's own historiography continues to record many adherents being enlightened via a musical "Road to Damascus" and the revival itself as developing in an "organic" way throughout the 1950s ... Perhaps praising the "organic unity" of the sound of the music together with its associations of protest ... holds more appeal than giving due credit to the organisational determinism of a politicised backbone.⁶¹

Whether or not this was the case, the contrast between Alistair Anderson's perceptions of the revival (discovered in a thriving 1960s local scene) and those of Louis Killen and Doreen Henderson (shaped amid a nascent 1950s national scene) is marked. Such a divergence might in fact be due to individual differences. Alternatively it could hint that in the revival's early years, even where individual (or club, or regional) participation was not overtly political, the infrastructure and many underlying assumptions of the folk world were moulded by the grand narratives of the 1930s and '40s.⁶²

How to apply these underlying assumptions to the praxis of performance was another matter. This section will explore how Folksong and Ballad's club identity coalesced even as they moved around Newcastle in search of a permanent venue, and how the policies inherent in this club identity caused some members, notably the Elliott family, to question their own attitudes and to find an answer in establishing their own club with a more egalitarian ethos. The two clubs, but particularly Birtley, were set

⁵⁹ D Henderson, interviewed by author, 13th December 2004, recording in my possession.

⁶⁰ T Gilfellon, interviewed by author, 21st March 2003, notes/recording in my possession; J Handle, interviewed by author, 3rd February 2004, recording in my possession.

⁶¹ M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944-200*, (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), p55.

to become the wellspring from which the rest of the North Eastern scene developed, and would influence the structure and philosophy of folk venues throughout the region.

Sowing the seeds of an issue which would prove even more contentious than class or politics was an early policy at Folksong and Ballad which subtly stipulated a minimum ability level among performers at the club, and marking them off from a listening audience, as Johnny Handle recalls:

we had a weekly club which was based on residents and audience, unlike many of the present clubs where they go round the room and everybody who comes to the club is expected to have the ability to sing – or not!⁶³

As controversies in later years would demonstrate, the fact that the residents of Folksong and Ballad were so dismissive of floor singers' earnest efforts (some of which were undoubtedly excruciating) caused schisms within the movement and a great many debates over musical democracy and authenticity of the type to be discussed both below and in Chapter Eight.

The overall identity of Folksong and Ballad had clearly coalesced relatively quickly. Its venue, however, was much less secure during these early years. As discussed above, the impact of reconstructing the built environment was felt particularly in the rather marginal pubs and clubs which were willing to host live music. "The Sink" would eventually close in 1962, but for at least a year prior to this the inevitability of its demolition had been understood, as the area was earmarked as site of the grand modernist statement of the new Civic Centre.⁶⁴ Folksong and Ballad would have to move, as Johnny Handle recalls:

we had the most monumental pub crawl, Louis and me, round the pubs in Newcastle, looking for an upstairs room. And everybody was very cagey about it or the rooms were in disrepair. So we finally moved to the Liberal

⁶² For a full discussion of this topic on the national scene, see M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944-200*, (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), p49.

⁶³ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

⁶⁴ B Bennison, *Heady Days: A History of Newcastle's Public Houses, Vol 1: The Central Area* (City of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1996), p5.

Club which was in Pilgrim Street. And there it was presented in more of a concert format with the seats in rows, rather than round tables.⁶⁵

Louis Killen states that the move, in 1961, was rather less informal than Handle's account suggests. For a start, in the summer recess before the move, the first meeting to consciously shape club policy was made. The club would no longer be run just by Killen and Handle, but by a committee of the residents. Further,

no money would be taken out as individuals, we'd all be working for nothing. We'd be committed to the club, and the money that we collected every week would go into the fund. And we worked out that about £5 a week was coming in after we'd paid the rents We could guarantee there was £20 [per monthly guest]. I think we were the first club to offer that to guests. I remember Joe Heaney, an American, saying to me, I used to do the Singers Club and they would only pay me £5. But you said you would pay me £20 and you did! And that was our policy, that we'd have one guest a month - a traditional singer, as best we could. Jeannie Robertson was brought down; Paddy Tunney; we brought up Bert Lloyd ... 5 or 6 guests were brought up that year.⁶⁶

More controversially, the influence of Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger was felt in relation to repertoire. As discussed in Chapters Four and Five, the radio ballads had brought Louis Killen and Johnny Handle into their direct circle, where they absorbed the ideas that shaped "the policy". The organizers of Folksong & Ballad subsequently chose to discard their non-indigenous material. This raised concerns, especially when combined with the club's ever increasing tendency towards being a concert platform rather than an informal singaround. Most vocal of the critics had been the Elliott family of Birtley, chiefly Jack and his son Pete, who were miners with a strong sense of their own tradition, a tradition which they felt was not served by any perceived élitism. Johnny Handle recounts:-

although they enjoyed coming to our sessions and would get up and sing from the floor, they felt that democracy ruled and there shouldn't be this hierarchy. "Anybody could sing", that was their theory. Well, we didn't agree with that because we found very quickly that "anybody could sing" was a way of

⁶⁵ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

⁶⁶ L Killen, interviewed by author 30th March 2004, recording in my possession.

disenchanted the audience, but on the other hand we had been rather, perhaps, dismissive of the floor singers.⁶⁷

Bryan and Doreen Henderson explain how the Elliott family came to form a new club with a more inclusive ethos:-

It was quite precious, Newcastle, ... you didn't get a chance to sing, it was them singing at you. [Doreen interjects – 'Oh it was them and us'] ... and they had Laurie Charlton - he was a grammar school teacher and he got very – well, you couldn't sing American, you couldn't sing anything but British traditional, and you were very honoured if you were picked out to sing a song. So there was no opportunity for people to get to sing, really, till Birtley opened and it was a free-for-all, so everybody wanted to get in on the act.⁶⁸

As discussed above, this divergence of opinion (further discussed in Chapter Eight) would repeatedly shake the unity of the North Eastern folk movement. In this case, after a couple of abortive attempts to find a venue first in a local working men's club and then an inappropriately teetotal welfare hall, from May 1962 the Elliotts established their own club at Birtley's Red Lion. It was consciously non-élitist, non-prescriptive (although some of those who attempted to accompany themselves on guitar might say there was a clear preference for unaccompanied singing), and it tapped into a new craving for participation within the movement. In the early years, the venue was so packed that, reputedly, participants were afraid to leave the club room even to go to the toilet for fear that their place would be usurped by others waiting in the bar or the "snug".⁶⁹ Members of the Birtley club (including those still at school, like Ed Pickford) were able to gain the experience, repertoire and confidence which would have been much slower in coming with a very sporadic floorspot at the Bridge. It is generally agreed that Birtley became effectively the finishing school for potential club organizers, and it was evidently the root from which several new clubs (such as South Shields, Felling, and Sunderland) grew. Despite differences in emphasis, there was no real enmity between the Bridge and the Birtley club, as residents from each would regularly visit the other club, and, when a new venue opened, members of both Folksong and Ballad and the Birtley

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ B and D Henderson, interviewed by author, 13th December 2004, recording in my possession.

club would turn out to boost numbers in their early weeks.⁷⁰ Such co-operation would later form the basis of the North East Folk Federation, which will be discussed later.

At this time, too, Johnny Handle moved his place of work to Stockton, where he forged connections between Newcastle and the nascent Teesside folk clubs which featured Ron Angel (later of the Teesside Fettleers), EFDSS's Tony Foxworthy, and songwriter Graham Miles. Handle started a magazine, *Singing Teesside*⁷¹, and threw his energies into the clubs around Stockton and Middlesbrough, all the while commuting to Newcastle every Tuesday to perform as a resident of Folksong and Ballad. A third development during this era was Ray Fisher's arrival on the local scene. Already an established artist in Scotland along with her brother Archie, she first visited the club as a guest singer, made frequent returns, and eventually became Mrs Colin Ross.⁷² She brought with her a wealth of Scottish song and became a powerful female presence among the previously all-male residents of Folksong and Ballad (the experiences of women within the regional revival are further discussed in Chapter Three).

This period when North Eastern folk clubs consolidated their identity was also the moment that local groups of musicians (as opposed to Louis Killen's individual forays) began to make regular incursions into the capital and the national scene as a whole. This was a timely development, as the following pages will demonstrate, coinciding with Merseybeat and The Animals: the trend for all things Northern that characterized the early 1960s. And it carried its own inherent dangers. The iconography produced by both the youth movements, and the linkage of culture/leisure with the economic/social (especially through Dan Smith's grand projects that promoted modernism but through a nostalgic lens for the old Newcastle) would serve only the past and the immediate present, tied as it was to old narratives of bluff, hardworking, industrial Northern-ness. Those young artists that left the

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² C Harper, *Dazzling Stranger: Bert Jansch and the British Folk and Blues Revival* (Bloomsbury, 2000), pp52-65.

provinces were able to participate fully in 'swinging London', those that remained found themselves documenting an increasingly pessimistic litany of social change.

During Folksong and Ballad's period of rapid expansion, the club residents became an established touring group, who would spend their weekends taking their regional brand of folk music down to a London sated with blues and which seemed open to the exoticism of music from the furthest reaches of England. Again, Louis Killen (by now an itinerant singer but who regularly returned to Newcastle) suggested the first trip to the Alex Campbell's Richmond club, and Johnny Handle still registers surprise at the impact the group made: 'it was just a mind-blowing weekend, because we didn't realise there was so much appreciation'.⁷³ This was certainly a novelty for the Londoners, because trips from Newcastle to London in the early 1960s - before bypasses and good motorway connections - were long enough to render the region positively remote.

Newcastle, however, was radically modernizing and by 1962 the Liberal Club was scheduled for massive renovation. The search for a new venue began again, resulting in the club's final move to a regular Thursday night in its current home. The Bridge Hotel sat alongside the High Level Bridge which inspired James Hill's famous *High Level Hornpipe*, a resonance which would not have gone unnoticed. The move to the new venue was a clear success, with audiences queuing for the doors to open at 7pm, and the door-takings raising sufficient money to book major names (such as Cyril Tawney and Shirley Collins) as guests.⁷⁴

Further, the significance of the North Eastern revival was by now being recognized by a wider public. 1962 saw the release of four Topic EPs: *The Collier's Rant* and *Northumbrian Garland* both by Killen and Handle with accompaniments by Ross; Handle's solo effort, *Stottin' Doon the Waall*; and London-based Bob Davenport's *Wor Geordie*.⁷⁵ In the same year, Folkways released *The Elliotts of Birtley*, adding

⁷³ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

⁷⁴ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession. Regarding the High Level Hornpipe, the tune can be accessed online:- J Hill, 'The High Level Hornpipe', *Baty Manuscript Tune Book*, (c1841-1860), <http://www.asaplive.com/archive/detail.asp?id=M0202301>.

⁷⁵ L Killen, J Handle, and C Ross, *The Collier's Rant* (Topic EP record, TOP74, 1962); L Killen, J Handle, and C Ross, *Northumbrian Garland* (Topic EP record, TOP75, 1962); J Handle, *Stottin'*

to the sense that the rest of the English folk world discovered North Eastern song in 1962.⁷⁶ Compounding the effect of these in 1963 was Topic's LP *The Iron Muse: a panorama of industrial song*, which included Killen, Davenport and Ray Fisher alongside A L Lloyd, Anne Briggs and Matt McGinn.⁷⁷ Not only did these recordings provide a national outlet for local artists, they had a positive effect on the companies which produced them. This will be further discussed in a separate chapter, however worth noting here are the claims that Topic Records was saved as a business by the surprising upturn in sales which coincided with the success of the Killen/Handle EPs and *The Iron Muse*.⁷⁸ This might be attributable to the purchasing power of Geordie chauvinism, however, it is far more likely that these records tapped into a wider enthusiasm in theatre, literature and pop for all things northern.⁷⁹ It was, after all, in 1962 that The Beatles broke into the mainstream consciousness, something upon which Sid Chaplin commented in the national press. In an article celebrating the resurgence of interest in *The Tyneside Sound*, he noted that none of the North Eastern artists 'has managed to sell that mere 100,000 which is what the Beatles' first record sold ... it is difficult to hard-sell the honest song the way they do the contemporary counterfeits'.⁸⁰ Music he perceived to be from within the tradition, such as The Elliotts or Johnny Handle (in spite of the fact that their recordings rendered them a part of the cash nexus), was for him preferable to the trans-Atlantic pop of the Merseyside Sound, which 'turned out to be only the slave trade getting a belated revenge on the port and the people'.⁸¹ No matter how short-sighted this argument may now appear, it is clear that for once the North felt sufficiently the focus of national attention to enjoy its internal rivalries. *The Iron Muse* in particular was able to exploit the vogue for grit.

Doon the Waall (Topic EP record, TOP78, 1962); B Davenport, *Wor Geordie* (Topic EP record, TOP83, 1962).

⁷⁶ Elliott Family, *The Elliotts of Birtley* (Folkways, FG-3565, 1962).

⁷⁷ A L Lloyd, (arr) and Various Artists, *The Iron Muse: a panorama of industrial song* (Topic LP record, 12T86, 1963).

⁷⁸ T L Fisher, *The Radical Revival: a history of the folk song revival and other counter-cultural movements in Britain and America from the 1930s to the early 1970s*, (unpublished MA thesis, University of Birmingham, 1973), pp198-200; M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), p64.

⁷⁹ see R Samuel, 'North and South', in *Island Stories: Unravelling Britain, Theatres of Memory Vol II* (Verso, London, 1998), pp153-155.

⁸⁰ S Chaplin, 'The Tyneside Sound', *The Guardian*, Saturday November 16th 1963, p14.

⁸¹ *ibid.*

Meantime, a completely opposite factor in sixties society which was to have a particular impact on the North East was the new linkage of culture and leisure with economic and social growth. Folk clubs would soon open in the new breed of civic buildings, such as the arts centres at Washington and Ashington, but the first sign of this change happened much earlier.⁸²

Brainchild of T Dan Smith, the 1962 Blaydon Races Centenary was a major event in this field, designed as an affirmation of regional identity, but especially as a tool of regeneration for the Scotswood Road area:

I imagine that it is only a Tynesider who can wax nostalgic about this throbbing, grimy, lovable, ugly artery. Shades of Coffy Johnny and Cushy Butterfield rip-roar their way along it to the long-gone Blaydon Races.

A century has marched along
Since first we heard that Tyneside song.
On June the 9th in 1962
We will tell the world anew...
Tomorrow, then, we all will see
That Scotswood's making history.⁸³

The day's programme was littered with traditional and music-hall inspired events, and it spawned a longer-term folk music link through the revival of Balmбра's Music Hall, dormant for decades as the billiard room of the Carlton Hotel.⁸⁴ Joe Bennett, 'a businessman ... by day and accordionist in his spare time' began a Northumbrian Traditional Group at the venue and 'a link was formed between the amateur artists appearing at Balmбра's and the still active miners' traditions in the Backworth area of South-East Northumberland,' with regular performances by The Shiremoor Marras, a populist dance group with greater links to the working men's clubs than to

⁸² These centres opened in 1972 and 1967 respectively.

⁸³ T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1970), pp62-65.

⁸⁴ Advertisement: 'Festival of Traditional Arts and Dancing at the Mayfair Ballroom', *Evening Chronicle*, 8th June 1962; B Fane, *A Life of Ridley: The Life and Times of Tyneside humourist, poet and vocalist, George Ridley* (Evening Chronicle Publications, Newcastle, 1985), p3; also Balmбра's Music Hall, *Programme for Re-Opening Night*, (Newcastle, 9th June 1962), Newcastle Central Library Local Studies Section.

the revival.⁸⁵ Balmbra's continued as a music hall (or, by its final years, a "variety") venue until 1981, and advertisements in the local press show that a folk club ('The Jet Set') continued until at least 1969; however, by 1975, the fare was limited to a single night of country and western music and four nights of variety (although the latter would include Geordie music-hall material).⁸⁶

So interest in Geordie heritage, to be more fully discussed in Chapter Six, grew as the shape of the place was transformed: as Colls has it, 'Buildings that for years had given habitude to landscape were brought down without a second glance'.⁸⁷ And with those buildings, much of the industry. Louis Killen and Johnny Handle made regular appearances on local television documentaries with self-penned songs about such regional issues:

Who would be a yardman's wife?
The trade is never sure,
The pits is bad, but yards is worse
Oh, is there ought secure?⁸⁸

Chapter Seven further explores this trend towards images of decline.

While old certainties contracted, the region's folk scene, riding on the national 'folk boom', continued to expand. As the following paragraphs will demonstrate, this followed wider trends, all the while retaining distinctive local elements, such as the region's famous continuity of traditions (more fully discussed in Chapter Four). This had an impact on the trajectory of the local folk movement: the fact that North

⁸⁵ Editorial, 'The Northumbrian Traditional Group', *English Dance and Song, Special Edition: The Folk Music of Northumbria*, Spring 1970, p24; also N Shiel, Questionnaire Responses, 1 February 2006.

⁸⁶ C Lightburn, *Balmbra's: The Hall that Outlived them All* (Bass/St Oswald's, Newcastle, 1998), pp11-13; Advertisement for Balmbra's Jet Set folk club, *Evening Chronicle*, Monday 9th June 1969, p2; Advertisement for Balmbra's, *Evening Chronicle*, Friday May 9th 1975, p6.

⁸⁷ R Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p341.

⁸⁸ This 1962 example was written for a BBC TV show called *Sunderland Oak*, and was printed in: P Seeger, 'Six New Songs from Britain', *Sing Out!*, 12/3, Summer 1962, 18-25; J Handle, *Is There Ought Secure?*, pp21-22. Regarding local television appearances, J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession; L Killen, interviewed by author, 9th March 2003, recording in my possession; J Handle, interviewed by author, 3rd February 2004, recording in my possession.

Eastern folk music was not purely and simply a revival created a climate in which certain aspects of the folk scene touched the North East earlier than in areas that had become virtually dislocated from their past traditions.

During the 1960s clubs opened throughout the region, from Hexham and Ponteland to Stanley; from Tynemouth and Cullercoats to Teesside; while the Teacher Training College at Sunderland proved a fertile training ground for young singers who would become established in the 1970s, such as Bob Fox, Jez Lowe and Keith Gregson.⁸⁹ This rapid expansion of clubs and participants is fairly typical of the rest of the country, however, the repertoire had its own distinctive flavour. While local clubs undoubtedly followed national trends by working their way through shanties and ballads on the one hand, and Dylan, Simon and self-penned material on the other, two key strands of repertoire were particular to the North East for at least the latter half of the 1960s. As mentioned previously, a major part of the local vernacular tradition was made up of music hall songs and recitations, particularly by the unholy trinity of Ned Corvan, Joe Wilson and Geordie Ridley, a nineteenth century legacy which Lancaster dubbed 'England's most distinctive musical culture'.⁹⁰ The fact that this material so completely permeated the local folk clubs was atypical of the rest of the country.⁹¹ Some music hall material did find its way into the repertoires of Glaswegians Alex Campbell, and Hall and McGregor, as well as Londoners like Red

⁸⁹ Regarding Hexham, D Sutherland, *History and Formation of North East Folk Clubs*, unpublished article written in correspondence with author, 2004, lists the Royal Hotel club as one of the many which opened in the mid 1960s; Regarding Ponteland, see A Anderson, interviewed by author, 5th March 2004, recording in my possession - Alistair Anderson states that the folk club at Ponteland's Blackbird pub was reasonably well-established by the time he first visited in 1964-5; Regarding Stanley, see B Graham, , interviewed by M Sutton, 10th April 2002, recording in my possession. Benny Graham was one of the founders of Stanley Folk Club: this grew from the local youth club and had established a separate identity by 1967; Cullercoats folk club was open by 1967 as it advertised in *Image*, Vol 1, No 1, Spring 1968; likewise Tynemouth, from where a 1968 poster exists in Arts Ephemera: Folk Clubs, North Shields Local Studies Library; Regarding Teesside, see J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession. Johnny Handle states that during his time on Teesside, around 1960-62, clubs opened in Stockton, Thornaby and Redcar. For the importance to the revival of Sunderland teacher training college: K Gregson, interviewed by author, 12th February 2004, recording in my possession.

⁹⁰ B Lancaster, 'Sociability and the City' in R Colls, and B Lancaster, (eds), *Newcastle upon Tyne : A Modern History* (Phillimore, Chichester, 2001), 319-340, p329.

⁹¹ This is not to claim that music hall songs had not permeated other traditions – it is evident that singers from elsewhere in England, such as Walter Pardon, Bob Lewis and the Copper Family, used music hall repertoire. The distinction is that – unlike the North Eastern case - this was overlooked by collectors in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and found full acknowledgement from folklorists much later. See J Carroll, 'A Folksong ... By Any Other Name?', *Enthusiasms 41*; and M Yates, 'The Other Songs', *Enthusiasms 40*; both from the Musical Traditions internet journal, <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/enthuse.htm>.

Sullivan and Martin Carthy but Cosmotheke represented the only fundamentally music-hall act in the English folk scene of the time. In contrast, music hall repertoire was the norm within the North East revival rather than the exception.

And, once again, the linkage between the folk clubs and the country dance and ceilidh traditions was distinctive to the North East at least in England (and closer to the blending of traditions seen in Scotland and, particularly, Ireland). Alistair Anderson recalls that for the rest of England, Dave Swarbrick was a lone bridge between dance forms and the folksong clubs, whereas in the North Eastern clubs, the instrumental tradition was gaining a strong foothold with players such as himself, Colin Ross, Foster Charlton and Nichol Caisley.⁹² As outlined above, the enthusiasm among local 'folkies' for Northumberland's landscape and music was a key factor, along with the relatively easy proximity to Tyneside (just a bus ride away) of the rural hinterland. This was coupled with a new upsurge of interest among Northumberland's intellectuals in the language, lore and music of historic Northumbria. Roland Bibby played a significant role here, organizing the first Morpeth Gathering in September 1966 and providing a link between the folk revival and dialect poets.⁹³

Anderson, born in 1948, (and, like many of his generation, initially inspired by Bob Dylan's City Hall concerts) was a relative latecomer. However, a neighbour's gift of an old concertina sparked his enthusiasm for traditional instrumental music and he rapidly found mentors in the great Northumbrian musicians, Billy Pigg, and the men who would later be promoted as 'The Shepherds', Will Taylor, Will Atkinson and Joe Hutton.⁹⁴ However, Anderson's passion for the music can hardly be described as typical: he was one of two teenagers who

⁹² Fiddler/piper Nichol was one of the famous Caisley family, along with piper father Colin (another leading figure in the Northumbrian Pipers' Society), and a multi-instrumentalist clan. The family were much reported in the local press, a typical example being from *Evening Chronicle*, 17th July 1967, 'Nichol, Fiddler on the Mountains'.

⁹³ K Bibby-Wilson, , interviewed by author, 26th February 2002, recording in my possession; also <http://www.northumbriana.org.uk/gathering/about.htm>. Again, there is a connection with Northumbrian Pipers' Society: Bibby would become President in 1977.

⁹⁴ Taylor, a fiddler, mouth organ player Atkinson and piper Hutton were, during the 1960s still working shepherds. Their professional fame came in retirement during the 1980s and 1990s.

started ... going to the Bridge and getting seriously into it – and I mean we did, we became instantly hardline converts. Dave Richardson and I used to cycle from Wallsend up to the Central Library in Newcastle and we hand copied the *Northumbrian Minstrelsy*, because it was unavailable – six months later, it was republished ... but we didn't know that.⁹⁵

(The fact that the *Minstrelsy* would shortly be republished is testament to the rash of media interest in all things North Eastern during the late 1960s, and this is dealt with in Chapter Five.)⁹⁶

If Anderson's enthusiasm bordered on the fanatical, the casual folk club member was also able to participate in the dance tradition because of another innovation which was particular (in England) to the North East. In 1965, Graham Binless, a member of Folksong and Ballad (and EFDSS) commented that the silence expected for performers on a Thursday night detracted from the fact that folk was a social movement and Johnny Handle describes how he suggested a counterbalance:-

‘Why don't we have a ceilidh?’ And we said, ‘Well, what the hell's a ceilidh?’ Well he says, ‘It's a sort of Irish/Scottish word for when you have a bit singing and a bit dancing.’ We said, ‘Whey, they cannot dance, can they?’ Because we were unaware that there was a tradition of Irish dancing, social dancing.... So Graham said, ‘I'll MC, I'll teach them to dance. We'll clear away the tables.’ So Colin said, ‘Well, I've played for country dancing before for the EFDS, I'll teach you some tunes.’ So we duly were taught tunes: which fitted what dances. And we'd launch off, and everyone was a bit shy at first, but Graham was a great MC. And we'd have about four dances over the evening and we used to sit and chat and people would get up and sing on nights like that who would be afraid to get up on the Thursday.⁹⁷

The predictability (and pure dance-orientation) of the wedding or fundraising ceilidh was obviously some years off. This was something radically different in the mid-1960s and newspaper advertisements and reports of the time show that most people – despite the proximity of Scottish and Irish traditions discussed in Chapter Three -

⁹⁵ A Anderson, , interviewed by author, 5th March 2004, recording in my possession.

⁹⁶ J Collingwood Bruce and J Stokoe (eds), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy: A Collection of the Ballads, Melodies and Small-Pipe Tunes of Northumbria* (Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1882).

⁹⁷ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession. See also S McGrail, ‘Alistair Anderson: Because he was a bonny lad’, *Living Tradition*, 73, March/April 2007, 26-30, p30.

were unsure of even the conventional spelling of the word.⁹⁸ The North Eastern folk clubs' special relationship with dance music became firmly established: the band at the Bridge became well-known throughout Britain as The High Level Ranters, and other clubs followed suit, with Birtley running 'kayleys' on the first Wednesday of the month and at Christmas, and Shotley Bridge club forging an association with the Derwent Valley Dancers.⁹⁹

As the folk revival developed and diversified, greater co-ordination was required and the following section will discuss the foundation of the umbrella organization known as the 'Fed'. This made perfect sense in terms of economies of scale but it also created a forum where ideological and artistic controversies could be aggravated, and where the problems wracking the national folk movement also surfaced. This section will further parallel the 'Fed's' promotion of the regional folk scene with the promotion of the North East as a tourist destination, in a notably early use of folk heritage – especially the industrial variety – as an attraction and a source of publicity.

With a special regional blend of traditional songs and music-hall; dance and singer-songwriters, it was clear that a distinctive brand of folk music was being disseminated by separate groups of people who interacted with each other only on an informal basis. As the scene grew in numbers, cohesion was becoming much less possible. Further, co-ordinated touring schedules were needed for visiting guest artists. And, possibly, the awareness of regional identity developing alongside the publishing companies and development corporations (using terminology such as 'the land of three rivers') finally won the argument for an organizational umbrella.¹⁰⁰ This came to fruition in 1967 with the formation of the North East Federation of Folk

⁹⁸ In addition to Birtley's rendering of 'kayley'; Tynemouth Folk Club, Percy Arms, poster for *Grand Northumbrian Ceilidhe* [sic], Rex Hotel Ballroom, Whitley Bay, Fri 23 April 1971; the same spelling had appeared in P Kennedy, 'More about barn dances' *English Dance and Song*, XV/2, September 1950, p42. *The Times*, 'New Vitality in English Folk Music', October 14th 1957, p3, used the established form of the word but also felt the need to render it in the phonetic spelling 'kaylee'.

⁹⁹ T Wilson, 'The Folk Clubs of Tyneside', *English Dance and Song, Special Edition: The Folk Music of Northumbria*, Spring 1970, 28-29, p28.

¹⁰⁰ T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1970), p105, refers to "three rivers country" in relation to the North East Development Association; and it is coincidentally the title of a song by Teessides' Vin Garbutt, *The Land of Three Rivers*, available currently on *The Vin Garbutt Songbook Vol I* (HRCD 016, 2003).

Clubs, under Tony Wilson's chairmanship. Dave Sutherland, one-time secretary of the organization states that it 'was open to all operating folk clubs who were allowed to nominate committee members as representatives of the Federation'.¹⁰¹ Its remit ran from roughly the Tees to the Tweed and it organized several major events which brought together like-minded people from all over the region, including the Hexham Festival.¹⁰² However, its first major task was to set up an event which epitomized the movement's shift to a new generation - the Memorial Concert for Jack Elliott, who had died the previous year, which was held at Newcastle City Hall on 28th April 1967.¹⁰³ This celebration of the man who had helped to define both miners' song and the North East folk clubs drew together most of the regional folk scene as well as leading national figures such as The Spinners, The Waterson Family, Alex Campbell and Bob Davenport.

Despite such a clear success, the financial problems almost always inherent in folk promotion struck in 1968 and led to the Federation's dissolution and reformation as the North East Folk Federation, with a new constitution which nodded to greater democracy by allowing for both club and individual membership.¹⁰⁴ Whether in spite of, or because of this openness to democratic debate, the 'Fed' would shortly become a forum for the internecine squabbles which had been simmering on a low heat ever since the inception of Folksong and Ballad, and this will be discussed below. However, for now, it remained a focal point for large scale organization, such as the folk programming of Newcastle Festival.¹⁰⁵

Such civic events were part of a further shift towards heritage and tourism beyond Dan Smith's heritage projects of the early 1960s, a development which occurred relatively early in this region. The tourist industry was quick to latch on to appropriate folkloric elements and in 1970 advertisements for the Northumberland and Durham Travel Association appeared in *English Dance and Song*, portraying

¹⁰¹ D Sutherland, correspondence with author, 20th March 2004.

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ 'Folk Song Tribute to Former Miner', *Newcastle Journal*, 21st April 1967; 'Concert Tribute to Folk Singer', *Newcastle Journal*, 29th April 1967; the role in this event of the North East Federation of Folk Clubs has been confirmed by Dave Sutherland, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ D Sutherland, *ibid.* Regarding the perennial financial difficulties in folk promotion, see M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), pp43-66.

¹⁰⁵ D Sutherland, *ibid.*; Also Newcastle Festival folk programme, 1977, Newcastle City Library Local Studies.

Northumbria as ‘land of the haunting mellow pipes, one of the purest sources of folk ballad and dance Least spoilt of England’s scenic regions.’¹⁰⁶ The same Travel Association had already proved a valuable sponsor for events such as Tynemouth Folk Festival.¹⁰⁷ At a time when Frank Atkinson’s dream of a museum of local life at Beamish was being realized, this would imply an unusual prescience in the North East regarding the touristic potential of the region’s special cocktail of industrial heritage and border folklore. Russell has shown this kind of thinking came to the fore only in the 1980s in towns such as Bradford.¹⁰⁸

Another new development related to heritage was the resurgence of artisan instrument makers. According to the David Banks’ 1971 newspaper column, there was at the time only one professional Northumbrian pipemaker, William Hedworth, who was unable to keep up with demand:-

Pipes that cost just £35 just five years ago are fetching £60 and £70 today. Piping is booming these days.¹⁰⁹

Certainly, the slump experienced by the Northumbrian Pipers’ Society was long over, and by the end of the decade Colin Ross had retired from his lecturer’s post and set up shop as a professional pipemaker.¹¹⁰ The potential market for these objects of desire continued to grow and with it the number of craftspeople and courses dedicated to their manufacture. Chapter Six is dedicated to understanding the search for heritage, while Chapter Eight will analyse what inspired the drive to find authenticity. Suffice it to say here that this was perhaps accelerated within the local folk scene because the 1970s clubs were losing any illusion of centrality.

¹⁰⁶ Northumberland and Durham Travel Association, Advertisement, *English Dance and Song, Special Edition: “The Folk Music of Northumbria*, Spring 1970, p2.

¹⁰⁷ Poster for Tynemouth Folk Festival, Saturday 13th September 1969, North Shields Library Local Studies Section, Arts Ephemera, Folk Festivals.

¹⁰⁸ Russell, ‘Selling Bradford: Tourism and Northern Image in the Late Twentieth Century’, *Contemporary British History*, Vol 17, No2, (Summer 2003), 49-68.

¹⁰⁹ D Banks, ‘Folk Music’, *Newcastle Journal*, April 16th 1971.

¹¹⁰ ‘Who Pays the Piper?’, *Newcastle Journal*, 21st November 1979, p8; J Say, *The Northumbrian Pipers’ Society: A Short History* (NPS, Morpeth, 2001), pp15-16 charts a steady recovery of membership from a low point in 1963.

As the previous chapter highlighted, the moment when the folk revival reached a numerical zenith of popularity was effectively the saturation point for this particular artistic community. The following section parallels national and regional developments where the more commercially successful folk artists flirted with pop or comedy while those remaining in the narrower confines of the scene became increasingly insular. Individual clubs struggled to retain their share of folk music's limited audience, which inevitably led to defensive stances justified by philosophical differences. While this followed a similar arc to the national scene, however, there was one significant difference that was special to the North East more than perhaps any other English region. The chapter will end with a specific account of the prevalent perception that the use of vernacular music and dance was unusually widely disseminated among the region's general population (most of whom knew at least the chorus of 'Blaydon Races'): the folk revival therefore retained some strength by being part of a package of regional identifiers which were increasingly important as the social landscape changed.

Compared with other genres, other venues, the region's folk clubs were proving to be a less than lucrative outlet for musical talent. Messrs Price, Burdon and Chandler had already managed to create convincing Northern blues and rock. Alex Glasgow was an established figure well outside of the club circuit, in theatre and broadcasting. Billy Connolly and others had begun to reach a wider audience through comedy, and North Eastern artists like Maxie and Mitch, and Mike Elliott were following suit. And the moment Fairport Convention plugged folk songs and tunes into serious amplification provided a further challenge to the status quo. Local musicians were quick to follow suit, the most successful band on the local circuit being Hedgehog Pie. The huge national success of Lindisfarne, though a long way from a traditional folk repertoire, was founded at least partially on leading songwriter Alan Hull's apprenticeship around the folk scene - even so, it was evident that he had to leave this coterie in order to achieve real fame. The concern was that by now the clubs were preaching to the converted, and the quarrels which erupted around this time would appear to be based upon attributing blame for the clubs' failure to attract newer and younger audiences.

Reports of such internecine disputes were rife in the local folk scene of 1971, with the chairman of the Federation, Andy Harrison accused of undermining other local clubs by attempting to book major 'names' to play Newcastle's Guildhall once a month. This was seen by Liz and Stefan Sobell, organizers of the Barleycorn club as something which would leach their regular Saturday night audience away from them¹¹¹. This hints at two issues – the perceived authenticity of a regular club was viewed in opposition to the more commercial exploitation of major artists in performance; and a telling understanding emerged that the potential audience for any folk event was finite – that the existing folk public would be split rather than new people being attracted to the music. Further, Matt Ditchburn, the chairman of the Chillingham Folk Club heightened the sense of disunity by controversially stating that there was very little significant talent in the North East folk clubs and that which existed was insular and subject to far too much deference:

The ivory tower known as the Bridge and the High Priests and Priestesses who reside there have had more publicity than any other folk singers in this area.¹¹²

This may have contained seeds of truth, but the tone was divisive.

Yet the outward signs were still of expansion: in 1971, new clubs opened in Durham, Bishop Auckland, and the Cannon in North Shields; the traditional dance scene was buoyant, and teams such as Addison Rapper and Killingworth Sword diversified the interests of those folk clubs and events they attended; and the various traditional Northumbrian festivals were growing in size and ambition. Representatives of the older Northumbrian traditions, such as Jimmy White, made forays into the local clubs, proving there was life outside of the revival.¹¹³ Leading artists of local origin such as Bob Davenport and Louis Killen continued to reach audiences outside of the North East: indeed, Killen had successfully completed one American tour with the Clancy Brothers and was on the verge of becoming a permanent member of the

¹¹¹ D Banks, Friday Folk Music Column, *Newcastle Journal*, 16th April 1971; 23rd April 1971.

¹¹² M Ditchburn, quoted by D Banks, Friday Folk Music Column, *Newcastle Journal*, 23rd April 1971; 7th May 1971.

¹¹³ D Banks, Friday Folk Music Column, *Newcastle Journal*, 2nd April 1971.

band¹¹⁴. And the music columns of the local press illustrate that there was a brief period straddling the late sixties and early seventies when the worlds of folk and pop were interchangeable, with Fairport Convention, Dylan, Baez and local heroes Lindisfarne all considered part of the pop/rock mainstream. Quite why the controversies began to rage around this time is unclear, though the possibility that this was a continuation of the 1960s debate over the music being diluted by eclecticism (and thus reaching beyond the incestuous world of the folk cognoscenti) might provide a partial explanation.¹¹⁵ Matters were not helped by Tom Gilfellow's exhumation in a local alternative magazine of the debate over excellence. When asked by an interviewer how he would advise young performers to develop their material, he commented:

Well I would advise 80% of them to pack in.

... Seriously. The standard of musicianship is so poor. The scene around this area, with all its much vaunted greatness ... When I go to other areas of this country I just have to say 'for God's sake don't come up to the north-east' because it's not good. Four years ago there were a lot of keen musicians in the area. They've got married, got other jobs and moved out of the area.

.... I'd possibly go to Northumberland and find the box players and fiddlers and pipe players still knocking around. These are the people I want to listen to and learn from. I wouldn't go to the clubs at all.¹¹⁶

The subsequent backlash against these inflammatory comments occurred just as Pete Elliott, the mainstay of the Durham clubs was ill, and with no liaison to calm the storm, it effectively split the Folk Federation into two opposing camps, north and south of the Tyne.¹¹⁷ An umbrella organization without unity is sure to lose relevance and influence, and this was the case here, with the 'Fed' dropping out of sight by 1976.

¹¹⁴ D Banks, Friday Folk Music Column, *Newcastle Journal*, 23rd April 1971.

¹¹⁵ Regarding the cognoscenti, see M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), pp 110-123; also, N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene - Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1993), pp40-48.

¹¹⁶ Interview, 'The High Level Ranters', *Muther Grumble*, Issue 7, July 1972. Also D Sutherland, correspondence with author, 14th March 2004.

¹¹⁷ C Fyffe, interviewed by M Sutton, 5th August 2004, recording in my possession; also, J Handle, interview with author, 3rd February 2004, recording in my possession.

By 1973, when *Melody Maker* ran a full-page spread on 'The Geordie Tradition', celebrating mostly the major figures of the 1960s, the folk scene had apparently withdrawn into itself.¹¹⁸ As discussed in the previous chapter, throughout England the first generation of folk enthusiasts were settling down and having children: regular club-going would, by the 1980s, recede in favour of sporadic (and child-friendly) festival attendance. Again, though, the North Eastern tradition showed a facet distinctive to the local area. Instead of drawing new audiences into folk clubs, the language of local music had been adopted by the general public to serve a wider Geordie renaissance. The *Melody Maker* article explicitly linked Scott Dobson's 'Larn Yersel' Geordie' series with the use of regional folk song and instrumental music.¹¹⁹ It seemed to have retained its role as a pervasive background soundtrack for the imagined community:-

It would be misleading to suggest that every Tyneside inhabitant oozes dialect poetry and folksong, but there is interest on a general, everyday level in these forms of expression. "Culture" is not the closed shop it appears to be in much of the country.¹²⁰

The subsequent chapters will assess whether this perception was accurate, and, if so, why.

¹¹⁸ A Means, 'The Geordie Tradition', *Melody Maker*, February 24th 1973, p52. The article also included references to a small number of new faces, such as then Newcastle resident Aly Bain.

¹¹⁹ See S Dobson, *Larn Yersel' Geordie* (F Graham, Newcastle, 1969); *Hist'ry o' the Geordies* (F Graham, Newcastle, 1970); S Dobson with D Irwin, *The Geordie Joke Book* (F Graham, Newcastle, 1970).

¹²⁰ A Means, 'The Geordie Tradition', *Melody Maker*, February 24th 1973, p52.

Chapter Three

Traditions within Traditions, Revivals within Revivals

As the previous chapter highlighted, North Eastern vernacular music was viewed as something distinct from other traditions, but this is not to say that it represented one coherent whole. Like the society from which it sprang, North Eastern music was a weave of local, ethnic, familial and social identities, which, as Russell highlights, often claimed priority over any notions of region or sub-region.¹ This was further complicated by geographical mobility, always a feature of society, but one of particular importance in the period under study, as Parkin has it, there were ‘those for whom many places mark their histories and whose sense of belonging is to that extent multilocal’.²

Martin Nield articulated diversity as the source of a major problem – threatening a unified purpose - in the North Eastern folk scene, stating, ‘there is not actually one North East Folk scene, but several ... almost as many folk scenes as there are folk clubs.’³ This chapter aims to disentangle some of these strands and to demonstrate that, while some of them remained distinct, others coalesced into the interlinking chain of interest groups that could be termed a regional folk scene.

This is not to suggest that this coalition of interests therefore represented the North East as a unified community or even North Eastern music in general. It was always a matter of individual choice, first, to be involved with music at all, and secondly, to

¹ D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), pp273-275; also D Russell, ‘Music and Northern Identity, 1890-c1965’, 23-46, p24, and M Huggins, ‘Sport and the construction of social identity in north-east England, 1800-1914’, both in N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical interpretations of ‘The North’ and ‘Northernness’* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), 132-162, p133.

² D Parkin, ‘Foreword’ to N Lovell (Ed), *Locality and Belonging* (Routledge, London, 1998), p(xiii).

³ M Nield, ‘An Outsider’s View’, *Acoustic News and Folk Song & Dance News*, No 25, October 1979, p13.

follow the various folkloric traditions as opposed to, say, pop or classical music (in any case, many individuals followed two or more of these genres). For example, where one miner from High Spennings might join the local rapper side, another might participate in a choir or listen to pop music; yet another might find football, reading, or the allotment more fulfilling cultural outlets. Archer has highlighted the dangers of the ‘myth of cultural integration’: to assume that entire cultures cohere around dominant values is to reject the notion of any significant internal differences, which in turn places the determining factors of change entirely onto external factors like socio-political change.⁴ This chapter, then, suggests that the sheer wealth of diversity within just this section of regional music is evidence that the various strands in North Eastern culture were capable of generating change internally through tensions and assimilations, and were not merely the plaything of politicians and social forces. The North East, especially as a border region, has had a particularly rich history of absorbing imported cultural influences and adapting them to suit local tastes. In the case of vernacular music, the Scottish and Irish traditions have regularly blended with North Eastern music, while, in the period under study, American blues, the output of singer-songwriters, stand-up comedians, and even commercial pop forms were highly influential. It is indisputable that a variety of forms of expression co-existed here, however, this chapter further seeks to question some of the myths built up around the varied cultural identities and their contribution to regional music.

What emerges is the picture of a tradition always in the process of being made anew by incoming elements, and in parallel a revival where key elements trod separate paths. Therefore this chapter will first discuss some internal distinctions between the region’s traditions before analysing the most important influences from outside the North East. It will then consider some significant divisions within the regional revival itself. While the schisms between enthusiasts of ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’ folk are woven throughout this thesis and will therefore not form a part of this chapter, there were other distinctions (whether dance or song predominated; or regarding locale, occupation, ethnicity or gender) that at least partly determined participants’ experiences of the revival. Above all, the aim is to

⁴ M Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social History* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp4-6.

foreshadow the subsequent chapter's discussion of tradition bearers and mediators and to demonstrate that these cannot be understood on the basis of a simple binary distinction (mediator versus source) but instead as parts of a multi-faceted pattern of individual agency, group loyalties and regional, national and ideological identities.

First, then, to differences within the region's indigenous traditions: even without considering external influences, the region was not a homogeneous entity with a consistent traditional soundtrack. Some commentators such as Phil Ranson have viewed the North Eastern folk scene as divided into at least three geographical areas.⁵ North of the Tyne, the relatively continuous Northumberland tradition (to be discussed in the following chapter) gave the music a distinctive character independent of support from the 'new-fangled' folk clubs. South of the Tyne, the emphasis was on participation as opposed to technical brilliance and this difference was highlighted by the controversy between Tom Gilfellow and the Durham area of the North East Folk Federation discussed in Chapters Two and Eight. Tyneside itself was seen as the meeting and blending point of the Northern and Southern extremes and an area with a high concentration of folk clubs that were a logical extension from the back-room music halls that had proliferated in the nineteenth century. In this account, Teesside was evidently viewed as a separate entity and will be considered as such below. Even the three broad areas outlined by Ranson contained divergences aplenty. North Northumberland carried a blurring of cultural identities with lowland Scots, and the Otterburn and Cheviot legacy of border ballads (which prevailed here, though they occasionally extended as far South as Weardale, for example with *Rookhope Ride*). Within the same county, the rural uplands to the North and West contained isolated hill farms where regular social dances and kitchen sessions (as well as the agricultural shows that featured music) provided a form of social glue that enhanced residents' sense of community.⁶ Some of these farms were large enough

⁵ The breakdown cited above is given by P Ranson in 'North Eastern Grassroots', *Acoustic News and Folk Song & Dance News*, No 25, October 1979, p11. By this stage, Ranson stated that there were eight folk clubs in Northumberland, fourteen in Durham, twenty in Tyne and Wear, and eight in Cleveland. The conception of a varied regional map with particular traditions as strongholds in particular localities is not universally accepted: Bob Fox, for one, believes any differences between local traditions are not musical, but are mainly related to lyrical subject matter, B Fox, Questionnaire responses, returned to author 8th March 2006.

⁶ The cultural blurring with the Scottish borders will be discussed later in this chapter. Some examples of the sense of community engendered by social dancing and kitchen sessions include the dances and kitchen session recalled by George Hepple; also Ada Reed, both interviewed by J Handle and T Wilson, 26th March 1973 and 15th November 1971 respectively; Will Atkinson and

to be almost villages in their own right and provided a ready made “folk” to produce and listen to music with clear stylistic and instrumental preferences. While some of these preferences, such as the energetic ‘rant’ step (and tunes that capitalized on its strong downbeat), were ubiquitous from Newcastle to across the border into southern Scotland, others were more localised.⁷ Will Atkinson played from the 1930s onwards in noted dance bands such as the Northumbrian Minstrels and The Cheviot Ranters and, through travelling about the county to perform, was able to grasp varying shifts of emphasis in local traditions. He recalled the pattern of music around North and West Northumberland in the mid-twentieth century:

Melodeons were common, and there were fiddles and accordions. ‘But not tin whistles, they’ve never been a leading instrument about here. There weren’t any pipers either, they were all further south, though Billy Pigg was around There were lots of songs.’⁸

Northumberland also contained market towns that provided forums for musical activities such as instrument trading and tuition, and lowland industrial villages that produced pipers and sword dancers.⁹ Rapper dancing reached as far North as Hepple near Rothbury and as far South as North Skelton near Middlesbrough, but its strongholds were along the coast and in the villages that straddled the industrial

Will Taylor, interviewed by A Anderson, 19th October 1996, all recordings available at <http://www.asaplive.com/FARNE/RadioFARNE>. For an excellent account of a kitchen session, see P Tunney, *Where Songs Do Thunder* (Appletree Press, Belfast, 1991), p136, which is quoted in Chapter Eight of this thesis. See also F Charlton, ‘Prince of Pipers’ (draft article, c1964), TWA 924/182-195(b). Alwinton Border Shepherds’ Show is an example of the agricultural shows that featured music, and an event that was adopted by revivalists. Elsdon held a smaller annual musical event, which drew both shepherds and revivalists: see ‘The Hills Are Alive ...’, *Melody Maker*, February 24th 1979, p52.

⁷ The obvious example of tunes that reflect the rant’s heavy downbeat is *Shields’ Hornpipe* which became better known as *Morpeth Rant*.

⁸ S McGrail and S Harley, ‘The Moothie Man’, *Living Tradition*, Issue 45, Nov/Dec 2001, 25-26, p25. The Cheviot Ranters line-up given here included George Mitchell on piano, Bryce Anderson on piano accordion, George Darling on drums and Willy Miller on fiddle, and the Northumbrian Minstrels’ usual line-up was Atkinson, Bob Clark (fiddle), Peggy Clark (piano) and Jack Thompson (fiddle).

⁹ Regarding market towns as centres of instrumental exchange, tutelage and performance, see J Hutton, ‘Rowhope Remembered 3: A Sound of Their Own’, *Northumbriana*, No 41 (Autumn 1991) 25-28, pp25-26. Regarding the pipers of lowland industrial villages see particularly C Ormston and J Say, *The Clough Family of Newsham* (Northumbrian Pipers’ Society, Morpeth, 2000), which recounts the great family of Northumbrian pipers who were miners from Newsham, near Blyth. Regarding sword-dancers see discussion below.

Tyne, particularly Winlaton, Westerhope and High Spen.¹⁰ These villages had seen unusually early industrialization through the linkage of coal with steel production, and they typified the close-knit communities necessary for dances that required frequent rehearsal, as well as providing a vital raw material: without sprung steel, the flexible rapper sword would not exist.¹¹ As Ranson indicated, Newcastle provided a meeting point for all of these traditions, into which new ingredients could be thrown: it was a centre for professional performers, for broadside and chapbook publishing, and (along with the grand houses of the gentry) the focal point for the learned societies that researched the region's indigenous culture.¹² Two traditions, song and clog/step dancing, were prevalent throughout the region, especially as they could raise semi-professional incomes for performers in pubs, soirées and music halls (these venues reached much further across the region than might be anticipated when considering the halls centred around Newcastle).¹³

Though clog dance was an international phenomenon, the style performed around the North East developed a distinctive rhythmic flavour as a result of mid-nineteenth century Tyneside having produced composers such as James Hill - whose Scottish

¹⁰ Rapper teams had long been features of the coastal villages such as Earsdon and Backworth, see 'Miners and the Royal Visit', *Northern Weekly Leader*, July 14th 1906; also, for North Walbottle and Newbiggin, see D Kennedy, 'The Rapper Sword Dances at Newcastle', *EFDS News*, No 6, November 1923. For Westerhope, see North of England Musical Tournament Programme, 1929, p29. The North of England Musical Tournament Programme, 1922, p84, shows originating from as far north as Hepple, near Rothbury. Rapper teams of long pedigree from south of the Tyne include Winlaton 'White Star', see D Kennedy, 'The Rapper Sword Dances at Newcastle', *EFDS News*, No 6, November 1923; and High Spen 'Amber Stars', North of England Musical Tournament Programme, 1929, p52. Winlaton were acknowledged masters, and held the Cowen Trophy for Traditional Short Sword Dance at the North of England Musical Tournament in 1922, 1923, 1924 and 1928, North of England Musical Tournament Programme, 1929, p29. The same page shows that champion rapper sides extended as far south as North Skelton in Cleveland. See also C Metherell, 'High Spen at Eighty', *English Dance and Song*, 69/1, Spring 2007, 12-13.

¹¹ For the striking industrial 'precocity' of this area directly south of the Tyne, see D Levine and K Wrightson, *The Making of an Industrial Society: Whickham, 1560-1765* (Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹² Learned societies undertook a great deal of research into indigenous North Eastern traditions, from the compilation of J C Bruce & J Stokoe (Eds), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* (Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle, 1882) to the publication of D Harker, *Songs and verse of the North East pitmen, c.1780-1844* (The Surtees Society, Durham, 1999). Regarding chapbook and broadside publishing, John Bell was a noted collector of broadsides, while Tyneside was viewed as second only to London for chapbook publication. Some of the gentry who had been patrons and collectors of North Eastern music included the Dukes of Northumberland, the Trevelyan of Wallington, and G V B Charlton of Hesleyside.

¹³ Regarding the widespread reach of the music hall into outlying villages, an example was the performance of Joe Wilson at Annfield Plain recounted in 'Tommy Armstrong - Reminiscences of a Famous Tanfield Song Writer, By an Acquaintance', *Press cutting of unknown provenance and date* (possibly British Consett and Stanley Chronicle, and after 1900), provided to the author by Tom Gilfellon.

background is discussed below – who were major exponents of hornpipe tunes, as opposed to jigs or reels. Clog dancing was found in both Northumberland and Durham, but two localities in particular bred champion dancers (often due to the patterns of transmission through family or tutelage discussed in Chapter Four). Both of these areas, the North West Durham area around Stanley and Consett, and South East Northumberland around Ashington and Bedlington, paralleled the strongholds of rapper dance, being concentrated around coal mining centres.¹⁴ This is not to imply that there were homogeneous versions of rapper or clog dancing that held sway across these occupational identities - these were competitive dance forms with varied approaches that will be further discussed in Chapter Eight – but it does suggest a tendency towards particular forms of traditional expression if not their precise styles.¹⁵ Figure 1 demonstrates that it is possible to draw a broad arc around the Tyne and the Wear (or at least their industrial areas downriver) where perceived geographical distinctions were overridden by such occupational particularities.

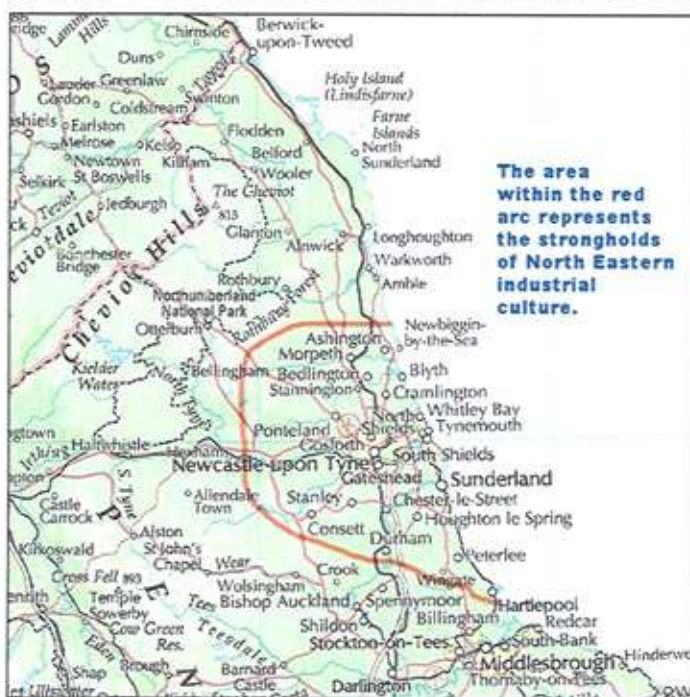


Figure 1: greatest concentration of NE industrial culture

¹⁴ Clog champions or teachers from North West Durham include Jackie Toaduff, the Ellwood Family, and Tiny Allison. Those from the Ashington/Bedlington area include Ivy Sands, Charlie and Dickie Hunter, and Dickie Farrell. There was also cross-fertilisation between the two key areas: Dickie Farrell taught Tiny Allison, who then went on to teach in Stanley with Jackie Toaduff as her best-known protégé. For the concentration of clog dancing in colliery areas, see E A Kirkby, 'Clog Dancing in Northumberland and Durham', *English Dance and Song*, 36/3, 1974, 88-89.

¹⁵ See A M Fisher, *Clog Dance, Revival, Performance and Authenticity: An Ethnographic Study*, unpublished MA dissertation, University of Surrey, 2000, which details throughout the disputes

Unsurprisingly, song was the most widespread tradition, though even in this there were local subtleties regarding dialect or subject matter: as Ed Pickford commented, ‘there is a distinction between the urban and the rural. Miners don’t sing songs about fox hunting’.¹⁶ This generalizes somewhat: fox hunting might not inspire songs in industrial areas, but, on at least one notable occasion, poaching did. *The Bonny Moor Hen* recounted the 1818 battle in Stanhope between lead miners and landowners over the arrest of some poachers, whose hunting had been outlawed by the Bishop of Durham in 1797.¹⁷ It appears fitting that the song originates from Weardale, itself a striking blend of the rural and the industrial, where a clash could easily be sparked between the customary rights of the past and new rationalized property laws.¹⁸ Similarly, the spread of popular music through choirs and brass bands would logically be concentrated in the industrial areas where funding by the masters might be secured and relatively stable populations with shared occupational and religious identities were easily drawn together into musical coalitions: this would appear to be borne out by those mass signifiers of industrial and musical communities, the Durham Miners’ Gala and the Bedlington Miners’ Picnic. Yet Billy Pigg composed a march for Northumbrian pipes, *Bill Charlton’s Fancy*, dedicated to the organizer of the Alnwick Gathering, the theme of which had developed from a brass band march.¹⁹ These anomalies serve to highlight that music, dance and song can never be mapped absolutely within geographical boundaries:

over stylistic authenticity prevalent in Co Durham clog dancing during the revival. This will be further discussed in Chapter Eight.

¹⁶ E Pickford, Questionnaire responses, returned to the author 1st October 2004. There was concurrence regarding the rural/industrial divide among several informants including A Crawford, questionnaire responses 2004; regarding dialect, see, N Shiel, Questionnaire responses returned to the author 2006.

¹⁷ This account is from F Graham, *Old Inns and Taverns of Northumberland and Durham* (F Graham, Newcastle, 1966), pp20-23. The lyric can be found at <http://www.geocities.com/joecartist/alsangtext.txt>.

¹⁸ It may indicate a slight perceived separation of Weardale from the North Eastern region and the coalmining (as opposed to lead) industry that *The Bonny Moor Hen* appears in neither *The Northumbrian Minstrelsy* nor *Come All Ye Bold Miners*. Weardale certainly derived some of its musical identity from the more urban regions to its East: versions of Joe Wilson’s *Geordie Ha’ad the Bairn* and Tommy Armstrong’s *Nanny’s a Maisor* appeared, very shortly after they gained popularity in Newcastle and North Durham, in a handwritten songbook by a Weardale gamekeeper: W Pearson, *The Weardale Songbook* (handwritten songbook from late 19th/early 20th century), Beamish Collection, pp109-112. For the shift away from customary rights, see E P Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New Press, New York, 1993), pp177-182.

¹⁹ A D Schofield and J Say, *Billy Pigg: The Border Minstrel* (Northumbrian Pipers’ Society, Morpeth, 1997), p29.

they are, after all, created and transmitted by those most mobile of sources – human agents.²⁰ As Connell and Gibson demonstrate, a static, functionalist definition of local musical peculiarities would overlook the dynamic nature of human culture.²¹ Therefore, only prevailing trends in each specific locality can be noted, and these have all been subject to change over time.

Among the informants questioned, there was very little denial that the North East indeed contains a diversity of traditions, but there was also considerable consensus that these overlap sufficiently that the region as a whole can boast a ‘strong and distinctive tradition of song, dance and music’.²² In the gaze of the revivalists, then, traditional music’s regional identity appears to take precedence over local peculiarities, but this may be a result of the heritage-based thinking surrounding a notional ‘Northumbria’ (discussed in Chapter Six) or even perhaps a modern conception of boundaries drawn from the broadcasting regions. What is clear is that there are considerable areas of overlap, meaning that the pattern of local differences is less one of linear ‘songlines’ running North to South or East to West, and rather one of an interlinking Venn diagram of influences.

This pattern is further complicated if one considers Teesside, an area with two of the region’s longest running clubs, Stockton folk club, the Wilson folk club, and Redcar’s ‘Cutty Wren’.²³ Most local informants concur that the music around the Tees developed a separate identity only during the revival. Prior to this, it had looked musically both North towards Durham/Newcastle and South towards North Yorkshire. The area had clearly been an extension of the North Eastern music hall

²⁰ See N Lovell, ‘Introduction’ to N Lovell (Ed), *Locality and Belonging* (Routledge, London, 1998), pp4-5, which cites Olwig and Hastrup’s contention that ‘Culture ... is not necessarily tied to particular places, but is rather created at the interstices between people in their interaction with one another in everyday discourses which may be localised, but also in the everyday experience of extraordinary events such as forced migration or exile’. Tunes can travel due to migration, then, but also by force of sheer popularity: mapping them to specific places is therefore always provisional.

²¹ J Connell and C Gibson, *Sound Tracks: popular music, identity and place* (Routledge, London, 2003), pp32-35.

²² This particular quotation comes from D Oliver, Questionnaire responses, returned to author 22nd April 2005. For a more sceptical view of internal diversity, see Bob Fox’s comments cited in Note 5 above.

²³ Stockton folk club was established in 1961, with Redcar’s Cutty Wren opening in 1965). Both clubs are still in existence.

circuit: artists such as Ned Corvan regularly performed in Hartlepool.²⁴ Meanwhile, Middlesbrough had for most of its existence been part of the North Riding. A sense of differentiation from the larger cultures that surrounded Teesside came about only more recently, echoing how it was seen increasingly as a discrete administrative area. Vin Garbutt views it as ‘a much younger place [than other parts of the North East] with only a developing identity’, and Stockton folk club’s Ron Angel stated that ‘the “Cleveland tradition” (modern industrial folk songs in the traditional style) ... was initiated single-handed in the late Fifties by Graeme Miles, the Teesside Bard’.²⁵ This shows the tendency of the folk scene to produce folk heroes, but is itself a surprising assertion, as others, including Angel himself, were equally early protagonists and Miles was anything but an uncomplicated product of indigenous tradition. Born in Kent, but brought to Teesside by his father’s employment with ICI, Miles nonetheless spent his national service in the West Kents regiment and his early working years in London art studios before returning to the region. Even the genesis of the Teesside revival, in which he was a prime mover had been spurred by his visits to Newcastle’s Folksong and Ballad club and his collaborations on Teesside with Johnny Handle.²⁶ Thus the vision of Teesside’s musical particularity was sparked by someone with a view from outside the region, and someone who was inspired by Newcastle’s own local patriotism: Miles’ paeon to the Tees demonstrates a strong continuity with similar songs celebrating the Tyne:

It’s the banks of the Tees I remember right well
When I think of the places I’ve seen in my time,
The glow of the furnace, the coke oven smell,
The misty grey rain in the morning.²⁷

²⁴ The first performance of Corvan’s *The Fishermen Hung the Monkey O* was at Hartlepool’s Dock Hotel Music Hall : see <http://portcities.hartlepool.gov.uk/server.php?show=ConNarrative.69&chapterId=128>.

²⁵ V Garbutt, responses to questionnaire, returned to author 14th June 2006; Ron Angel, Letter to the Editor, *Acoustic Music*, 26, May 1980, p12. Paul Lucas of Redcar’s Cutty Wren folk club is in broad agreement with this account although he adds the names of Vin Garbutt and Richard Grainger as other notable catalysts of Teesside song - P Lucas, response to questionnaire, returned to author 10th April 2006.

²⁶ M Howley, ‘Graeme Miles and a vision of a Teesside [sic] tradition’, *Living Tradition*, Issue 35, November/December 1999, 20-23, pp20 and 22.

²⁷ G Miles, *The Banks of the Tees* (1961), reproduced in Howley, *Ibid*, p21.

These sentiments are echoed by the Teesside Fettleers' *Chemical Workers' Song*, which shows the evident influence – both lyrically and in melodic arc - of industrial 'heroic-worker' ballads from writers like Handle and Ewan MacColl.²⁸ By contrast, Vin Garbutt's *Valley of Tees*, written some ten years later and the product of a by now more securely held identity (and of a 1970s environmental awareness), romanticizes the industrial landscape much less, instead yearning for the pastoral beauty that has been robbed from much of the river's estuary.²⁹

Garbutt provides an excellent example of how local identity could blend with other ethnicities and produce something that remained part of the region. Born in South Bank, Middlesbrough to an Irish mother and an English father, he followed a typically Teesside employment route into ICI's Wilton chemical works, and absorbed local cultural influences from folk clubs he attended.³⁰ At the same time, he was made aware of his maternal heritage through hearing Irish dance tunes, and he began to make regular trips to Ireland to seek out his musical roots.³¹ It is unclear whether this is suggestive of the power of Irish communities, or simply the contemporary fashion for young celtic bands described in Chapter One, but it serves to demonstrate the oft-cited blend of Irish and North Eastern workers and the synthesis of their cultures that will be discussed below. Garbutt may have viewed himself as both Irish and a Teessider, but his understanding of the next layer of identity, that he belonged to a wider North East, derived from the comments of external observers: 'as I travelled around Britain people from other regions made me aware that I was a Northumbrian'.³² The local and the ethnic had been primary in Garbutt's perception until the gaze from outside brought the regional to his own attention, yet his North Eastern-ness was clearly visible to observers. It was no rarity for a person of Irish background to seek out and develop their cultural roots: it was rather more unusual, however, for these elements of musical style to become refracted quite so obviously

²⁸ R Angel, *Chemical Workers' Song* (1962) recorded by Angel with The Teesside Fettleers, *Ring of Iron* (Traditional Sound Recordings LP, TSR 016, 1974). The Teesside Fettleers were formed in 1962 by Ron Angel, Graeme Miles, Ellis Holiday, Ken Crawford and John White.

²⁹ V Garbutt, *The Valley of Tees* (Trailer LP, LER 2078, 1972).

³⁰ Garbutt states that the first song he ever wrote was about a 1967 strike at the Wilton works. V Garbutt, responses to questionnaire, returned to author 14th June 2006.

³¹ Some details here are gleaned from Garbutt's official website: <http://www.vingarbutt.com/index.php?page=biography>; others from V Garbutt, questionnaire responses, returned to author 14th June 2006.

³² V Garbutt, questionnaire responses, returned to author 14th June 2006.

through a regional English identity – a strong Teesside accent and the comedic “patter” that typify North East England. The section below argues that this melding of ethnic and regional identities is indeed a North Eastern peculiarity, but will also question whether, by virtue of its specialness, this characteristic has perhaps been overstated.³³

Garbutt’s awareness of his ethnicity has resonances with both Hobsbawm’s argument, that ‘where the supremacy of the state-nationality and the state-language were not an issue’, the state could afford to relish – even encourage - cultural diversity within its borders, and Linda Colley’s analysis that it was possible to remain conceptually within a wider national identity but still ‘think in terms of dual nationalities’, to have ‘two *native* languages’.³⁴ In the case of many within the North East, this duality jockeyed for position against the competing levels of regional/local identity discussed earlier. But cultural practices could be enriched and diversified by those who retained loyalties to another nation. Connell and Gibson have highlighted how (alongside similarly portable symbols such as kinship, sport and food) music ‘provides a mechanism by which the “cultural baggage” of “home” can be transported through time and space, and transplanted into a new environment’.³⁵ This would appear to be particularly the case among diaspora communities like the Irish.

The cultural impact of the Irish community on the North East is well-documented.³⁶ An example of what Smith terms a ‘vertical *ethnie*’ (with shared cultural values, myths and language that cut across class and social strata, albeit in this case divided by religion), ‘Irishness’ is an identity that travels well.³⁷ Those Irish people who settled in the North East, particularly with the mid-nineteenth century influx into

³³ Regarding this blending of identities, Dave Douglass recalls carrying a ‘mild admixture of Tyneside twang and bits of me Mammy’s Irishisms’; D Douglass, *Geordies, Wa Mental* (TUPS, Newcastle, 2000), pp18-19.

³⁴ E Hobsbawm, *Nations & Nationalism Since 1870* (Canto, Cambridge, 1990), p35; L Colley, *Britons, Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (2nd Edition, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2005), p373.

³⁵ J Connell and C Gibson, *Sound Tracks: popular music, identity and place* (Routledge, London, 2003), p161.

³⁶ See R Cooter, *When Paddy Met Geordie: The Irish in County Durham and Newcastle 1840-1880* (University of Sunderland Press, 2005); J A Burnett and D M MacRaid, ‘The Irish and the Scots in the Modern North East’, in R Colls (Ed), *A New History of Northumbria* (forthcoming).

³⁷ A D Smith, *National Identity*, (Penguin, London, 1991), p52. Smith counterposes socially inclusive vertical *ethnies* against lateral *ethnies*, in which the shared values are largely the property of a particular, most often a dominant social group within the ethnicity.

mostly the urban areas, thus carried with them a strong understanding and praxis of their culture.³⁸ While Irish immigration was far from unique to the region, the potential within the North East for the two cultures to collide or blend was unusual. First, as Cooter has emphasized,

unlike their compatriots in other parts of Britain, the Irish in Durham and Newcastle were rarely the victims of religio-ethnic hostility and economic scapegoating ... Paddy's meeting with Geordie was all in all an uncommonly smooth and fruitful affair.³⁹

The cultural level proved even more fertile ground. North Eastern-ness might not be an ethnicity, but, in many ways, the expression of local cohesion had much in common with the vertical *ethnies* discussed above: there was cross-class identification, with a long history of the learned gentry dabbling in the culture of those below them.⁴⁰ As Ardagh puts it, Newcastle's 'dominant ethos, the "establishment" if you like, is – rarity! – working class'.⁴¹ The two cultures therefore could provide at least peaceful co-existence and often fascinating hybrids.

Hence, Ned Corvan, though of Irish parentage, produced North Eastern music hall songs, and Gateshead's Geordie Ridley was noted as the 'most successful delineator of the day of local, Irish, Comic and Sentimental Songs'.⁴² The cross-fertilization

³⁸ For the concentration of migrants in urban areas, see J A Burnett and D M MacRaild, 'The Irish and the Scots in the Modern North East', in R Colls (Ed), *A New History of Northumbria* (Phillimore, Chichester, forthcoming). For general population density, see R Lawton, 'Irish Immigration to England and Wales in the mid-nineteenth century' map quoted in R Cooter, *When Paddy Met Geordie: The Irish in County Durham and Newcastle 1840-1880*, (University of Sunderland Press, 2005), p11, shows the 1841-1861 Irish population to be more concentrated in the North East (along with parts of the North West, South Wales and London) than elsewhere in England – the actual figures averaged around 5% of total population.

³⁹ R Cooter, *When Paddy Met Geordie: The Irish in County Durham and Newcastle 1840-1880*, (University of Sunderland Press, 2005), p174. It must be noted that this harmonious co-existence was actually relative – even though other parts of the country experienced greater tensions, there were nonetheless outbreaks of violence in, for example, Sandgate and Consett.

⁴⁰ From Ritson and the Duchess of Northumberland through Bell to the gentlemen of the Society of Antiquaries, the North East shows an unusually early pattern of the wealthy promoting and enjoying working-class culture; also H Beynon and T Austrin, *Masters and Servants: Class and Patronage in the Making of a Labour Organisation* (Rivers Oram, London, 1994), p29 describes John Buddle's regular performance of dialect songs at annual bonding dinners.

⁴¹ J Ardagh, *A Tale of Five Cities, Life in Provincial Europe Today* (1979) quoted in W Lancaster, 'Sociability and the City' in R Colls and W Lancaster (Eds), *Newcastle upon Tyne – A Modern History* (Phillimore, Chichester, 2001), 319-340, p340.

⁴² Regarding Ned Corvan, see 'Irish by Birth but Geordie by Nature', *Evening Chronicle*, 9th August 1963, for Geordie Ridley, see W Fane, *A Life of Ridley* (Evening Chronicle Publications,

stretched beyond the music halls. Joe Crane recalls hearing an Irish tune, *Navy on the Line*, being played on Northumbrian pipes, and comments that Johnson Ellwood and his pupils used to clog dance to this tune.⁴³ This demonstrates considerable cultural assimilation, although it is significant that Ellwood himself was of Irish stock:-

Me father become Pitman's Champion at clog dancin' ... Ah took after me father wi' me clog dancin' and me father took after his mother, Bridgette Boyle, Champion Clog Dancer of Ireland.⁴⁴

This was an unsurprising lineage, as Ednie Wilson has suggested that North Eastern clog style, though also assumed to be a partial offshoot of the Lancashire hornpipe, was heavily influenced by Irish styles: as Irish dancers tended to make more money, the clog dancers also started to perform with their arms by their sides.⁴⁵

The nineteenth century legacy of Irish-North Eastern cultural blending continued into the folk revival. It is no accident that Bob Davenport was inspired to participate in and encourage vernacular music through visiting Camden's Irish pubs: he had already had exposure to the music from hearing *Ceilidh Hour* on Radio Athlone, as described in Chapter Five and was able to relate Irish music to his native songs.⁴⁶ Similarly, Louis Killen would perform for a time as an honorary Clancy Brother, deputizing for Tommy Makem.⁴⁷ Prior to this, Irish piper Willie Clarke had contact with members of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society from at least the 1920s while the MacPeakes followed shortly after, befriending Foster Charlton.⁴⁸ Billy Pigg (himself

Newcastle 1985), p30; D Harker, *Geordie Ridley: "Gateshead Poet and Vocalist"* (Newcastle, 1973), p9.

⁴³ J Crane, 'Tyneside Irish', *Northumbriana*, No 49, Summer 1996, 28-29, p29.

⁴⁴ J Ellwood, 'Winning the Silver Watch' in G Purdon, *Twizell Pit Village* (Pit Lamp Press, Stanley, undated, c1980?), p31. The names of two other champion clog dancers would appear to imply Irish parentage – Joe Daley of Blaydon and Warren Doyle of Low Fell, see E A Kirkby, 'Clog Dancing in Northumberland and Durham', *English Dance and Song*, 36/3, 1974, 88-89, p89.

⁴⁵ E Wilson, Lecture on Northumbrian Dance, Sage Gateshead, 1st February 2005. Regarding the Lancashire hornpipe, see R Robins, 'Clog Dancing', *English Dance and Song*, 22/1, 1957, 30.

⁴⁶ B Davenport, B, interviewed by author, 16th March 2005, recording in my possession. Davenport's mother had bought a powerful radio receiver with compensation money from a gas explosion which had flattened their home and killed her husband.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ A Charlton, W Clarke, and J Robertson, *The Pipes of Three Nations* (Columbia 4879-4881, 3 x 10" 78 rpm disks), 1928. Regarding the MacPeakes and Foster Charlton, see A D Schofield and J Say, *Billy Pigg: The Border Minstrel* (Northumbrian Pipers Society, Morpeth, 1997), p6.

an alchemist who took Irish styles from the radio, records and the Tyneside Irish and transformed them into his own brand of Northumbriana) persuaded the Alnwick Gathering committee to invite Leo Rowsome to perform there.⁴⁹ South Tyne Folk & Blues Club, eclectic as their name implied, booked artists such as Finbar and Eddie Furey.⁵⁰ Folksong and Ballad club had regularly featured performances of Irish songs (with overt political, nationalistic and religious allegiances) from the likes of John Brennan, but were keen to bring great tradition bearers into their circle, booking performers from the Irish tradition (already noted on the London scene) such as Dominic Behan and Paddy Tunney. Tunney described his visit to Newcastle with the zeal of a missionary to a lost outpost of Irishness:-

It was Johnie Handel [sic] from Castle Garth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who first brought me to Geordie land. I had sung in the Royal Festival Hall, London, in 1958 and again in 1965, but did not penetrate Newcastle until 1967. On that occasion the weight of song I was forced to unload upon them was nothing short of staggering.⁵¹

There are indications that Tunney's sense of obligation may have been due to the extent of assimilation: the overdetermination of ethnic Irishness by the regional Geordie identity. As discussed above, Ned Corvan had been considered 'Irish by birth, but Geordie by nature', and Griffiths has established that the Geordie dialect features few if any words of Irish derivation.⁵² This is not to contend that Irish identities were entirely submerged: there were areas where the Irish population – and sense of identity - was concentrated, such as Sandgate in the early nineteenth century

⁴⁹ Ibid. Also, Paddy Tunney recalled Pigg's enthusiasm for Irish piping: 'At the mention of Ireland, Billy exclaimed, "Ah yes! Willie Clancy, Frank McPeake, Leo Rowsome and Seamus Ennis. Great pipers!"' – Tunney was equally impressed by Pigg. And 'Billy Pigg played set-dances, polkas and Irish tunes, such as *The Gentle Maiden* and *The Lark in the Clear Air*'. P Tunney, *Where Songs Do Thunder* (Appletree Press, Belfast, 1991), pp136-137.

⁵⁰ 'Mixing It', *The Journal*, Friday March 12th 1971, p4. The 1971 appearance was their third at the club.

⁵¹ P Tunney, *Where Songs Do Thunder* (Appletree Press, Belfast, 1991), p133. Regarding the political/nationalistic/religious affiliations of the songs, J Handle recalls a great number of rebel songs being performed at The Bridge before the Troubles of the 1970s rendered them inappropriate: J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

⁵² Ned Corvan, see 'Irish by Birth but Geordie by Nature', *Evening Chronicle*, 9th August 1963. B Griffiths, *A Dictionary of North East Dialect* (Northumbria University Press, Newcastle, 2004), pp(xvi)-(xvii).

and Consett or South Tyneside in the twentieth. Jarrow boasted the St Aloysius Drum and Fife Band, and John Doonan (a major figure in the local Irish musical scene who also played with The High Level Ranters) recalled Irish music sessions that were held during the 1930s in houses around South Tyneside.⁵³ Further, the Tyneside Irish 'pals' regiment in the Great War provides an example of Irish identity being used within the region as a rallying force. Still, the conscious maintenance of Irish 'otherness' through specialist cultural associations appears to have been a development that appeared most strongly after the Second World War:-

There'd been a reading room in the Side and an Irish Institute in Clayton Street, both defunct by 1930s. Then in 1946, the Tara Club started in the Royal Arcade (centre of all things cultural!), which lasted until the Arcade closed.⁵⁴

The Tara Club's location in the Royal Arcade placed it within the same artistic milieu as many of the other formative features of the local revival: just as the Arcade's jazz club had introduced young Tynesiders to exotic, authenticity-laden blues, so did the Tara Club bring native Irish traditions to the diaspora community. Due to the cultural assimilations discussed above, some of these traditions had to be reintroduced to the region: it has been claimed that in the 1940s there were no Irish dancing schools in the North East, so the Tara Club paid a qualified instructor to travel by rail from Glasgow each Saturday to teach Irish dance in the afternoon, and to help call for a regular ceilidh in the evenings.⁵⁵ When the Royal Arcade was demolished, the Irish Club moved to Westmorland Road until 1984 when the present Tyneside Irish Centre opened on the site of the former Magpies (Newcastle United) Club. Clearly, these cultural organizations are indicative of a self-conscious ethnicity and traditional music helped forge links with the wider Irish diaspora via educational organizations like Comhaltas Ceoltiori Eirann and *fleadh* (festivals) and

⁵³ J Crane, 'Tyneside Tales', *FRoots*, 228, June 2002, 48-51, p48. Doonan was among the earliest guests of the Folksong and Ballad Club, A Joseph, 'Dovetailing into the tradition on Tyneside', *Sing*, 6/5, January 1962, 48-49, p49.

⁵⁴ T Monaghan, 'History Project 1992', *Newcastle Irish Festival Brochure* (Newcastle, 1992), 12-14, p14.

feis (dance contests), but it was also a key factor in the construction of the Tyneside-Irish identity.⁵⁶

While The John Doonan Ceili Band, in existence from 1948, pre-dated both the second folk revival and the 1960s-'70s vogue for Celtic music noted in Chapter One, The Doonan Family Band became a mainstay of the 1970s folk club circuit and, with the inclusion of specialists in North Eastern music like Jed Grimes, Phil Murray and Stu Luckley, an example of the synthesis of Irish and Geordie cultural identities.⁵⁷ As with Ned Corvan, and Geordie Ridley and the influential presence of John Brennan in Folksong and Ballad, there would therefore appear to be a distinct Irishness within the North Eastern tradition. Certainly, A L Lloyd cited the influx of Irish labourers, with their '*come all ye*' tunes as the accident of history that 'helped restore some of the folkish character' of the North Eastern song tradition and 'saved' it from being entirely urbanized.⁵⁸ This is evidently an ideologically driven argument: Lloyd was keen to promote industrial song as an aspect of folk- as opposed to commercial/popular - music and any roots in a venerable ethnic tradition were therefore to be emphasized. There are indications that in seeking this folk-popular, Irish-North Eastern hybrid Lloyd overstated these connections, and that during recording or notation, he advised or accepted the replacement of unknown or musically inappropriate melodies with those more in keeping with the *come all ye* tradition.⁵⁹ Peter Bowron further emphasizes the dangers of exaggerating the influence of the Irish musical canon:-

⁵⁵ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession. (On this topic, Johnny Handle was recalling conversations with John Doonan.) See also D Douglass, *Geordies, Wa Mental* (TUPS, Newcastle, 2000), pp20-30.

⁵⁶ Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is an organization very much of the revival. Set up to promote Irish traditional music, Comhaltas originated in Ireland in 1951, with its first festival of music - *Fleadh Cheoil* – having been held in the September of that year. Regarding the formation of its Tyneside branch, see D Banks, 'A Touch of the Irish', *The Journal*, June 25th 1971, p4.

⁵⁷ Regarding the John Doonan Ceili Band, see J Crane, 'Tyneside Tales', *FRoots*, 228, June 2002, 48-51, pp48-49. Regarding the Doonan Family Band, Jed Grimes and Phil Murray were founder members of Hedgehog Pie. Murray was also a member of the Lindisfarne offshoot, Jack the Lad. Stu Luckley became noted as one half of a duo (alongside Bob Fox) with a special affinity for Geordie songs.

⁵⁸ A L Lloyd, produced by D Cleverden, *Songs of the Durham Miners, Part I – The Older Stratum* (Radio broadcast, BBC Third Programme, pre-recorded 18th September 1963).

⁵⁹ See J Murphy, *Heritage and Harmony, Case Studies in Folk/Popular Music and the construction of historical identities within the North East of England, 1877-1988* (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Sunderland, 2003), pp62-63, and pp81-82.

There are only a handful of recognisable Irish tunes mentioned in Allan's Tyneside Songs, considerably outnumbered by borrowings from Scotland and even from America, whence the Christy Minstrels propagated the songs of Stephen Foster and others.⁶⁰

Certainly, there is evidence that, long before the blues reached Tyneside (and this will be further discussed below), vaudeville-influenced minstrel shows had penetrated performance as well as repertoire. Fundraising concerts for the 1892 Durham miners' strike featured 'the well-known Christy Minstrel amateur troupe, the White-Eyed Kaffirs' and the Sleetburn Minstrel Troupe.⁶¹ Whether such trans-Atlantic borrowings outnumbered those from across the Irish Sea is debatable, but Bowron's comment highlights the most obvious ethnic influence on North Eastern music: that of Scotland. I will briefly examine this historical synthesis before assessing the role of Scottish musical idioms and performers in the regional folk revival.

The cultural interchange between Scottish and Northumbrian traditions across the permeable and debatable border is long-acknowledged. As Feintuch states,

Northumberland ... is neither English, in the BBC sense, nor Scottish. Historically, though it is one of the places against which those identities were constructed and fought out.⁶²

Thus, the nationalities are blurred: from Scottish-derived melodies such as *The Keel Row* and *Wild Hills o' Wannie*, via Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* [my emphasis], and the farming traditions noted earlier in this chapter, through to the regular invasion of Whitley Bay during 'Scots week', the culture of the North East frequently attached itself more obviously to lowland Scotland than to much of the rest of England.⁶³ Clog dancers performing hornpipe steps partially derived from

⁶⁰ P Bowron, 'Sing a Song of Tyneside', *North Magazine*, No 1, 1971, 24-27, p27.

⁶¹ 'Byers Green, Entertainments', *Durham Chronicle*, 3rd June 1892, p6; 'New Brancepeth, Entertainments', *Durham Chronicle*, 17th June 1892, p6.

⁶² B Feintuch, sleeve notes to Various Artists, *Northumberland Rant: Traditional Music from the Edge of England* (Smithsonian Folkways CD, SFW CD 40473, 1999), p2.

⁶³ W Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (Harrap, London, 1931). Regarding *Wild Hills o' Wannie*, the tune appears to have originated in Scotland under the title *Hills of Glenorchy* before being set to a Northumbrian song about fishing: William Thomas Green, 'Hills of Glenorchy', *Manuscript tune book of William Thomas Green*, 1831, Northumberland Records Office; J

Ireland were equally likely to dance to tunes made by the Scottish-born Gateshead hornpipe master James Hill. The distinctive identity of the early Tyneside concert hall had been shaped by an Irishman, Ned Corvan, but also two men of Scots parentage, Billy Purvis and Robert Emery.⁶⁴ This cross-fertilization continued throughout the nineteenth century: Joe Wilson ‘had for years been a member of the Highland Society, a benefit society held at the house of Mr Baird ... Joe, in highland fashion, was the bard of the Society’.⁶⁵ Burns suppers were longstanding traditions, of double significance: not only recognizing the exchange and assimilation between Scotland and North East England, but also the poet’s populist egalitarian politics.⁶⁶

Similarly, the early Northumbrian Pipers’ Society were keen to reinvigorate the smallpipes, most probably derived from the French musette, but were also very energetic in their promotion of the Border ‘Half-Long’ pipes, an instrument of questionable pedigree but most closely related to the Scottish lowland pipes. In the 1920s the Society engaged Pipe-Major Robertson, an Edinburgh-based teacher and pipe-maker to provide sets and training to Scouts and military groups.⁶⁷ As with the romanticized border ballads, or the fascination with Ossian, the interest in pipe bands, highland or half long, seemed to reveal a yearning for the Spartan warrior values of old Scotland – an ‘otherness’ which was acceptable, especially when south of the border and tamed by the parade ground.⁶⁸ This might apply to the whole of Britain which, with an empire to sustain, was interested in anything that promoted military cohesion, but the North East was particularly fertile ground due to sheer

Armstrong, ‘Wild Hills o’Wannys’ in *Wanny Blossoms: a book of song, with a brief treatise on fishing with the fly, worm, minnow, and roe; sketches of border life, and fox and otter hunting*, (Hexham, 1879), 2-4. Scots week refers to the week during summer when factories in Scotland closed and their workers would travel en masse to Whitley Bay.

⁶⁴ ‘This Geordie Songster Was Born In Edinburgh’, *Evening Chronicle*, 19th July 1963.

⁶⁴ W Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (Harrap, London, 1931).

⁶⁵ J Wilson, *Tyneside Songs and Drolleries* (T & G Allan, Newcastle, 1890s), p(xxii).

⁶⁶ The report of a mass meeting during the 1892 Durham miners’ strike records Mr J Robson of Broompark quoting a political couplet from Burns to cheers of from the audience: ‘Mass Meeting at Waterhouses’, *Durham Chronicle*, 3rd June 1892, p6. The Northumberland shepherd fiddler Willie Taylor is an example of those who revered Burns sufficiently to hang his portrait in his living room: see S Richardson (Producer), *Kathryn Tickell’s Northumbria* (Channel 5, 14th March 2006) . And a statue to the poet was erected by public subscription in Heaton Park.

⁶⁷ TWA, 924/130.

⁶⁸ See W Donaldson, *The Highland Pipe and Scottish Society 1750-1950: Transmission, Change and the Concept of Tradition* (Tuckwell Press, East Lothian, 2000), p58:- ‘history contained numerous examples of societies such as ancient Rome which had been founded in spartan warrior virtue, only to fall victim eventually to luxury and moral decay a number of commentators were coming to see the Highlands as a vital reservoir of the military spirit whose maintenance was essential to the well-being of the United Kingdom as a whole.’

proximity.⁶⁹ While the half long pipes remain a minority interest, the growth of highland pipe bands out of Burns Clubs, the prominent presence of pipes at Durham Miners' Gala, and the development of a pipe band to stir the Tyneside Scottish ('the Fighting Fifth') regiment all indicate considerable influence from across the border.⁷⁰ As with the Irish cultural associations, there were evidently some instances where Scottishness was valued as an entirely separate identity, and parallels can be drawn with local accordion clubs, which were heavily Scots-influenced and not particularly drawn to Northumbrian folk music.⁷¹ As Burnett and MacRaild have emphasized, however, the trend, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, was towards drawing inspiration from Scottish traditions in the preservation or revival of specifically North Eastern culture. Thus, they argue, 'A Geordie Neet Oot' imitated a Burns night, Northumbrian puddings were promoted as looking like haggis, and clear parallels with highland tartans were claimed for the Northumbrian black and white checked plaid.⁷² Such efforts would have repercussions for the understanding of regional heritage, as it echoed the more developed Scottish populist heritage industry, and this will be further discussed in Chapter Six.

Throughout the twentieth century, traditions continued to cross and re-cross the border, and several of those Northumbrian traditional artists most closely aligned to the revivalists drew inspiration from Scottish sources:-

Will Atkinson always kept a photo of his close personal friend, Jimmy Shand on the sideboard. As a young man access to the gramophone was scarce and recordings of traditional music even rarer. The exception was Scottish music, and so he developed a taste for Strathspeys.⁷³

⁶⁹ J Crinson, *Standard English, the National Curriculum, and linguistic disadvantage: a sociolinguistic account of the careful speech of Tyneside adolescents*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1997, p73, reinforces the power of proximity on language, quoting a sixteenth century London traveller telling a Redesdale beggar, 'Me thinke thou art a Scot by thy tongue', while p74 cites direct parallels in the plural you ('youse') and the similarity of the Tyneside intensifier 'geet' to the Scots' 'gey'.

⁷⁰ See J A Burnett and D M MacRaild, 'The Irish and the Scots in the Modern North East', in R Colls (Ed), *A New History of Northumbria* (forthcoming).

⁷¹ 'The Four-Way Battleground', *Acoustic News and Folk Song & Dance News*, No 25, October 1979, p11.

⁷² J A Burnett and D M MacRaild, 'The Irish and the Scots in the Modern North East', in R Colls (Ed), *A New History of Northumbria* (forthcoming).

The Cheviot Ranters, Billy Pigg and Jack Armstrong were all known to have been influenced by Shand's inter-war dance bands, and the reach of Scottish recordings into Northumberland is presumed to have been one catalyst (alongside Peter Kennedy) for the local barn dance craze in the 1950s.⁷⁴ It is also of note that Jack Armstrong attended Jimmy Shand's wedding, and, like Shand, Armstrong recorded for the Beltona label, noted specialists in Scottish music.⁷⁵ Paddy Tunney noted similar cultural assimilations at work in Billy Pigg:-

It is in the Scottish tunes and laments and in the slow music of the border region that the unique genius of Pigg is truly manifested. There is a wild, lonesome other-worldliness about his playing of these pieces that transports the listener to a world beyond the corridors of time.⁷⁶

Once again, the wild, border 'otherness' is emphasized and appears to have been a key component in the construction of regional folkloric authenticity to be discussed in Chapter Eight. A more prosaic explanation for the Scottish inflexion is offered by Hannah Hutton, who, though she speaks with a Northumberland accent, learned to sing songs with a distinctly Scottish voice: radio transmissions and recordings were undoubtedly fundamental to the development of style but for someone like herself, raised near the border, it was also simply easier to walk to a neighbour's house in Scotland than the fourteen miles to Rothbury.⁷⁷

The revivalists who visited such traditional musicians were sufficiently impressed by their borderer status to proclaim that in Northumbrian music, 'a half-way house of influences exists, both Scottish and English'.⁷⁸ There is, however, the possibility of some teleology in these statements, where expectations and conditioning would

⁷³ S McGrail and S Harley, 'The Moothie Man', *Living Tradition*, Issue 45, Nov/Dec 2001, 25-26, p25.

⁷⁴ I am indebted to Alistair Anderson for this insight, given during my interview with him on 5th March 2004, recording in my possession.

⁷⁵ See B Dean-Myatt, 'Beltona Records and their role in recording Scottish Music', *Musical Traditions*, web-journal Article 150: <http://mustrad.org.uk/articles/beltona.htm>).

⁷⁶ P Tunney, *Where Songs Do Thunder* (Appletree Press, Belfast, 1991), pp137-138.

⁷⁷ H Hutton, discussion at Sage Gateshead led by J Oliver, 22nd February 2005, recording in my possession.

⁷⁸ J Handle, 'What's So Special About Northumberland?', *English Dance and Song*, 32/1, Spring 1970, p7.

encourage them to seek out cross-border links. Contrary to functionalist ideas that assume that music and culture directly represent a fixed identity, there was, then, the element of 'opting in' to a particular musical ethnicity. Media and heritage outlets reproduced versions of Scottish traditions which, however trite, reached beyond their country of origin and were far more readily available and understood in 1950s Britain than similar English traditions. Beyond the imagery of tartan and *The White Heather Club*, networks of participation were also already in place. Pipe bands have already been discussed above, and their presence continued throughout the 1970s.⁷⁹

Having established that a variety of traditions fed into the North East English musical identity, the following pages will examine how these in turn led to an equally rich diversity of versions of folk revival. I will first consider some cross-border influences within the revival, before assessing the relative dearth of other ethnicities within the North Eastern folk scene of the period. The final sections of this chapter will attempt to unravel three aspects of the regional revival that separated participants from each other: the North Eastern love of the blues; the development of folk rock; and the ways in which gender dictated how revivalists experienced folk music.

First, then to the impact of Scottish forms on the regional folk scene after 1950. In an area with its own distinctive dance traditions, the popularity of Scottish country dancing is rather surprising and suggests that in urban areas there was a need for imported traditions prior to conscious revival of the indigenous forms. Alistair Anderson – who would become a leading advocate for Northumbrian dance music – recalls his earliest participation in organized folk music events at Scottish country dances organized by the Ramblers' Association in Newcastle's Durant Hall: this was when he was aged eleven, which situates these dances around 1959.⁸⁰ The Ramblers' Association dances had developed out of another group that used the

⁷⁹ This interest certainly stretched to the end of the 1970s, for example, see 'Pipers Call the Tune', *Evening Chronicle*, 5th July 1979 which detailed the success of Killingworth's MacGregor Pipe Band and their prominent participation in that summer's Whitley Bay Spectacular. Also from 1979, there was a listing for the Highland Pipers' Society of Northumbria, based at Seaton Delaval in P and S Ranson, M and C Nield (Eds), *The North East's Folk Directory*, (Newcastle, 1979), p13.

⁸⁰ A Anderson, interviewed by author, 5th March 2004, recording in my possession.

Durant Hall from 1951: the Newcastle upon Tyne and District Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society. Founded in 1950, this was one of the largest branches of an organization that stretched throughout the UK.⁸¹ The Society acted as catalyst in the development of several dance bands that played throughout the region in venues such as the Old Assembly Rooms, and Tynemouth Plaza.⁸² These bands were Scottish by culture but North Eastern by identity: Robert Whitehead's Dane Law Country Dance Band, and groups led by David White and Andrew Rankine combined traditional Scottish or Jimmy Shand strathspeys with new compositions drawing on North Eastern themes such as White's own *Beamish Hall*, and these tunes were collected on an LP, *The Newcastle Collection*, symbolically tied to Dan Smith's modern Newcastle by its cover image - a line drawing of the new Civic Centre.⁸³ It is unsurprising, given the presence of these groups and their early influence on one of the region's most vocal supporters of instrumental music (Anderson), that the North Eastern revivalists were keen to emphasize any Scottish influence and that the local clubs adopted the ceilidh format unusually early.⁸⁴

The impact of expatriate singers may have been more individual, less organizational, than in the country dancing milieu but there were nonetheless some very significant Scottish members of the North Eastern folk clubs, such as Dick Gaughan, Rab Noakes, and Chuck Fleming, but particularly Jock Purdon and Ray Fisher. Purdon had moved in 1944 from the outskirts of Glasgow to Harraton's 'Cotia pit as a 'Bevin boy'.⁸⁵ He became involved in miners' 'social neets' through his Irish-descendant father-in-law, again indicating that, whether or not the local repertoire derived from Celtic sources, some of the impetus to perform did. And Purdon's songs provide another instance of the overdetermination of ethnic difference by a strong regional identity: songs such as *The Easington Explosion* and *Farewell to 'Cotia* appear on the printed page like Geordie laments, full of regional subject

⁸¹ The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Newcastle upon Tyne Branch, *The Newcastle Half Century, 1950-2000* (RSCDS, Newcastle, 2000), pp2-4.

⁸² *Ibid*, p5.

⁸³ The Dane Law Country Dance Band and David White and His Band, *The Newcastle Collection* (RSCDS LP, 1974). See also *Evening Chronicle*, 10th November 1969, p5, which gives a brief biography of Andrew Rankine, the expatriate Scot bandleader who settled in Whitley Bay in 1963 and who stated that he enjoyed Northumbrian dance music as much as Scottish.

⁸⁴ See Chapter Two in this regard.

⁸⁵ The 'Cotia' name derived from Scotia - reflecting the numbers of Scots workers there.

matter and occasional 'pitmatic' terminology: Purdon's nationality is only evident through the accent in which he performed.⁸⁶

Ray Fisher represents a rather more complex picture of dual loyalties, not only because she represented another layer of identity, gender (this was a significant distinction within the second folk revival and will be further discussed later in this chapter) but also because her music was so clearly a product of Scotland rather than the North East of England. When she arrived in Newcastle in 1962 she was already established, along with her brother Archie, as a Scottish folksinger with considerable television exposure and touring experience.⁸⁷ Their visit to the Folksong and Ballad club, which led to her meeting future husband Colin Ross, was at the end of a tour of the English folk clubs.⁸⁸ Fisher's musical education had included six weeks' worth of informal lessons from the great traveller singer Jeannie Robertson, who Hamish Henderson and the School of Scottish Studies had lauded as emblematic of the continuous Scottish tradition.⁸⁹ Thus it was to be expected that she concentrated mainly on the Scottish repertoire and commented in 1970 that 'I always feel it's a bit presumptuous of me to sing the Northumberland songs'.⁹⁰ Of all of the expatriate folk performers discussed above, Fisher compromised least with her new regional culture and yet perhaps held the greatest sway (at least since Ned Corvan), both as a leading figure in Folksong and Ballad and as the voice of BBC Radio Newcastle's 1970s local folk music broadcasts, although this apparent paradox was more likely a

⁸⁶ J Purdon, *Songs of the Durham Coalfield* (Pit Lamp Press, Durham, 1977); for the sound of Purdon's accent:- J Purdon, *Pitwork, Politics and Poetry* (independently produced cassette, Durham, c1980s).

⁸⁷ Though their interest was as a result of the familiar process of stumbling upon their own traditions after becoming involved in skiffle in a band called The Wayfarers. See K Hunt, 'Along the Ray', *Folk Roots*, 11/2, 74, August 1989, 21-22, p21; and K Hunt, 'The Loneliness of the Long Distance Folk Singer', *Swing*, 51/14, 1989, 17-27, p17.

⁸⁸ 'Stop-off at Newcastle Has Permanent Look', *Whitley Bay Guardian*, 4th December 1970, p21.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p21; and see particularly H Glasser, 'Ray Fisher: A Tremendous Sort of Feeling', *Sing Out!*, 22/6, 1974, 2-8, pp3-4. Robertson had offered these lessons after hearing one of her own songs performed by Fisher, and informing the young revivalist that she was 'not tackin' it oot richt' (referring to phrasing and interpretation). See also, R Fisher, 'Uniquely Lizzie', *English Dance and Song*, Summer 1993, 14-18, p15. For Hamish Henderson's promotion of Jeannie Robertson, see H Henderson, *Alias MacAlias: Writings on Songs, Folk and Literature* (Polygon, Edinburgh, 1992), pp38-39; also A Munro, 'The Role of the School of Scottish Studies in the Folk Music', *Folk Music Journal*, 6/2, 1991, 132-168, p134 and p158.

⁹⁰ 'Stop-off at Newcastle Has Permanent Look', *Whitley Bay Guardian*, 4th December 1970, p21. For examples of Fisher's typical repertoire, see her recordings, eg, her contribution, 'The Spinner's Wedding', to Various Artists, *The Iron Muse* (Topic LP, 12T86, 1963); and R Fisher, *Traditional Songs of Scotland* (Saydisc CD, SDL391, 1991).

result of Fisher's powerful personality and position within the region's oldest club rather than the degree of her assimilation.⁹¹

The Irish and Scots apart, there appears little evidence of input from other major ethnic groups in the North Eastern folk scene from the 1950s to the 1970s, and this is worthy of some analysis. Certainly, attendance in the folk clubs by locally-based non-whites appears to have been minimal, despite the fact that the music of touring African-American blues performers had instigated skiffle and ultimately the folk scene, and that Newcastle's jazz and even working men's clubs featured at least some Ghanaian-born musicians.⁹² It could be argued that at the time - the South Shields Arabic community excepted - the North East's non-white population was relatively small: certainly, the annual influx into the jazz clubs of black sailors while the Bermuda Star was in dock was considered noteworthy.⁹³ While this provides a partial explanation, questions have frequently been raised regarding the inclusiveness of folk music in general: outside of America, there appeared to be very few black folk performers, with Cliff Hall of The Spinners and Johnny Silvo notable by their rarity value.⁹⁴ This may of course speak less of racial exclusivity (which would be a bizarre phenomenon given the leftist orientation of many folk club participants) and more of the lack of identification with the old British traditions purveyed by many clubs. Regarding those clubs that derived more from the blues, there might still be an explanation in the changing expectations of young black people who sought to distance themselves from the slave discourse of their older music and developed alternatives such as be-bop, soul and reggae.⁹⁵ The blues was becoming an altogether different colour.

⁹¹ R Fisher, interviewed by the author, 7th March 2005, recording in my possession.

⁹² G Pearson, *Sex, Brown Ale and Rhythm & Blues: The Life that Gave Birth to the Animals* (snagaP, Darlington, 1998), p104, details a band of Ghanaian born musicians, called the Black Cats.

⁹³ G Pearson, *Sex, Brown Ale and Rhythm & Blues: The Life that Gave Birth to the Animals* (snagaP, Darlington, 1998), p124.

⁹⁴ For discussions relating to the dearth of non-whites in the average folk club see the Mudcat online forum:- <http://www.mudcat.org/thread.cfm?threadid=23286>. Indeed, some controversially claim that 'folk' and 'blues' authenticity was code for white or black racial purity: see Barker, H and Taylor, Y, *Faking It: The Quest for Authenticity in Popular Music* (Faber and Faber, London, 2007), pp97-99.

⁹⁵ For the tensions between black and white expectations regarding music of black origin, see D Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Methuen, London, 1979), pp48-49, which contrasts the black hipster's zoot suit with the white 'beat's' studious raggedness, and S Frith, *Sound Effects: youth, leisure and the politics of rock 'n' roll* (Constable, London, 1983), pp20-24, which counterposes the slick output of soul musicians with its ('Disco sucks') rejection by the white rock

The previous chapters have already highlighted the 1950s-'60s discovery of the blues by white British urban youth, and Sandbrook further delineates the development of

a rudimentary blues infrastructure allowing suburban teenagers to seek out obscure records and even to take up guitars themselves. Most blues clubs were situated in London and the South East ... But soon there were plenty of clubs in the provinces, too: the Olympia in Reading; the R&B Club in Andover; the Wooden Bridge Hotel in Guildford; the St Andrews Hall in Norwich; the Rhythm and Blues Club in Belfast; and the Downbeat in the docks of Newcastle. ... in many ways it was easier for white British teenagers to follow an interest in black American music than it was for their American counterparts, who were inhibited by the racial politics of the day.⁹⁶

Blues Package tours brought surviving greats from the Delta to these clubs, and as a consequence, Son House, Bukka White and Fred McDowell, Sonny Terry and Big Bill Broonzy visited the North East.⁹⁷ The audiences drawn to these performances indicated a trend highlighted again by Sandbrook (and one which will be further discussed in Chapter Four):-

Rhythm and blues fitted nicely with the dissenting spirit of the art schools. As the music of the black American city, it allowed suburban British bohemians to portray themselves as cosmopolitan rebels.⁹⁸

Unlike those in London, however, some of the Tyneside teenagers who attended clubs like the Downbeat were not products of suburbia, but had originated from the politics of disenfranchisement that spurred the blues in the first place. This could at least partially explain the Animals' uncompromising rawness as well as the persistent popularity of the blues in North East folk clubs. To quote a fictional but telling parallel, Roddy Doyle's character Jimmy Rabbitt explained the shared 'otherness'

fans whose music derived from the blues. For black people's 'abandoning the blues owing to its association with their unhappy past' see T Arkell, 'Geography on Record: Origins and Diffusion of the Blues', in G O Carney, (Ed), *The Sounds of People and Places: A Geography of American Folk and Popular Music* (3rd edition, Rowman & Littlefield, Maryland, 1994), 55-62, p61.

⁹⁶ D Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (Little Brown, London, 2006), p130.

⁹⁷ H Dene, 'Geoff Heslop: Standing on the shoulders of giants', *Living Tradition*, 62, May/June 2005, 24-26, p24; J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p131.

that allowed Irishmen to play soul music: ‘The Irish are the niggers of Europe, lads ... An’ the Dubliners are the niggers of Ireland ... An’ the northside Dubliners are the niggers of Dublin’.⁹⁹ The enduring popularity of the blues – beyond the 1960s peak of national enthusiasm – among working-class Tynesiders speaks of just such an understanding, as Douglass suggests:-

There was a bond between the dispossessed and abandoned kids of the north-east and the lives and struggles of black people in the states. ... Their music would become body and soul our music. We didn’t know it then, but something similar had been happening down in Liverpool, a radical hard city also abandoned by the southern ruling class.¹⁰⁰

Many of those who cleaved to this music of poverty and dispossession were, however, beginning to escape the social group that could identify with it most closely, and the following chapter will analyse this in greater detail.

In the North East of the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, ‘Folk and Blues’ clubs developed a separate identity from the jazz clubs which had preceded them. The popularity of South Tyne Folk and Blues club (itself a 1968 offshoot of the earlier Frenchman’s Fort Folk and Blues club) was evident from the 200 newsletters they routinely distributed each month.¹⁰¹ Similar clubs in Gosforth Assembly Rooms, Gateshead’s Honeysuckle and Heaton’s Chillingham Arms were all going concerns throughout the early 1970s, and produced a local circuit for performers such as Ray Stubbs, George Shovlin, Pete Mason, Jim Murray and bands such as Pigmeat.¹⁰² This is not to imply that the ‘folk and blues’ clubs were peculiarly North Eastern, nor that they were a particularly new development (as Chapter One has demonstrated, the 1950s folk revival had developed out of the London-based ‘Ballads and Blues’ format), but there are indications that the blues enthusiasts within the region were following an opposite trajectory to many in the rest of England. While Jansch, Renbourn and

⁹⁹ R Doyle, *The Commitments* (Minerva, London, 1991), p9.

¹⁰⁰ D Douglass, *Geordies, Wa Mental* (TUPS, Newcastle, 2000), p115.

¹⁰¹ D Sutherland, correspondence with author, 16th January 2007. D Banks, ‘Mixing It, Making It’, *The Journal*, March 12th 1971, p4. This article specifically refers to the mix of genres as controversial at this time, despite the fact that the blues had been a key influence on the early years of the second revival.

Graham had been increasingly drawn to the concept of a synthesis of blues and traditional British folk music, their counterparts around Tyneside were delineating the two strands as distinct – but equally authentic – ‘roots’ musics, and opting to specialize in one style or the other, and to alternate guest artists with parallel specialisms. Thus, South Tyne Folk and Blues would host Finbar and Eddie Furey one week, followed by Roy Bookbinder on the next club night.¹⁰³

Aside from the blues clubs, there were other folk enthusiasts who also approached the music in distinct, albeit far more pedestrian ways. In schools, even after the zenith of Sharp’s educational drive and the regular use of folk music in *Singing Together*, teachers remained keen to introduce folk songs to their pupils and, by the 1970s, the PTA ceilidh was becoming a regular feature.¹⁰⁴ And churches adopted folk music as a gentle but contemporary way of reaching their congregations. Tynemouth Folk Moot opened with a church service, combining the local, a Northumbrian piper, with the international, in the form of that byword for Christians bearing folk guitars, *Come By Ya*.¹⁰⁵ A facet with greater bearing on the understanding of the regional folk identity was the way in which those with politically-charged approaches - be they left-wing or ‘high Tory’ - drew on narratives of ‘North-Easternness’ to reinforce their understanding of the world. This echoes Cantwell’s *longue durée* account of ‘the folk’ as ‘a compound concept’ that brought together disparate interest groups (‘Nobles, Patrons, Patriots’, Reds’) within the American folk revival: here, the conservative tradition of Burke co-existed alongside the radicalism of Cobbett in their mistrust of the modern and their nostalgia for a receding past.¹⁰⁶ In the North East, the YCND and YCL faithful held ‘folk socials’ at the Bridge Hotel, alternating international protest songs like *We Shall Overcome*

¹⁰² For the Folk and Blues club in Gosforth Assembly Rooms, see *Evening Chronicle*, 2nd June 1969, p2. For the Honeysuckle, see <http://www.raystubbs.co.uk/Biography.htm>. For the Chillingham Folk and Blues club, see *Evening Chronicle*, 24th April 1975, p6.

¹⁰³ *The Journal*, March 12th 1971, p4.

¹⁰⁴ T and B Davis, ‘Folk Song in School’, *Spin*, 3/2, c1966, pp16-17. Kim Bibby Wilson recalls ceilidhs within Morpeth schools: K Bibby-Wilson, interviewed by author, 26th February 2004, recording in my possession. Jean Spence remembers her earliest contact with folk music as being via schools broadcasts such as ‘Time and Tune’ and ‘Singing Together’: J Spence, interviewed by author, 21st October 2004, recording in my possession.

¹⁰⁵ Tynemouth Folk Moot Programme, 1975, p3.

¹⁰⁶ R Cantwell, *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival* (Harvard University Press, 1996), pp360-377. The Nobles (like Jamie Allen’s Countess of Northumberland) and the Reds are self-explanatory. Patrons are those from bourgeois backgrounds who chose to passionately promote local folklore

with the region's indigenous strike ballads, while Northumbrians from old families held their patrimony close in honour of the less complicated, more hierarchical, times of the Border Ballads.¹⁰⁷

A division more significant to the internal politics of the revival was the clear schism (discussed in previous chapters) throughout the folk scene between traditionalists and those who favoured more contemporary music. In some of these more contemporary styles, such as songwriting, comedy and folk-rock, it was clear that participants not only experienced the revival differently from the traditionalists: they also developed characteristics that were distinct from the national genres to which they were attached, and while the following section acknowledges that they represented distinct versions of revival, it is a necessarily brief analysis of aspects that are considered in greater detail elsewhere in the thesis.

As stated earlier in this chapter, I do not intend to dwell directly here on what were mostly national divisions between singer-songwriters and performers of a more traditional bent, except to emphasize once again that the varied traditions on which the songwriters and composers drew inevitably shaped their understanding of the revival and their place within it. Hence, the songs of Johnny Handle, Alex Glasgow and Ed Pickford developed out of the mining and music hall traditions that fell within the arc on Figure 1, while, as previously discussed, Vin Garbutt's tunes had a distinctly Irish lilt, and Alistair Anderson's original compositions were clearly a product of an ascribed 'Northumbrian-ness'. Similarly, the comedians who developed out of the local folk scene, such as Maxie and Mitch, and Mike Elliott may have carried the outward 'hippie' image of other folk comedians such as Billy Connolly and Mike Harding, but their delivery owed equally as much to the music

and dialect as fascinating curiosities, while Patriots are those who tie folklore to a political mast that stops short of Marxist proletarian revolution. The direct quotation is from p371.

¹⁰⁷ Regarding the YCL and YCND folk socials, see D Douglass, *Geordies, Wa Mental* (TUPS, Newcastle, 2000), pp96-97; p130, pp282-283; and pp300-305. This portrays a widely diffused left-wing cultural activity, from the Bridge to the Downbeat and the Club a Go-Go, but with a strong regional identity (singing *The Lambton Worm* while being bussed to CND rallies) woven into it. Regarding the old families' cleaving to the past, Lance Robson repeatedly raised his family heritage as representing a golden age and a means of demonstrating his authority on Northumbrian folklore : L Robson, interviewed by author, 8th December 2004, recording in my possession.

hall and club tradition that had continued from Joe Wilson through to Bobby Thompson.

Once again, there appears to have been at least a dual layer of identity at work. In the case of folk-rock, there was an understanding among its acolytes of separation from the mainstream revival, as suggested by Burns, 'the performers I interviewed ... maintain that there has been an anti-folk-rock faction in the folk audience since folk music was first combined with other styles.'¹⁰⁸ This was therefore a revival within the revival: an identification on a national scale with other folk enthusiasts struggling with contested authenticity. But bands such as Hedgehog Pie also represented another constituency, of North Eastern specificity, in which they characterized themselves as wild men from the far north. Mike Harding recalls:-

I booked a band from Newcastle called Hedgehog Pie. When I'd booked them up in Newcastle there were only four of them. By the time they arrived in Middleton there were thirteen of them all playing and singing, a mob of bearded Geordie anarchists with a wicked sense of humour playing everything from traditional Geordie songs like *Black Leg Miner* to *Route Sixty Six* and *I'm the King of the Swingers*.¹⁰⁹

Hedgehog Pie were therefore – like their counterparts on the city halls circuit, Lindisfarne - a folk-rock band touring the country as part of a wider electric-folk community and a North Eastern group with a strong sense of regional belonging. To borrow a framework from Raymond Williams, this duality represented both emergent (international media, electric instruments and blues-rock inflexions) and residual (the intense local solidarity of mono-industrial working-class communities) cultures.¹¹⁰ One evident strand of the nostalgic layer of this identity is its intense

¹⁰⁸ R G H Burns, 'Continuity, Variation and Authenticity in the English Folk-Rock Movement', *Folk Music Journal*, 9/2, 2007, 192-218, p200. See also M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), pp89-109.

¹⁰⁹ M Harding, 'The Music of the People – The Manchester Folk Scene: A very personal and perhaps coloured memoir', *North West Labour History*, 26, 2001, 44-46, p46. See also *Journal*, 20th August 1971, p4.

¹¹⁰ See R Williams, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', *New Left Review*, 1/82, November/December 1973, 3-16, particularly pp10-12. While Williams' emphasis on incorporation of residual and emergent forms into a dominant hegemonic culture would appear somewhat contradictory to the questions raised by Archer, cited at the beginning of this chapter, the fact that both thinkers see a multiplicity of cultures at work would seem to allow their ideas to be reconciled in the current analysis.

masculinity. Gender was a clear international faultline along which folk enthusiasts experienced the revival differently, but its significance was all the greater when regional specificity was built so firmly upon male-oriented occupations such as shipbuilding and mining: as Lloyd has it, ‘these are rough songs, mostly made by rough men.’¹¹¹

The final section of this chapter will assess this debate first via the ways in which women in the (inter-)national folk scene felt separate from aspects of the revival before considering the specific experience of being female in the North Eastern folk clubs. A feminist reading of the regional folk revival could easily require another entire thesis, but it is possible here to gain more than a token understanding of gender as a separate strand within the folk music movement.

Boyes has most clearly articulated the significance of the gender divide within the folk movement and her commentary on the ‘repressively macho social realism’ of most industrial song demonstrates why female participants within an industrial stronghold might feel particularly disenfranchised:-

MacColl and Lloyd continued to proselytise for ‘Industrial Songs’ – editing hymns to male struggles in heavy industry from the past or political battles in the present. But somehow, the industries worth researching and writing about were never catering or nursing, hairdressing or office work, and only the heroic was celebrated. As subjects for consideration in song, as writers who might draw on their concerns or experience, as club members in a pub-based movement or performers attempting to reproduce its agreed repertoire, women had no obvious role among the ‘plebs in pitboots arguing politics’¹¹²

The specific dynamics within the North East created by the image of the masculine industrial worker will be further discussed below, but Peggy Seeger has reinforced the understanding of a male-biased repertory throughout the wider traditional canon of Anglo/American folk song:-

¹¹¹ A L Lloyd (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners: Ballads and Songs of the Coalfield*, revised edition (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1978), p13.

Almost all of the songs in which women are the central figure involve (1) men (2) love (always heterosexual, familial or maternal) and (3) the family. Songs in which men are the central figure cover these three areas but they also frequently place men in venues that do not involve women: in field or factory, on the battlefield, in the bar, or in various humorous plots both bucolic and urban. There is far more variety in man-hero songs than there is in woman-heroine pieces.¹¹³

And this harking back to archaic gender roles was even seen as an instrument of authenticity: Frankie Armstrong bemoaned the revival's embracing of "'humorous' wife-beating songs' as an alternative to 'the marshmallow limbo to which marriage had been consigned by Tin Pan Alley'."¹¹⁴ These commentaries emphasize that gendered territories within the folk revival were not merely a question of accepted social roles but woven into the sacred texts of the canon.

The formation of the canon was in itself selective, and in Chapter Four I argue that this was in part determined by the connoisseurship that derived from the urge to collect obscurities. This is in itself a male dominated area. Will Straw discusses the 'gendered, masculinist character of record collecting' and that for women, whatever their musical proficiency, they are less likely to participate in the obsessive collectors' rich pattern of allusion and fact-gathering: 'the lines of exclusion are now elsewhere. They emerge when the music is over, and the boys in the band go back to discussing their record collections.'¹¹⁵

Social roles did, of course, play a significant part, and Finnegan has highlighted the gender distinctions that obtained throughout the urban musical pathways which she mapped:-

¹¹² G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p240.

¹¹³ P Seeger, 'A Feminist View of Anglo-American Traditional Songs', <http://www.pegseeger.com/html/feminist.html>.

¹¹⁴ F Armstrong and B Pearson, 'Some Reflections on the English Folk Revival', *History Workshop Journal*, 7, Spring 1979, 95-100, p98.

¹¹⁵ W Straw, 'Sizing up Record Collections: Gender and connoisseurship in rock music culture', in S Whitely (Ed), *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender* (Routledge, London, 1997), 3-16, p4 and p15. For a somewhat parallel process of folksong collectors selecting the most patriarchal versions of ballads, see G Boyes, 'Singer, Gender and Power: Male and Female Performers and

Girls were often (though not always) the singers in rock bands while boys were drummers, PA experts and drivers, and in all contexts men tended to take on public roles like those of chairman, dance-caller or conductor, with women called on for back-up typing, 'social secretary' tasks and, inevitably, the provision of refreshments at practices and concerts. None of this was at all surprising – or confined to just musical contexts – and there were also plenty of exceptions, demonstrating that these gender-influenced roles were general expectations rather than absolute requirements.¹¹⁶

Peggy Seeger would appear to be a powerful exception to the rule, but regarding general expectations, the folk scene was evidently a problematic place for a woman when even an artist as radical Joan Baez succumbed to gender roles during her time with the Bob Dylan entourage: 'I'd make tea ... And I would dry Dylan's sweaty vests.'¹¹⁷ Frankie Armstrong reinforced this impression by commenting that 'folk clubs are male chauvinist to a remarkable and remarkably unselfconscious degree.'¹¹⁸ In folk dance, too, both Boyes and Judge have suggested that patriarchal attitudes had dominated ever since the controversy between Cecil Sharp, Mary Neal and Rolf Gardiner at the start of the twentieth century.¹¹⁹ Once again, these tendencies were paralleled within the North Eastern folk clubs and will be discussed below.

In spite of prevalent chauvinism, Lucy o'Brien has demonstrated why female music enthusiasts might be drawn to the pared down intimacy of folk music, 'opting for

the Greig/Duncan Collection', *Musical Traditions* internet journal, article MT141, <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/singer.htm>.

¹¹⁶ R Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-making in an English town* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p315.

¹¹⁷ Joan Baez, interviewed by Emma Brockes, *The Guardian*, 24th January 2006 Beryl Davis noted similar expectations – where wives of folksingers were expected to provide accommodation and food for visiting club guests : B Davis, 'Unfair to Folksingers' Wives Part 2', *Spin*, 5/6, c1967/8, 17-20.

¹¹⁸ F Armstrong and B Pearson, 'Some Reflections on the English Folk Revival', *History Workshop* 7, Spring 1979, 95-100, pp97-98.

¹¹⁹ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), pp82-85, and pp154-158; R Judge, 'Mary Neal and the Esperance Morris', *Folk Music Journal*, 5/5, 1989, 545-591. Mary Neal founded the Esperance Morris, a female team, in a London settlement house in the early years of the twentieth century. Rolf Gardiner was an influential early protagonist of the Morris Ring and has long been a controversial figure (Boyes goes so far – arguably too far – as to imply that many of his ideas were proto-fascist): but his impact upon female morris dance was clear enough, even persuading Neal that she may have been wrong in appropriating this 'masculine' form for her girls.

solo expression as a way of not having to negotiate the male network of band politics, other musicians' egos or complicated tour arrangements that interfere with childcare.'¹²⁰ Thus, the female presence within the folk scene was likely to be at least marginally more visible than that in parallel musical 'tribes'. Of McRobbie's typology of females in youth subcultures, the women in the folk movement would appear to best fit those who were 'present and visible' in that they did not need to experience a different subculture within the private world of the teenage bedroom - but in many cases they were nonetheless marginalized in ways that reproduced wider social subordination and stereotypes.¹²¹ As touched upon in the Introduction to this thesis, Anne Briggs typified an acceptable mode of female folk performance (which often differed sharply from feistier offstage personae) – a fey, waif-like presence, apparently passively 'channelling' the song from the distant past: Jack Speedwell satirically instructed female singers, 'If ... you cannot be either small or beautiful, you can still contrive to look slightly helpless.'¹²² This was one version of folk femininity, with its lack of obvious ego and a vocal lightness placed mainly in the head register: an example from the North Eastern revival of the 1960s being the pure, girlish vocal quality of Maureen Craik.¹²³ There is an opposite archetype, which, as well as the Waterson sisters, includes North Eastern figures such as Pat Elliott and Doreen Henderson, and Ray Fisher: this might be characterized as the 'earth mother', with a powerful, active, driving vocal style placed in the chest register, and derived from the 'big voices' of singers like Jeannie Robertson and the Weavers' Ronnie Gilbert.¹²⁴

Within the North East, these passive/active; waif/earth mother dichotomies were not restricted to the revival. Throughout the tradition, the subject matter of songs,

¹²⁰ L o'Brien, *She Bop II: The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop and Soul* (Continuum, London, 2002), p180.

¹²¹ A McRobbie and J Garber, 'Girls and Subcultures', *Feminism and Youth Culture* (Macmillan, London, 1991), 1-15, p3.

¹²² J Speedwell, 'Advice to Revivalists', *Folk Music*, 1/8, January 1965, 25-30, p28.

¹²³ Maureen Craik contributed to two Various Artists Topic LPs: *Tommy Armstrong of Tyneside* (Topic LP 12T122, 1965) and *New Voices – An Album of First Recordings* (Topic LP, 12T125, 1965). Pete Seeger called into question the possibility of a long career for young women who sang in this style of constructed naivety, labelling it the 'trap of Sweet Sixteen': P Seeger, 'Johnny Appleseed, Jr', *Sing Out!*, 12/3, Summer 1962, 66-67, p67.

¹²⁴ Indeed, Fisher articulated her preference for the big voices as opposed to the 'thinner' sounds produced by Sandy Denny. R Fisher, interviewed by K Hunt, 'The Loneliness of the Long Distance Folk Singer', *Swing*, 51/14, 1989, 17-27, p19, and p25.

especially those composed from the male viewpoint, appeared to follow the same archetypes, and (in parallel with the beginning of this chapter) to diverge along occupational lines. Thus, the feisty working women, *The Cullercoats Fish Lass*, *Cushie Butterfield* or *Elsie Marley* would contrast sharply with the battered wives or weeping widows of *The Sandgate Lass's Lament*, *The Lament of the Border Widow* or *Trimdon Grange Explosion*.¹²⁵ Songs more probably created by women, lullabies and 'dandling' songs, such as *A U Hinny Burd* and *Pit Lie Idle*, are far more ambiguous, with the mother neither clearly passive nor aggressive.¹²⁶ Despite this qualification, North Eastern songs are frequently peppered with stereotypical attitudes towards women as the butt of the joke, for example, *Little Chance*, a very popular regional folk club "standard", features that mainstay of patriarchal comedy, the mother-in-law joke:-

Noo, me an' me wife, and me mother-in-law went te the silvery sea.
 The mother-in-law gat into a boat, a sailor she wad be.
 She hadn't gan passin twenty yards when suddenly there's a shoot;
 Me mother-in-law falls into the sea, an' there she's splashing about.
 She shougs: 'Help, aa canna swim!' Titty fa la, titty fa lay.
 Aa says, 'Noo's the time to learn.' Titty fa la, titty fa lay.
 Me wife, she says: 'Ye hoond, tha's not ganna watch her droond!'
 Aa says: 'Naw, aa'll shut me eyes.' Titty fa la, titty fa lay.¹²⁷

Thus, it would appear that the feminist readings of the folksong canon as a whole have strong resonances with the North Eastern repertory. Indeed, by virtue of the

¹²⁵ N Corvan, *The Cullercoats Fish Lass*, collected in C E Catcheside-Warrington, *Tyneside Songs Vol II* (Windows, Newcastle, 1912), pp12-13; G Ridley, *Cushie Butterfield*, collected in C E Catcheside-Warrington, *Tyneside Songs Vol I* (Windows, Newcastle, 1911), pp18-19; Anon, *Elsie Marley*, collected in J C Bruce and J Stokoe (Eds), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* (Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle, 1882), p112; Anon, *The Sandgate Lass's Lament*, collected in C E Catcheside-Warrington, *Tyneside Songs Vol III* (Windows, Newcastle, 1912), pp24-25; Anon, *The Lament of the Border Widow*, collected in W Scott (Ed), *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (Harrap, London, 1931) p382; T Armstrong, *Trimdon Grange Explosion*, collected in W H Armstrong (Ed), *Song Book containing 25 Popular Songs of the late Thomas Armstrong*, Third Edition (N Wilson, Chester-le-Street, 1930), p1.

¹²⁶ Anon, *A U Hinny Burd*, collected in J C Bruce and J Stokoe (Eds), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* (Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle, 1882), p120; Anon, *Pit Lie Idle*, collected in A L Lloyd (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners: Ballads and Songs of the Coalfield*, revised edition (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1978), p338. A 'dandling' song was similar to a lullaby, but was generally intended to soothe a child when awake rather than necessarily to send them to sleep.

¹²⁷ Anon, *Little Chance*, collected in A L Lloyd (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners: Ballads and Songs of the Coalfield*, revised edition (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1978), pp68-69. Lloyd notes the popularity of this version of the song since the mid-1960s on p344.

predominance of male-oriented industrial and comic song (as Carole Garland argues: 'I think most of the Geordie stuff, about 98 per cent of it, is for men and it is hearty and butch and sometimes it just doesn't fit awfully well with women.'), the Geordie tradition in particular may be even more chauvinist than in general.¹²⁸

As regards the social roles performed by women within the local revival, once again, there were distinct echoes of the issues raised in relation to the (inter-)national folk scene. Women were certainly present and visible within the folk clubs, and accounted for a sizeable proportion of the scene as a whole. Folk club committees were largely informal affairs and record-keeping was evidently not a priority, therefore details of membership during the period under study are sketchy at best. But it is reasonable - even given the lag of a decade - to surmise some conclusions from MacKinnon's 1986-7 survey of folk club attendance, which brought some quantitative rigour to previously haphazard observations. MacKinnon's sample was drawn from ten clubs throughout the UK, but it favoured the North East in that it featured one club in Newcastle and one in rural Northumberland. 'The division of the sample by gender was 59 per cent male and 41 per cent female'. As the majority of respondents were aged over thirty by this stage (and therefore, as discussed below, the women were likely to find their evenings out restricted by childcare issues), the figure of 41% female attendance might even be viewed as conservative compared with the folk revival's heyday.¹²⁹

Women participated not only as audience members and performers, but also (often falling into the support category outlined by Finnegan) as organizers, with Pat Elliott and Doreen Henderson, and Carole Garland all active within the North East Folk Federation; Kim Bibby-Wilson working with her father on the Morpeth Gathering; and Terri Freeman, Ray Fisher and Liz Sobell organizing local clubs. What is immediately noticeable from this list is the tendency for those women who were

¹²⁸ C Garland, interviewed by M Sutton, 5th August 2004, recording in my possession. Though there were contemporary arguments to counter this, see E Anderson, Letter to the Editor, *Spin*, 2/10, c1965, p17, which contends that the listener could 'accept the fact that they [the singers] are ... telling a story and not really anticipating changing sex', they might be seen as a rather simplistic reading of the possibilities of a convincing female rendering of the verse from *Little Chance* quoted above.

¹²⁹ N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1993), p43.

driving forces in committees to have become involved in the folk scene's ad hoc administration alongside family members.¹³⁰ This may be an entirely appropriate phenomenon in a musical form often dependent on transmission through generations of a family, but the sheer frequency implies that perhaps female enthusiasts required some sense of validation from their male counterparts before they felt able to take on organizational roles. Similarly, performers such as Prelude's Irene Hume were often married to other group members.¹³¹ The women mentioned above may have increased their involvement in the movement through association with other family members but they were far from being considered mere appendages. Other women within the folk scene could be far more marginalized: a newspaper report on a local folk group patronizingly referred to 'Bill's wife, Gill, who is a schoolteacher, [and] occasionally joins the duo and rattles a tambourine or lends harmony to some of the songs.'¹³²

Participation within what was mostly (except for occasional festivals) an adult-oriented pub-based scene was further circumscribed by having children. Among those interviewed for this project, the only people who raised the issue of childcare as a limiting factor on their own involvement in folk music were female. Though an established artist, Ray Fisher 'let music take a backseat to the joys of raising children', while Carole Garland expressed this in less joyous terms: 'I was a young mum, I just didn't get out'.¹³³ Hannah Hutton did not even begin to perform in public until after her children were long grown and not long before her husband, Joe, died.¹³⁴ Even those who continued to perform found their capacity to develop their style was hampered: Kim Bibby-Wilson explained that family commitments

¹³⁰ Pat Elliott and Doreen Henderson were both members of the Elliott family, whose impact on the North Eastern folk scene is evident throughout this thesis; K Bibby-Wilson, interviewed by author, 26th February 2004, recording in my possession; T Freeman, Questionnaire responses, 3rd November 2005 (she became involved in running a folk club in 1969 alongside her husband); Ray Fisher is married to Colin Ross and both were major forces in Folksong and Ballad, Liz Sobell ran the Barleycorn folk club alongside her husband, Stefan; Carole Garland, interviewed by M Sutton, 5th August 2004, recording in my possession (although already active in the Federation, she did considerable work alongside her then husband, Richard Hill).

¹³¹ 'Prelude to the Big Time', *The Journal*, 6th August 1971, p4. See also Carole Garland, interviewed by M Sutton, 5th August 2004, recording in my possession; and the comments above relating to Liz and Stefan Sobell.

¹³² *Evening Chronicle*, 13th June 1969, p10. Further marginalization throughout the folk clubs was often due to the female in the party remaining sober as 'designated driver'.

¹³³ K Hunt, 'The Loneliness of the Long Distance Folk Singer', *Swing*, 51/14, 1989, 17-27, p17; Carole Garland, interviewed by M Sutton, 5th August 2004, recording in my possession.

prevented her from attending many music events outside of those in which she was directly involved, thus restricting her awareness of innovations and trends.¹³⁵

All these factors suggest a negative experience for women within North Eastern folk music but, as Finnegan highlighted, where general expectations might prevail, there were nevertheless exceptions to the rule. This is most evident here in the case of Northumbrian pipers. There had been female patrons of piping ever since the late eighteenth century, when the Countess of Northumberland first engaged the services of Jamie Allan, and this continued throughout the twentieth century with the Presidency of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society held by Lady Trevelyan from 1947-1966 and, later, her daughter, Patricia Jennings.¹³⁶ Jennings was herself a piper, and, along with Diana Blackett Ord and Grace Gray, was one of several young women from monied families who took up piping as a worthy pastime in the early twentieth century.¹³⁷ Prior to this, there was only one notable female piper, 'Piper Mary' Anderson of Milkhope in Coquetdale, although there may have been others whose gender rendered them invisible to the likes of Bruce and Stokoe.

Grace Gray was a founding Vice President of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society and a regular trophy winner in 1920s piping contests.¹³⁸ Tom Clough, judging her in 1927, commented that

she has everything regarding confidence and coolness but her coolness is really due to lack of spirit as much as anything. Her piping is extra good but cold in its effect.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ H Hutton, discussion at Sage Gateshead led by J Oliver, 22nd February 2005, recording in my possession.

¹³⁵ K Bibby-Wilson, interviewed by author, 26th February 2004, recording in my possession.

¹³⁶ J Say, *The Northumbrian Pipers' Society: A Short History* (Northumbrian Pipers' Society, Newcastle, 2001), p32. See also *Evening Chronicle*, 11th August 1969, p11. Jennings became NPS President in 1997, but had been influential for several years prior to this.

¹³⁷ 'Piping Present: Diana Blackett Ord', *Northumbrian Pipers' Society Magazine*, 20, 1999, 23-27.

¹³⁸ See, for example, 'Pipers at Bellingham', *Journal*, 14th September 1926; Photograph of Miss Grace Gray, *North Mail*, 20th September 1926; *North of England Musical Tournament Programme 1929*, p29, gives Grace Gray as the winner of the 1925 'Cocks Trophy' for smallpiping, just before Billy Pigg came to dominate these contests. See also J Say, *The Northumbrian Pipers' Society: A Short History* (Northumbrian Pipers' Society, Newcastle, 2001), p5.

¹³⁹ T Clough, Letter to W A Cocks, 18th June 1927, Cocks Collection, Clough Correspondence, 11-22.

And the following year, he deemed her efforts ‘just as usual’.¹⁴⁰ There is no obvious indication of a patriarchal subtext at work here, and it is quite possible that Grace Gray was merely technically proficient, however, Clough’s comments regarding ‘lack of spirit’ might indicate that he was seeking an energy in the playing more in keeping with contemporary definitions of masculinity. While Miss Gray was a product of the 1920s, Diana Blackett Ord – like Patricia Jennings - encompassed both first and second revivals. Although there had therefore been an unbroken presence of women pipers from the 1920s, and despite the fact that Jennings was a favourite in the local press and that Blackett Ord’s undisputed piping ability led to some 1962 Australian television appearances, the present-day domination of the media by two female pipers (Pauline Cato and Kathryn Tickell) would appear to have been unthinkable until the 1980s.¹⁴¹ Once again, women were present and visible, but were perhaps at some reaches from dictating the revival’s core values.

Similarly, female dance teams first emerged in the North East as a result of the mechanisms of the first revival: from its 1919 inception, the North of England Musical Tournament featured women’s and girls’ morris dance contests.¹⁴² Echoing the EFDSS systems of control noted by Boyes, the regulations were clear that, in the ceremonial (sword and morris) dances, teams ‘must in no case be of mixed sexes’, while country dance teams were actively encouraged to present mixed couples.¹⁴³ There appears to be a further parallel to the trajectory mapped by Boyes, with a mid-century lull in female morris sides after Sharp and Gardiner appeared to have at least temporarily won the argument – with considerable emphasis on authenticity and traditional values - over ceremonial dance as a masculine preserve.¹⁴⁴ Even the University’s dance team were known as the **Kingsmen**. Yet, in Winlaton during the 1950s, a girls’ rapper team not only existed, it gained the approval of dance teacher John Atkin, who argued ‘I prefer to see the Winlaton Sword Dance performed well

¹⁴⁰ T Clough, Letter to W A Cocks, 30th May 1928, Cocks Collection, Clough Correspondence, 11-31.

¹⁴¹ ‘Piping Present: Diana Blackett Ord’, *Northumbrian Pipers’ Society Magazine*, 20, 1999, 23-27, p27. Regarding Blackett Ord’s acknowledged ability, she won the 1950 Northumbrian Pipers’ Society Open competition, ahead of noted pipers Joe Hutton, Billy Robson and Tommy Breckons.

¹⁴² *North of England Musical Tournament Programmes, 1919-1929*. Women’s morris teams from Heaton, Westgate, Morpeth and Ashington

¹⁴³ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), pp162-172, outline precisely the same dual approach towards single-sex (preferably male) ceremonial teams and ideally male-female balanced country dance sides.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

by girls than to see a few University Students murdering it upon every occasion'.¹⁴⁵ Atkin's attitude was contrary to several influential names on the national scale: in Gardiner's terms, 'I think we all shared a private rage at 'women's morris' – 'werris' we called it'.¹⁴⁶ The Winlaton girls' team declined by the 1960s and female teams such as Sandgate and Tyne Bridge Morris, only began to reappear in the late 1970s (with female rapper sides such as Short Circuit and Pengwyn Rapper developing only in the 1990s), after the period covered by this study.¹⁴⁷

These pages have mapped a pattern of underlying patriarchy throughout most aspects of the second folk revival in the North East, though (apart from the likes of Gardiner, who used the weight of tradition as a justification after the fact) it might be difficult to view this discrimination as in any way specific to the wider folk music movement, let alone that in the North East. Women faced similar obstacles in other musical genres, other subcultures and in society as a whole. Nevertheless, the particularity of their situation did indicate that this was indeed a revival within the revival, where participants' experience was qualitatively distinct.

In summary, this chapter has argued that, far from representing a single, uncomplicated tradition, the North Eastern folk scene instead reflected a multi-faceted coalition of interests, occupations and ethnicities. Further, it has demonstrated that the 'scene' itself was not a single entity, but that there were diverse ways of participating and of understanding the revival and the tradition that inspired it. It has implied that the boundaries are never absolute: sometimes they overlap, and they shift over time. As definitions alter, as society develops, so too do the cultural divisions, and these eventually spur further changes in a cyclical pattern. The following chapter, which deals with continuity, change and mediation, will examine these temporal developments in much greater detail.

¹⁴⁵ J Atkin, quoted in Winlaton and District Local History Society, *A History of Blaydon* (Gateshead MBC, 1975), p61.

¹⁴⁶ R Gardiner, 'The Travelling Morrice and the Cambridge Morris Men', 1961; quoted in Boyes, *Ibid*, p163.

¹⁴⁷ Regarding the female dance teams, Sandgate Morris began in 1977, and Tyne Bridge Morris was formed by Newcastle University students in 1978. Short Circuit Rapper originated in 1993; with Pengwyn Rapper appearing in the following year. Addison Rapper, which date from 1978, are a male team but also feature female clog dancers.

Chapter Four

A Living Tradition? Mediators and Tradition Bearers

They are hard living and hard working, very proud of their area and convinced that it is not part of the British Isles at all. If you live there for any length of time, you will soon understand why. It has a different atmosphere and the people themselves are so different, that it really does seem like a different country.

Because of this pride in their part of England, they have kept alive their traditional customs; in fact it must be the richest part of the country for the living tradition.

Tony Foxworthy, 1970¹

The art of playing the small pipes has survived ... not because of, but in spite of we amateurs and students, however much money or leisure we may have given to the subject.

Kennedy North, 1928²

We [the Elliott family] always sang for as long as I can remember, and we didn't know that we were singing folk songs until Ewan MacColl came ... here MacColl said he'd thought this was an arid area for folksongs. ... And I always remember him, when we were talking, saying to Peggy, 'It's pure Chaucer, isn't it?'

Doreen Henderson, 2004³

¹ Tony Foxworthy, 'North East Customs', *English Dance and Song*, Special Edition: The Folk Music of Northumbria, Spring 1970, 8-10, p8

² Kennedy North, 'The Pipes of the North. Men Who Have Kept Them Alive', *North Mail*, letters, 22nd December 1928

³ Doreen and Bryan Henderson, interviewed by author,

As the above statements, spanning eight decades, demonstrate (and as the preceding chapters have highlighted), a commonly-stated peculiarity of North Eastern folk music is its continuity of tradition. This is quite frequently attributed to the idea that people from the region, as borderers, are somehow almost stateless and beyond the reach of the modern. This chapter will examine the truth of this perception and question the boundaries between where continuity ends and revival begins. Who were the “tradition bearers” and who the mediators of that tradition? And was the line between them actually just as permeable as the old border had once been? The following pages will therefore outline some general concepts relevant to mediation and tradition in North Eastern folk music, before analysing precisely what continuities existed and to what extent they persisted. It will then consider where significant discontinuities were to be found during the period under study, before assessing the role of mediators in this process of transformation.

First, then, it is necessary to be aware of the complexities inherent in analysing tradition and mediation in any heterogeneous society. The North East of England is clearly not a sealed community untouched by modernity, and therefore designations of what constitutes traditional regional culture are subjective and shift over time. In their study of the equally complex cases of Quebecois and Hawaiian traditions, Handler and Linnekin call into question the entire dichotomy between mediators and traditionalists. They argue against concepts of tradition as a natural object that can be defined as spurious or genuine, and in favour of tradition as a process – an ongoing dialectic between past and present, continuity and discontinuity. Just as Erik Cohen has described the interplay of staged authenticity and those who live within the touristic site (further discussed in Chapter Eight), Handler and Linnekin argue that

The self-image of rural villagers develops through a dialogue with a variety of tradition-seekers, ranging from romantic journalists to urban nationalists, not to mention social scientists. One of the major paradoxes of the ideology of tradition is that attempts at cultural preservation inevitably alter, reconstruct or invent the traditions that they are intended to fix.⁴

This dialectic would seem evident in the career of Jack Armstrong, whose country dance bands and piping were an inherent feature of the lived regional musical landscape (his popularity among local people as a band leader was evident from the frequency with which he was booked to play for dances and radio appearances) and yet also a part of the constructed identity of the ancient roots of Northumbria. Following the suggestions of radio producer Richard Kelly⁵, Armstrong would rename old tunes to evoke ascribed Northumbrian characteristics. In Armstrong's hands *Buttered Peas* became *Border Fray*⁶. There was continuity in the choice of tune and discontinuity in its nomenclature. There was continuity in the village hall venues Armstrong so often played, but discontinuity in the fact that these "hops" were occasionally broadcast by radio and television, and this is further discussed in Chapter Five. A former miner leading a dance band and playing pipes within his own locality would seem an inherently traditional figure and yet, as a broadcasting personality, a regular performer at the tourist tearooms at Wallington Hall and a leading figure in the Northumbrian Pipers Society, he was also a mediator.⁷

Further, the standard class distinctions between mediators (middle- and upper-) and mediated (working-), as delineated by writers such as Harker or Boyes, are blurred by examples such as Jack Elliott, who stated that "*Jowl, Jowl*" was passed to him by

An old friend of mine, F Rutherford, a librarian at Durham. He got [songs including *Jowl, Jowl*] from Mr Toyne, a school-master at Birtley, who got them from his uncle, a miner long since dead from Hetton-le-Hole.⁸

⁴ R Handler and J Linnekin, 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious', *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol 97 No 385, 1984, 273-290, pp287-288

⁵ C Ross, interviewed by J Murphy, 7th March 2005, recording in my possession: Colin Ross recalls Jack Armstrong stating that the initial instigator for his renaming of tunes was local radio producer, Richard Kelly.

⁶ B Feintuch, CD sleevenotes to *Northumberland Rant – Traditional Music from the Edge of England*, (Smithsonian Folkways, SFW CD 40473), p18. Colin Ross recalls Jack Armstrong stating that the initial instigator for his renaming of tunes was local radio producer, Richard Kelly: C Ross, interviewed by J Murphy, 7th March 2005, recording in my possession.

⁷ Armstrong gave up mining to become a chauffeur, not a full-time professional musician. A similar process of traditional performer turned mediator was evident in the work of clog dancing teachers such as Tiny Allison and Johnson Ellwood, see A M Fisher, *Clog Dance, Revival, Performance and Authenticity: An Ethnographic Study*, unpublished MA dissertation, University of Surrey, 2000, pp30-33.

⁸ Jack Elliott, letter to Mary Brodie, 24th February 1964, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. Peggy Seeger gives a slightly different account of the song's provenance in "*Folk Music*", Vol 1, No 5, c1963, p2, stating that William Toyn got the song from another schoolmaster, Henry Natrass and it was his uncle who had worked in the collieries at Hetton.

So the working-class informant was himself informed by two middle-class sources. While Doreen Henderson recalls her parents singing local and political songs before the Birtley folk club had been thought of, it must also be remembered that the Elliotts' folk club in Birtley had been one of the keystones of the revival in the North East.⁹ This intertextuality between tradition and revival is significant because here the mediators are the tradition carriers: they sang some songs until they gained an awareness through the media and local contacts that there was a new infrastructure specifically to support this music; they then became a part of that infrastructure (indeed, Jack and Pete were proud to have held Memberships No 1 and 2 at *Folksong and Ballad*).¹⁰ They increased their repertoire and performed their songs within the revival, where they were represented once again as a functional and traditional part of a holistic community.¹¹ As Handler and Linnekin explain, tradition is 'a model of the past and is inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present ... the ongoing reconstruction of tradition is a facet of all social life, which is not natural but symbolically constituted'.¹² Perhaps the boundaries between continuity and discontinuity, tradition and mediation are themselves spurious?

Even where a continuity of tradition appears incontestable, this can involve a distinction between active and inactive repertory that speaks of complex dynamic change. Tradition bearers may hold some songs readily within their memory for regular use, others may be easy to polish to performance level, while others remain only as a vague recollection. The reasons why these songs move in and out of the status of a singer's active or inactive repertory are diverse. The causes of these transformations can be external (social), personal, or internal to the culture (new ways in which the music can be produced or reproduced). All are instructive, and

⁹ D Henderson, interviewed by author, 13th December 2004, recording in my possession

¹⁰ The whereabouts of the membership cards is no longer known, however the story has been confirmed by Doreen Henderson, Jack's daughter and Pete's sister. There are other parallel cases of this "poacher-turned-gamekeeper" duality: see M Yates, 'Bob Blake and the re-invented self', *Musical Traditions*, Article MT184, 18th August 2006, <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/blake.htm>. This demonstrates that, not only could some seemingly iconic "traditional singers" have learned their entire repertoires from printed sources, but even those firmly within a local tradition would pick up odd pieces that took their fancy from print or recordings.

¹¹ A very similar process could be seen at work with the Copper Family of Sussex.

demonstrate that what might at first sight appear to be a mediated discontinuity is in actual fact a progressively evolving continuity. Goldstein has suggested the reasons for shifts in repertory can include notions of ownership, when a song is viewed as the peculiar property of an individual performer, others are wary to approach it because they feel unqualified to do it justice until that performer is no longer part of the scene.¹³ Then there is the fluctuating topicality of certain songs according to the conditions of the day so that strike or war ballads might be revived several times by the same singer but overlooked in times of calm. Repertory is further subject to changing aesthetic tastes (possibly also dictated by the introduction of new instruments) and social roles (adults who have forgotten children's songs relearn them when they become parents). And there may have been a change or loss of audience through technological innovation (whereby radio and recordings initially took tradition bearers' original audiences away, but eventually replaced them with new audiences in the colleges and coffee houses), or migration.¹⁴ This last is of direct relevance to this study because the following pages will show that many north eastern performers actively developed their dialect repertoires when they moved away from the area. Was this a contradiction or an acknowledgement that they might find a fresh audience unavailable to them at home? Similarly, Reg Hall, in his study of Sussex musician Scan Tester, has argued that war, so often seen as catastrophic to tradition, might actually have been a source of a mutating continuity:

To some extent the War accelerated social changes that were already in progress; it broke down country institutions, such as village bands, and created many others, like the British Legion. ... many fathers were killed, some sons looked to their grandfathers for their values, and this could account for some of the old songs continuing long after they might have been expected to have been forgotten.¹⁵

¹² R Handler and J Linnekin, 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious', *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol 97 No 385, 1984, 273-290, p276. See also Chapter Eight for the symbolic use of tradition within modern society.

¹³ The 'ownership' of certain songs within local communities might explain why singers such as Louis Killen and Bob Davenport developed an interest in local repertoire once they left the North East – being outside of the local community afforded them the freedom of exploring songs they might previously have considered the property of, say, Owen Brannigan or Jimmy White.

¹⁴ Kenneth S Goldstein, 'On the Application of the Concepts of Active and Inactive Traditions to the Study of Repertory', *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol 84, 1971, 62-67

¹⁵ Reg Hall, *I Never Played to Many Posh Dances: Scan Tester, Sussex Musician, 1887-1972* (Musical Traditions supplement no 2, Rochford, 1990), p131

While Hall was discussing the effects of the Great War, a similar pattern can be perceived in relation to World War II and the social dislocations that followed it. As will be discussed in the following chapter, *Wot Cheor Geordie* and the *Northumbrian Barn Dance* radio shows began broadcasting in 1945: quite possibly this extension of the existing regional policy was a response to the wartime homesickness of North Eastern servicemen abroad.¹⁶

Moving beyond the immediate aftermath of the war, increased social and geographical mobility, in particular the new homes and wider educational opportunities gradually afforded by the welfare state created a similar need to retain roots. With all these different variables playing on a single person, then inevitably their repertoire and style must change over time. Moreover, as will be discussed below, the enquiries of a mediator might lead a performer to reactivate a previously dormant part of their repertory.

These discussions of intertextuality and of active/inactive tradition are placed here to emphasize that throughout this chapter it should be remembered that continuity and revival are not necessarily discrete terms: each can feed the other in an ongoing process. There are, however, differences of emphasis between the two extremes, and the rest of the chapter will consider some continuities, some evident discontinuities, and the role of mediators in both.

¹⁶ BBC Yearbook, 1946, p77: 'The North Region spoke, sang, and played its music to Britain and the world all through the war, ... Recording cars made it possible for homesick soldiers to hear the tap of clogs on cobbled streets ... "Strike a Home Note" broadcasts from Yorkshire, Durham, Lancashire, and Westmorland, took humour to exiled Northerners'. For existing regional policy, see Asa Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (Oxford University Press, 1985), pp131-138. For those servicemen who returned home, 1945-6's temporary surge in divorces would have only added to this longing for local continuity and rootedness.

Continuities?

There is a general assumption that the North East of England boasts an unrivalled continuity with past folk music forms: how else did Northumberland retain the only English bagpiping tradition to survive into the twentieth century? Even as late as the 1970s, social-, rapper- and clog-dancing remained at least occasional features of pubs and clubs outside of the folk scene:-

If the MC at an ordinary village hop can announce a country dance without having to “call” it or “walk” it – or if a group of men can perform a ritual sword or Morris dance without having to explain it (or excuse it!) as a “folk” dance, then you can almost certainly take it that the dancing is “traditional” in that community. By that definition, the North East is one of the last bastions of traditional dance in England.¹⁷

Thus, traditional country dances like *Morpeth Rant*, *Durham Rangers* or *Circassian Circle* were juxtaposed with foxtrots and even rock’n’roll (the active and inactive repertory would shift over time) in village halls and actual barns.¹⁸ These were most usually called simply ‘dances’, not ‘ceilidhs’ or ‘barn dances’, another indicator that they were free of the self-consciousness that went alongside revival and mediation. Peter Kennedy may have asserted that he had reinvigorated barn dancing within the region when he arrived in the North East as EFDSS’s regional organizer in 1947 (as discussed below), but he acknowledged that the dances and music were still a feature of village life, albeit in remote pockets of the region.¹⁹

A 1959 report on the village halls of Northumberland noted that dances remained among the three most popular events within these halls (along with Womens’

¹⁷ A Brown, ‘Where Dance is a Way of Life’, *Acoustic News and Folk Song & Dance News*, No 25, October 1979, p14.

¹⁸ As described by Alistair Anderson, interviewed by author, 5th March 2004, recording in my possession.

¹⁹ P Kennedy, email to Judith Murphy, 5th April 2005; P Kennedy, ‘Discovering “The Barn Dance” in the North East’, *English Dance and Song*, 15/1, July 1950, 9-11. Also P Kennedy, ‘A Singer’s Notebook’, *Sing*, 5/3, July 1960, p42. These articles are further discussed below in relation to Kennedy’s role as a mediator.

Institute meetings and whist drives, and ahead of football clubs).²⁰ But there were signs that the nature of such local entertainment was evolving as farming became more mechanized and village populations aged or receded; as television gradually eroded the need to seek entertainment outside the home; and as more cars and improved bus services brought the cinemas and clubs of Newcastle (or at least Morpeth and Hexham) within reach of a greater number of the rural public.²¹ Dances were becoming less regular and relied on a smaller number of elite musicians:-

Dancing is not dying out, but is changing its character. The older generation are unable to accept this change, and still look back to the days of the village barn dance on a Saturday night, with the joiner on his fiddle, and the blacksmith with his accordion. ...

... People no longer consider a fiddle and accordion good enough, nor even that a reasonably good local band is good enough. Bands now enjoy waves of extraordinary but short-lived popularity, and are followed all round the countryside by bus loads of enthusiasts, who will dance to no other. A natural consequence of this situation is that these bands become fabulously expensive, the more popular ones costing anything up to £50 a night. This immediately cuts out the small halls which cannot afford the financial risk of loss, because a band in this class puts tickets up to 5s.0d. or 7s.6d. which the main body of local people are unwilling to pay. Even the smaller bands are still beyond the means of many halls for regular dances. The cheapest band mentioned cost £8 a night, all told.²²

A consequence of this increased cost was that dances became less a regular feature of village life, and more an activity that was sporadically booked for occasional events such as hunt balls and cricket club parties.²³ It is therefore evident that social dancing within the folk tradition was surviving but might have struggled to continue beyond the early 1960s had it not been effectively underwritten by the attendance of

²⁰ Heather H Aitken, *Northumberland Village Halls* (Northumberland Rural Community Council, Newcastle, 1959), p11 and Table XII, p34. Whist drives were the most frequent activity and raised 40% of the halls' revenue, with dances the second most significant fundraiser at 39%.

²¹ *Ibid*, p10; p28 (the report noted that 47% of respondents blamed television for any fall-off in village hall attendance, though others saw the media as simply raising the expectation of quality in entertainment that they still sought locally); p25 and pp31-32. Television *per se* may have been perceived as altering the pattern of village entertainment, but expectations of its threat to local culture might have been accentuated by the arrival of the populist ITV Tyne Tees region in 1959, the year in which the report was compiled.

²² *Ibid*, p15.

young revivalists seeking the authentic Northumbrian experience, as described in Chapter Two. The question arises whether the continuous social dance tradition was ironically a product of those mediators who sought survivals from the past, and this will be addressed later in this chapter.

Like similar, strong rural traditions in Sussex, East Anglia and Devon/Cornwall, a key factor that allowed the tradition to continue was the geographical isolation of the outlying farms. A discussion between Alistair Anderson, mouth-organ player and accordionist Will Atkinson and fiddler Will Taylor emphasized the way in which social and musical networks developed according to walking or cycling distances (though sometimes of eighteen mile round-trips over rough country) and bus routes.²⁴ This is not to claim that the rural community was hermetically sealed: as will be discussed below, there was traffic between the hill farms and the Newcastle music halls or dance halls (Jack Armstrong's band were known to play lively renditions of Tyneside favourites such as *Blaydon Races* and *Keep Yor Feet Still Geordie, Hinny*), there was radio, cinema, and there were gramophone records.²⁵ But the musicians who made up the dance bands or who played in farmhouse kitchen sessions formed an interlinking chain of direct musical influences derived from each player's immediate circle, thus maintaining a balance of continuity and innovation more in keeping with pre-war society. A significant part of this kind of oral tradition was the transmission of acceptable style: Will Atkinson criticized some technically adept younger players who 'just batter the notes off each other. That's no good. You have to *feel* a tune.'²⁶ There were ways to develop this feel and they involved socialization. Pipers (especially those like Billy Pigg, who moved around Northumberland) would absorb new tunes and diffuse others, depending upon which fellow musicians they visited.²⁷ Joe Hutton sketched some details of the network of players, teachers and instrument-makers which stretched across both the generations and the countryside:

²³ Ibid, p16. Table III gave the statistics as 28% of dances were regular events, while 56% were irregular.

²⁴ Will Atkinson and Will Taylor, in discussion with Alistair Anderson, recorded by Anthony Robb, Folkworks Northumbrian Workout, Alnwick, 19th October 1996.

²⁵ Accessible via the FARNE website: <http://www.asalive.com/archive/detail.asp?id=A1000007>.

²⁶ S McGrail and S Harley, 'The Moothie Man', *Living Tradition*, Issue 45, Nov/Dec 2001, 25-26, p26.

²⁷ A D Schofield and J Say, *Billy Pigg, The Border Minstrel* (Northumbrian Pipers' Society, Morpeth, 1997), pp2-6.

I had started to play the pipes in 1926. My father was a fiddle player and he used to play at local dances. Now he knew where there was a set of pipes, but they weren't in working order. He got the loan of them and we took them down to George Armstrong, the pipe tutor and maker at Hexham, to get them renovated....

... quite a few pipers have been Coquet men: Jamie Allan, Billy Pigg, Archie Dagg, John Armstrong. I'd come across John Armstrong, at Alnwick for the competitions. A good fiddle player and piper, he lived at Carrick, and when I first came through to Coquetdale I went along there to a piping-music night. Tommy Breckons, Archie Dagg and Billy Robson were there, and John had Billy Pigg over that night.²⁸

This account highlights another significant source of continuity: the tendency towards family traditions, where each generation formed the repository of knowledge for the one that succeeded it. Will Atkinson and Will Taylor were cousins, and Atkinson recalled, 'I can remember my aunts dancing me round the floor – I had three uncles who played fiddle, you see'.²⁹ The family tradition continued into at least one of the next generation: Atkinson's son George became a piper. The small pipes in particular were a generational instrument: pipes were relatively costly and required considerable knowledge to build, maintain and play. In the era before the weekend folk workshop, it was much easier to become a piper if one of the family or a friend already owned and played a set. The Cloughs of Newsham are probably the most celebrated such piping family, but, like Joe Hutton, other players similarly relied on family connections to develop their talent.³⁰ Jack Armstrong's father had been a piper before him, and the Caisley family (like the Elliotts) straddled the roles of tradition bearers and mediators, but much of their music was transmitted generationally³¹.

²⁸ J Hutton, 'Rowhope Remembered 3: A Sound of Their Own', *Northumbriana*, No 41 (Autumn 1991) 25-28, pp25-26.

²⁹ W Atkinson quoted in S McGrail and S Harley, 'The Moothie Man', *Living Tradition*, Issue 45, Nov/Dec 2001, 25-26, p25.

³⁰ See J Say and C Ormston, *The Clough Family of Newsham* (Northumbrian Pipers' Society, Newcastle, 2000). Also J Murphy, *Heritage and Harmony: Case Studies In Folk/Popular Music and the construction of historical identities within the North East of England, 1877-1988*, (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Sunderland, 2003).

³¹ B Cassie, 'The Caisley Family', *English Dance and Song*, Special Edition: The Folk Music of Northumbria, Spring 1970, p14.

Similar patterns of transmission appear evident within rapper dance (for example, the High Spen team boasted at least three generations of continuity); clog dance (the Ellwoods and the Farrells); and even industrial song (the Elliott family, and Tommy Armstrong and his son “Poety” Billy are obvious examples, but Bob Davenport also claims that both he and Eric Burdon are descended from *Blaydon Races* composer Geordie Ridley).³² Furthermore, the fact that many of these traditions derive from south of the Tyne and into County Durham demonstrates that continuity was not purely a result of the notional isolation of upland Northumberland: clearly the industrial village and the urban centre provided equally fertile ground.

In these cases, the geographical isolation was less absolute than that of the hill farm but was still striking: it related to Newcastle’s distance – both geographically and culturally - from London. This perception of a local patriotism based on difference from the capital is in itself a continuity. As Chapter Seven highlights, North Eastern sporting heroes like Clasper had been celebrated in song for putting the capital in its place, and nineteenth century Geordies took pleasure in ‘belittling the Cockneys with feats of strength and science’.³³ The sheer physical distance from London may not have precluded travel to the capital (the London success of the likes of the St Hilda’s Colliery Band, Tom Clough and Jackie Toaduff are testament to the fact that such journeys were a possibility) but was sufficiently large to create a particularity within regional music based on an awareness of “otherness”. The North Eastern music hall retained its regionality for longer than elsewhere (a fact that was, significantly, noted

³² Regarding rapper dance, see G Wallace, ‘A North East Tour’, *The Nut on the Net*, <http://www.thenut.net/articles/netour.php>, 1994; For information on the clog-dancing families, see <http://www.asaplive.com/archive/detail.asp?id=B0701801>. The Ellwood family name was associated with clog dancing throughout, however, the most famous exponent of the Farrell steps, Jackie Toaduff, had learned them via a dance teacher, Tiny Allison; Regarding Tommy and Billy Armstrong, see J Murphy, *Heritage and Harmony: Case Studies In Folk/Popular Music and the construction of historical identities within the North East of England, 1877-1988*, (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Sunderland, 2003). Bob Davenport’s claim is anecdotal but the fact that he writes about it at all is indicative of an understanding of generational transmission: Bob Davenport, email correspondence with author, 5th July 2005: ‘Dick Ridley is still living in Gateshead: he is George Ridley’s great nephew and was my late mother’s cousin. I am not sure what that makes me!! Eric Burdon said that he was also distantly related - it would seem that George Ridley owned a bike.’ See also C Phipps, J Tobler, and S Smith, *Northstars* (Zyurgy, Newcastle, 2005), p9.

³³ R Colls, *The Collier’s Rant* (Croom Helm, London, 1977), p41; M Huggins, ‘Sport and the social construction of identity in north-east England, 1800-1914’, in N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of ‘The North’ and ‘Northernness’* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), 132-162, pp142-143.

by a revivalist, Johnny Handle).³⁴ Moreover, the distance of Northern industrial villages from the rich commercial outlets afforded by the metropolis meant that the region retained a good proportion of voluntary musical activities like brass bands, though these were receding by the 1960s.³⁵ These provide just two examples of how continuity with the past was effectively protected by musical institutions that were distinctive from metropolitan musical culture. The North-East's folk-musical culture retained elements of both the Tyneside music hall and the colliery band (the sound of the latter might have been used especially in the rather mannered arrangements of mediators like Alex Glasgow, but were also referred to by the likes of Tommy Armstrong, with his *Tanfeeld Lee Silvor Modil Band*).³⁶

These elements highlight another possible cause of continuity in the North East: not only was the tradition adaptable and open to innovations (as a living tradition by definition must be), but those who sought to collect and categorize it were also relatively non-prescriptive with regard to boundaries: Bell, Allan, Bruce and Stokoe, Gillies Whittaker and the local newspapers were all unusual in accepting – at least to some degree – the broadsides and music hall songs that were viewed by the metropolitan folklorists as degenerate fodder for the masses.³⁷ The fact that the songs of Joe Wilson and Geordie Ridley were collected, printed and available alongside Border Ballads and pipe tunes had prevented the dislocation between past and contemporary vernacular forms found elsewhere. This had continued into the twentieth century with the near-ubiquity in North Eastern musical homes of Ernest Catcheside-Warrington's books of Tyneside songs, and the use of regional folk music in populist programmes like *Wot Cheor Geordie*, both of which are further discussed in Chapter Five. This is a clear example of how tradition was able to

³⁴ See J Handle, 'Industrial Folk Music and Regional Music Hall in the North East: 2. Growth And Extent of the Music Hall', *English Dance and Song*, 27/5, 1965, 138-141, p141. Also, it is worth noting that major studies of the music hall like G J Mellor, *The Northern Music Hall* (Frank Graham, Newcastle, 1970) do not contain references to the likes of Corvan, Wilson and Ridley.

³⁵ D Russell, 'Music and Northern Identity, 1890-c1965', in N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), 23-46, pp27-28.

³⁶ T Armstrong, 'Tanfeeld Lea Silvor Modil Band', in W H Armstrong (Ed), *Songbook Containing 25 Popular Songs of the late Thomas Armstrong* (3rd edition, Noel Wilson, Chester-le-Street, 1930), pp22-23.

³⁷ F J Child's description of broadsides as 'veritable dung-hills' springs to mind. See D Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British 'folksong' 1700 to the present day*, (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1985), pp113-117; the exact quotation is from F J Child, letter to S B Hustvedt,

continue into the modern world at least partly through its relationship with mediators, although it did not remain in their hands: the general public continued to embrace many of these songs. *Keep Yor Feet Still Geordie Hinny* and *Cushie Butterfield* were not only shorthand for Geordie identity, played by bands at the Durham Miners' Gala, but also useful 'singalong' tunes for charabanc trips and social events.³⁸ *Blaydon Races* served both purposes at once, as the rallying cry for Newcastle United supporters. (Here, it is worth noting that there is evidence that football supporters' anthems are selected out of unaffected preference rather than constructed identity: Sunderland adopted, not *The Lambton Worm*, but Elvis Presley's, *I Can't Help Falling in Love With You*).

There was one further aspect of continuity that relied on a sense of distance: in this case, distance from professional outlets. This helped retain folk music (at least for the performers) within its traditional context as an aspect of everyday life, rather than as a career option that followed its own pattern of touring and recording. Out of the first wave of 1950s North Eastern folk musicians, only Louis Killen turned full-time professional, and he was notably the person who spent most time outside of the region, in London and sometimes in America. Others, like Johnny Handle, considered a music career, but settled for the more secure combination of semi-professionalism plus a day job, while artists like Alex Glasgow would find security by diversifying into journalistic and theatrical roles.³⁹ Many, like Jack Elliott, Joe Hutton, Will Atkinson and Will Taylor, would pursue music alongside a genuinely working class occupation, and were thus lauded as beacons of the North East's unbroken tradition.⁴⁰

This is problematic: the conscious pursuit of continuity may actually be symptomatic of dislocation. Borrowing from Edward Said's analysis of orientalism, Russell has

25th August 1872 in S B Hustvedt, *Ballad Books and Ballad Men* (Harvard University Press, 1930), p254.

³⁸ John Mapplebeck (Producer), *Like a Candyman's Trumpet* (BBC2, 11th July 1967).

³⁹ J Handle, interviewed by author, 3rd February 2004, recording in my possession. Others who pursued teaching – and who will be discussed below - include Bob Fox; Keith Gregson; Ed Pickford; Kim Bibby-Wilson; Jed Grimes; Jez Lowe. To emphasize this point, members of some teacher training colleges formed the basis of folk clubs like Hexham, Sunderland and Ashington. Regarding Alex Glasgow's media career, see Chapter Five.

⁴⁰ In Elliott's case, the working-class occupation was mining; while Hutton, Taylor and Atkinson all worked as shepherds.

warned that seemingly positive representations of northern musical life can actually reflect the *longue-durée* cultural dominance of the capital:-

While positive readings of northern culture could emerge, the South's 'positional superiority' and the sheer longevity of attitudes defining the North as 'other' meant that they were often ultimately displaced by other interpretations which reasserted a more 'traditional' view of the North.⁴¹

The adoption of stereotypes is discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, but the emphasis on continuity (in contrast with, say, Bell's nineteenth century acceptance of newer forms) within North Eastern folk music may also play to a London-defined discourse: the preoccupation of the early folklorists with exotic survivals from the days of noble savagery. Many of the above quotations asserting the unbroken regional tradition appeared in national publications, perhaps indicating the North East was assessing the value of its music by virtue of metropolitan prescriptions. In this case, it seems fair to ask: was continuity assessed on the basis of the value judgements of mediators? Was the continuous tradition something that developed out of folk roots without losing some of its (approved) original characteristics? Or was the continuous tradition something that had absorbed more of the pop culture influences around it, and therefore reached the widest number of 'the folk'? This returns us to the question, raised earlier in the chapter, of tradition's permeability within a modern society. Richard Lewis recently commented on the dubious validity of the need to mark off 'folk traditions' as an abstraction:-

I can't help but feel a bit let down intellectually by the fact that I'm still dealing to some extent with the folk revival mafia, the legacy of Ewan MacColl, Martin Carthy, Fairport Convention and the rest. But this disappointment is a little shallow. In the search for authenticity, then, only an unbroken tradition will do. But the truth is that a growing number of modern people are recognizing that the ancient custom makes sense to them today.⁴²

⁴¹ D Russell, 'Music and Northern Identity, 1890-c1965', in N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), 23-46, p35.

⁴² R Lewis, *The Magic Spring* (Atlantic, London, 2005), p299.

This will be further discussed below, in relation to mediators, and, regarding authenticity, in Chapter Eight, but here it is worth noting that for many participants in the folk revival a continuous tradition is their utopia.

Journalist Martin Nield considered the interaction of folk clubs with local people and contrasted the scene in Wales with that in his new North Eastern home:-

Something [about the North East]... impressed me early on; the strength of local interest both in the folk traditions of the region and the revival. The Welsh, with some notable exceptions, seemed more interested in rugby and male voice choirs.⁴³

This appears to have been a common enough external perception of North Eastern folk music, though it may have been coloured by the author's recent arrival in the region, where the folk scene would be his main point of socialization into the new area. Certainly, the North East had musical alternatives aplenty - brass bands, choirs, the rock scene, and the concert rooms of CIU clubs - but, as discussed above, certain tunes, certain dances did retain a hold on the mainstream imagination, and in that sense Nield's assessment would appear fair. But the increased population of the folk clubs represented a very significant discontinuity. Despite Nield's complaints that the Welsh remained preoccupied with choirs, the years 1955-1965 were the years of most discernible decline in these voluntary music institutions.⁴⁴ It seems logical that volunteer musicians did not simply disappear but instead moved from the organized, almost industrial machines of choir and brass band into the more individualized realm of the folk clubs (not to mention participation in the even more informal "scenes" around pop and rock music). Whether one adheres to the Marwick (revolutionary) or the Sandbrook (gradualist) account of change in the 1950s and 1960s, social upheavals happened.⁴⁵ And, as old loyalties and old certainties

⁴³ M Nield, 'An Outsider's View', *Acoustic News and Folk Song & Dance News*, No 25, October 1979, p12.

⁴⁴ D Russell, 'Music and Northern Identity, 1890-c1965', in N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), 23-46), p40.

⁴⁵ A Marwick, *A Marwick, British Society Since 1945* (Pelican, London, 1982); D Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A history of Britain from Suez to The Beatles* (Little Brown, London, 2005).

disintegrated, so too did their cultural expressions, regardless of whether culture reflected or pre-empted these changes.

The above discussion has highlighted that much-vaunted continuities of tradition were much more complex affairs than a mere retention of existing forms and contexts. It has included what might be viewed as discontinuities in order to argue that change can, in certain circumstances, represent part of a continuum. The following section provides an examination of those more obviously defined discontinuities, both social and cultural, that were historically significant to the practice and reception of folk music in the period under study.

Discontinuities

The fracture between the old forms of musical identity and the new is perfectly illustrated by Arthur Haggerston, protagonist of Sid Chaplin's *Day of the Sardine*:

Brass bands of any variety leave me cold ... for the Old Lady there's still some nostalgia. But there's none for me. All mine comes from the first time I squatted on the steps of a cellar at eight or nine years of age listening to the local group give forth in trad. fashion with 'Tiger Rag'.⁴⁶

As previous chapters have demonstrated, the authenticity-driven link between traditional jazz and folk was a close one, involving a re-drawing of cultural identities, tastes and aspirations away from that provided by large organizations in favour of the 'home-made'.

Paradoxically, Frith points out how new forms of social activity (the jazz appreciation society, the book club, the gramophone society, the folk club) had arisen precisely out of the commodification of culture for the masses. True, their educational roots may have lain in nineteenth century forms of rational recreation such as the Mechanics' Institutes, and surely there was considerable continuity with past modes of diffusion such as the broadsheet, but these societies were rendered

distinctive by the sheer availability of material on which to draw. This came with its own price: the fact that folk clubs could run appreciation sessions, listening to source recordings (an inherently new piece of musical infrastructure) was possible through some of the biggest mediators of them all – the record companies or broadcasters discussed in Chapter Five.

By the 1960s, there were discontinuities aplenty. As repertoire and expectations changed, so, too did venues:-

The car allowed youngsters to escape the limiting world of their local communities, and suburban families to escape into the fresh air of the countryside; and it represented the increasing privatisation of leisure, with families preferring to amuse themselves alone rather than rely on the local community to provide entertainment, as had been the case in the world of charabancs and works outings.⁴⁷

As these sites of entertainment changed, an inevitable consequence was that the entertainment itself altered with them. If charabanc trips had resulted in communal ‘sing-songs’, what happened to these in private family cars? If a relative shortage of transport had given rise to the inclusive village hall ‘hop’, then a relative abundance allowed the audience to be more selective – to travel to events designed for more specialized tastes, such as the ceilidhs and barn dances of the folk music community (as well as another relatively new institution, the Parent Teacher Association).⁴⁸ Singing in the local pub was to an extent replaced by following a circuit of clubs where musical tastes and expectations were shared.⁴⁹ This was clearly the case in the folk clubs of the 1960s and ‘70s. A typical month’s entries from Keith Gregson’s folk club diary, from June 1974, illustrates how participants with full-time day jobs were now willing to travel to a range of different venues even to perform floor spots:-

⁴⁶ S Chaplin, *The Day of the Sardine*, (1961, new edition, Amethyst, Leeds, 1983), p170.

⁴⁷ D Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A history of Britain from Suez to The Beatles* (Little Brown, London, 2005), pp113-114.

⁴⁸ This link has been confirmed by interviewees who performed at such events: for example, Kim Bibby-Wilson, interviewed by author, 26th February 2004, recording in my possession.

⁴⁹ For parallel developments in venues for folk performance in the North East of Scotland, where Bothy Ballads moved between the wars out of farmhouse kitchens and onto the village hall or

2 nd	Castlereagh, Seaham
4 th	The Bluebell, Fulwell
7 th	Seaburn Hall, Seaburn Festival
11 th	The Bluebell, Fulwell
17 th	Church Hall, Egglecliffe
18 th	The Bluebell, Fulwell
19 th	The Cheviot, Bellingham
25 th	The Bluebell, Fulwell
27 th	Belford House, Hendon
28 th	Brierton School, Hartlepool ⁵⁰

It was clearly now possible to follow a chosen circuit of clubs as routine. However, Benny Graham suggests that towards the end of the period, other changes in transport would have a negative impact on audience participation:-

When we first started, drinking and driving was almost – well, nobody bothered. ... So you had that couple of pints, inhibition loosened and all the rest of it and there was a difference in people. ... Now they'll turn out and somebody's got to be the driver, so he's got the half of coke, and they sit there with their arms folded and expect almost a concert situation where they don't have to do anything. It's like, "Entertain me, don't ask me to join in because I'm not going to do that". You see that at the festivals – a thousand people in a huge marquee, and somebody's singing a song with a chorus and not a voice lifts, you know?⁵¹

Perhaps it is possible to detect in this aspect of the music a slow downward trajectory in participation (surprisingly, in the opposite direction from the gradual democratization noted by Ian MacDonald) from the charabanc trip's universal choir to the "choruses only" of the folk club audience to the relative silence of the designated driver passively enjoying professional entertainment.⁵²

music hall stage, then post-1945 into the revival and competitions, see I Russell, 'Competing with Ballads (and Whisky?)', *Folk Music Journal*, 9/2, 2007, 170-191, especially pp172-173.

⁵⁰ K Gregson, *Folk Club/Repertoire Diary*, Book 5, 1974, pp8-14.

⁵¹ B Graham, interviewed by Dr M Sutton, 10th April 2002, recording in my possession.

⁵² I MacDonald, *The People's Music* (Pimlico, London, 2003), pp192-209. Though MacDonald's argument appears not to fit this aspect of the revival, there were others where it provides valuable insights, and these are discussed below.

What is clearer still is that those in possession of transport were in a position to adjust the style and repertoire of the clubs they visited. For instance, they might bring with them suggestions garnered from another club some miles away, or they might withdraw their custom because of a change in policy. Change, hybridism and innovation had been a part of musical culture from its earliest days, however, technology and transport were clearly altering their velocity. While the farmworkers of Northumberland had certainly walked or cycled miles to attend local dances, and carried repertoire with them when they moved around the region, their freedom to choose their venues remained restricted in comparison.⁵³ Those who now were able to visit clubs throughout the region were clearly not organic members of the community from which the clubs sprang (though they could be viewed as organic members of a wider “folk revival” community), and their potential impact on the functioning of those clubs was powerful: were they therefore, inevitably, mediators?

The discontinuities cited above were applicable to most of Britain, although the growth of car ownership was sure to have greatest impact in areas with scattered small (and proletarian) communities like swathes of Northumberland and Durham. Some other changes had specifically regional impacts. For instance, the reconstruction of Newcastle involved the removal of some traditional sites of entertainment (such as the Royal Arcade and many Scotswood Road pubs) and the development of new, publicly-funded venues (like the University Theatre and Spectro Arts Workshop⁵⁴). Similarly, some surviving theatres gave way to commercial pressures while the long-dormant *Balmbra's* was revived as part of the 1962 Blaydon Races Centenary.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, independent nightclubs developed greater specialization in the entertainment on offer. Mike Jeffrey's Downbeat and Club-a-Go-Go catered to the

⁵³ W Atkinson and W Taylor in discussion with Alistair Anderson, recorded by Anthony Robb, Folkworks Northumbrian Workout, Alnwick, 19th October 1996; Regarding Billy Pigg, see J Connell and C Gibson, *Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place* (Routledge, London, 2003), pp34-35.

⁵⁴ Spectro Arts Workshop was already established in 1972: 'Whitley Bay Festival', *Muther Grumble*, Issue 6, June 1972.

⁵⁵ C Lightburn, *Balmbra's: The Hall That Outlived Them All* (Bass, Newcastle, 1998), pp8, 14, and 17. *Balmbra's* re-opened in 1962 after a hiatus of more than half a century, while the Palace Theatre, Percy Street had disappeared by the early 1960s and Newgate Street's Newcastle Empire closed in 1963.

jazz, blues and rock aficionados (British popular music after Lonnie Donegan and the arrival of Elvis was itself evidence of a major discontinuity).⁵⁶ Such venues and musical genres catered to another national phenomenon that proved to be one of the most cited discontinuities of them all: the rise of the affluent teenager.⁵⁷ As discussed in Chapter One, Bill Osgerby has highlighted how the changing behaviour of young people, has become a commonly stated shorthand for social transformation, one that has left the ‘impression that youth culture simply did not exist before the war’.⁵⁸ Osgerby somewhat undermines this by emphasizing the presence of identifiable youth oriented tastes and patterns of consumption over almost a century prior to 1945.⁵⁹ Further, the ‘myth of teenage affluence’ overstated its capacity to level class distinctions in favour of the generational.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, he acknowledges that, due to a range of social factors, from ‘baby boom’ demographics to institutions and economics, there was an undoubted post-war acceleration of the visibility of youth identities and their perceived pattern of hedonistic consumption.⁶¹ While Mike Jeffery’s clubs and some coffee bars strove to attract this sector, the local folk scene favoured ‘dull, dingy’ pub venues, as discussed in Chapter One, perhaps as a function of some of the inter-generational aspects of the North Eastern revival already discussed.⁶²

⁵⁶ For accounts of these clubs, see G Pearson, *Sex, Brown Ale and Rhythm and Blues* (snagaP, Newcastle, 1998), pp214-218; also D Douglass, *Geordies, Wa Mental* (TUPS, Newcastle, 2000), pp126-128. Both accounts locate the nightclubs, especially The Downbeat within a wider, self-conscious youth counter-culture, loaded with political, musical, sexual and narcotic rebellion.

⁵⁷ See M Donnelly, *Sixties Britain* (Pearson, Harlow, 2005), p27; E Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (Michael Joseph, London, 1994), pp328-329.

⁵⁸ B Osgerby, *Youth in Britain Since 1945* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1998), p5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, pp6-10 list concerns that Victorian juvenile delinquency was fed by degenerate cultural preferences, such as ‘penny dreadfuls’, gambling and the music-hall, while even throughout the war, where generations might be expected to respond harmonically in response to a shared threat, the rise of the ‘spiv’ attracted as much horror as the later Teddy Boy.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp32-37; pp64-65.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, pp17-21, cites education and national service as institutions that adjusted the perception of a distinct youth culture, while pp22-26 demonstrate how changes in the labour market tended to favour youth and generally increase their disposable income. So, irrespective of the fact that class distinctions remained (those who remained in education had less disposable income and sometimes different cultural outlets than those without qualifications who took the option of a ‘dead-end’ job – providing mostly disposable income - while waiting for the call-up), and that the pattern changed with the end of national service and the huge expansion of higher education in the 1960s, young people generally were able to spend more money on leisure pursuits than previously. Greater teenage spending power is also cited as a major force in the development of 1960s popular music by D Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (Little Brown, London, 2006), p97.

⁶² The reference to pubs as ‘dull and dingy’ again comes from Osgerby, *Ibid*, p41.

New venues that targeted wider audiences than the much-vaunted youth market included the Dolce Vita and the Mayfair - and, for that matter, most CIU clubs. These provided pop and ballroom dancing, as well as cabaret entertainment that had gradually metamorphosed from the music halls into the modern mass culture of the day. Sunderland saw similar developments: pubs closed to make way for road building, while cabaret/dance-based nightclubs such as Wetherells and La Strada promised unprecedentedly late licenses and a 'big-name' level of modern sophistication beyond the reach of the old venues.⁶³ Bingo – an international phenomenon – was impacting on old halls, churches and cinemas, as well as underwriting the staged entertainment in the CIU clubs. These places of entertainment, though more in keeping with the Sandbrook/Harker vision of a less-than-revolutionary 1960s popular culture, were nonetheless representative of change because of their scale and sophistication.⁶⁴

Drawing these threads together, then, while some popular-cultural institutions, notably the Oxford Galleries ballroom and J G Windows music shop, represented continuities almost as lengthy as anything that traditional music could produce, the overriding pattern appeared to be one of disruption and change.⁶⁵ In the midst of this upheaval, opening the back room up to a folk club (or any special interest group who might increase bar takings) must have appeared lucrative to many a beleaguered publican.

As reconstruction impacted upon the sites where popular music was available, it also created an urge to commemorate the built environment before its physical transformation into concrete, glass and aerial walkways. Books, songs, plays and films all drew on this recent past, rendering the lost places into heritage: this is discussed more fully in Chapters Six and Seven, but is noted here as another distinct

⁶³ See M Kirtley, *Sunderland in the Sixties* (Wearside Books, Sunderland, 1995), pp34-35.

Significantly, by 1965, Lonnie Donegan was part of this cabaret circuit, playing at La Strada on 7th February.

⁶⁴ D Harker, 'Still Crazy After All These Years: What was popular music in the 1960s?', in B Moore-Gilbert and J Seed (eds), *Cultural Revolution? The challenge of the arts in the 1960s* (Routledge, London, 1992), 236-254, p251. See the Introduction of this thesis for a fuller account of the Sandbrook/Harker viewpoint.

⁶⁵ The publicity materials for Whitley Bay Jazz Festival date the opening of the Oxford Galleries to a 1925 visit by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra: (<http://www.northeastengland.co.uk/page/news/article.cfm?articleId=1518>). J G Windows' family-owned shop, still open at time of writing, was established in 1908.

discontinuity: where once innovations were mostly welcomed, they were now greeted with scepticism.⁶⁶ At the start of the folk revival, the North East's industrial decline was not particularly evident, although echoes of the 1930s were still keenly heard.⁶⁷ As the 1960s progressed, as economic change, mechanization, and diversification transformed or destroyed old patterns of work and community, some major cultural discontinuities were inevitable. In the colliery villages, as pits closed, those still employed as miners might move into suburban 'semis' not too far from the larger pits where they were relocated, while the houses in the old colliery rows were bought by incomers.⁶⁸ The inter-reliance of villagers in these formerly mono-industrial settlements receded, and, with it, the certainty of identity. This led to a gradual loss of the residual culture's focal points, such as the local band and banner parading through the village before being bussed into the Big Meeting or the Miners' Picnic. The effects of similar changes on inner city communities (for instance in the loss of entire swathes of slum housing in Scotswood, Sunderland and elsewhere) might have been less overwhelming, but could not be denied. The demographic changes noted in rural Northumberland by Aitken now also affected the industrial centres.⁶⁹ This was further exacerbated by the haemorrhaging of congregations from organized (particularly Protestant) religion and the cultural webs that the churches supported.⁷⁰ If the established communities that supported traditions, that transmitted culture through the generations, were disintegrating, a new community was needed to ensure some of this cultural identity was retained. This kind of more diffuse community based on specific personal interests was something that developed throughout participatory musical movements. It was more wide-reaching than the romantic *gemeinschaft* model, but it was hardly an example of

⁶⁶ Regarding welcoming innovations, see, for example, J Hill, *The High Level Hornpipe*, "The High Level Hornpipe", (John Baty manuscript tune book, c1841-1860), Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum, MU187/John Baty 8; and R Nunn, *The Fiery Clock Fyece*, collected in S Reay, (ed/arr), *Album of Tyneside Songs Vol IV* (Windows, Newcastle, 1920), pp16-17.

⁶⁷ Regarding the fact that industrial decline was not particularly evident at the start of the period, see D Byrne, 'The Socio-Spatial Reconstruction of the Great Northern Coalfield, 1961 to date' (unpublished symposium paper, *Post-industrial Mining Communities – Past, Present and Future*, Northumbria University, 2006), p1, which selects 1961 as its starting point because of the relative buoyancy of the industry at the time.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p7.

⁶⁹ Heather H Aitken, *Northumberland Village Halls* (Northumberland Rural Community Council, Newcastle, 1959), p10.

⁷⁰ A Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (Pelican, London, 1982), p101, states that even by the start of the 1950s under ten per cent of the population were regular churchgoers. Also D Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A history of Britain from Suez to The Beatles* (Little Brown, London,

heterogeneous and commercially-driven *gesellschaft* either – if anything, this type of community was a way of coping with the latter. Finnegan’s concept of ‘urban pathways’ seems to provide an excellent explanation for these coalitions of interest:-

something overlapping with, but more permanent and structured than, the personal networks in which individuals also participate. They form broad routes set out, as it were, across and through the city. They tend to be invisible to others, but for those who follow them they constitute a clearly laid thoroughfare both for their activities and relationships and for the meaningful structuring of their actions in space and time.⁷¹

Social and ritual dances, jazz appreciation societies or pub-singing were just some of the established social and musical pathways out of which the folk scene emerged. Over time, a discontinuity was evident as the folk movement established its own conventions, its own widespread community. As we shall see, one of the primary forces that carved these new pathways was folk music’s vanguard of mediators.

Mediators

This section will emphasize that the second folk revival in the North East requires a more nuanced understanding of mediation than that which has been more generally applied, particularly to the first revival. Such existing accounts characterize folk mediation as, at best, interference; at worst, theft: expert collectors who were external to the communities from which they drew their material claimed to ‘save’ the culture of another social group, all the while adapting it to suit the needs and tastes of their own milieu.⁷² This rest of this chapter will demonstrate how social

2005), p122, highlights the trend that while belief in a deity was not drastically reduced, church attendance was in steep decline.

⁷¹ R Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-making in an English town* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp323-324. A particular brand of these pathways, where 1960s youth tribes drawn from all over the region went on outings together in the way that neighbourhood communities had once done, is articulated by D Douglass, *Geordies, Wa Mental* (TUPS, Newcastle, 2000), p196.

⁷² This kind of behaviour clearly did occur: Goldstein has drawn attention to the fact that collectors assumed that, because ‘source’ singers made changes to songs during oral transmission, then this was also permissible for the mediators: this, of course ignored the fact that the first group of changes derived from within a peer group, while the second involved following the ‘cultural

transformations led to a wave of mediators drawn from internal sources: young people who were often only one generation away from the traditional culture that they sought to maintain and communicate. This will lead to an examination of the parallel influence of external mediators, and of the role of institutions such as state-sponsored arts projects, learned societies and structures inherent within the folk clubs. As with the previous discussion of continuities, the overriding picture is one of constant interplay between mediation and tradition, and this chapter will suggest that it is an oversimplification to view these two forces as separate and oppositional.

As previously stated, theorists of folk revival, from Harker to Boyes and Brocken, have tended to view mediation as the expropriation of culture from one class or social group to further the specific interests of another. This was not necessarily a new development. Patronage – by the lord who retained pipers or the organizer of the local dance – had long shaped tradition. It is less likely that it had also consciously designated an entire folk culture, and this is the distinction that separates mere patronage from the mediations that occurred from the Romantic era onwards. Herder and Rousseau, Walter Scott, Cecil Sharp and the brothers Grimm, were thus all mediators in this process, whereby the “otherness” of “the folk” provided a vibrant alternative to mundane modernity. Storey summarizes:

Although folk culture survived in the oral traditions of the folk, they did not really understand the treasure they held, and furthermore, they were disappearing as a group; therefore, it was the task of intellectuals – the true inheritors of folk culture – to secure its continuation with a view to using it to solve the social and cultural problems produced by industrial capitalism.⁷³

While this assessment has obvious merits, applying it uncritically to all folk revivals presupposes two important factors. First, it has to be assumed that intellectuals of different eras held broadly similar preoccupations to those at the Romantic turn of the nineteenth century, and that these represented a hegemonic dominant ideology in which subordinate cultures and debates were mere shadow boxing within an overall pattern of consensus, manipulation and coercion (the ‘myth of cultural integration’

imperatives of their [the mediators'] own society’: K S Goldstein, ‘Bowdlerization and Expurgation: Academic and folk’, *Journal of American Folklore*, 80, 1967, 374-386, p384.

which Archer comprehensively undermines).⁷⁴ Secondly, it suggests that mediators necessarily originated from an entirely different social milieu than the folk. There were certainly aspects of the second revival that confirmed these assumptions, for instance critics such as Bob Davenport and George Melly have decried the way in which traditional musicians were produced like 'lantern slides' to illustrate the preoccupations of mediators such as EFDSS or Alan Lomax.⁷⁵ However, there is also strong evidence that other facets of the second folk revival contradicted this pattern, and that these were particularly noticeable in the North East.

Within this region, the commonly recognized form of folk mediation had run its course, from Scott to Bruce and Stokoe, a good generation prior to Cecil Sharp and the foundation of EFDSS. Although some external collectors continued to make incursions into the region (their role is discussed later in the chapter), many mediators of the second folk revival, especially within the North East, displayed considerably more blurring with their traditional communities. Ian MacDonald (notwithstanding the anomaly highlighted earlier) noted some parallel changes:

What began to happen from around 1963 was a decisive shift of power from producers to consumers in the business of identifying what is popular, deciding how this music is to be packaged and controlling the way new developments in style are labelled and sold.⁷⁶

As pop fans wrested at least some control from the hands of music executives, so did folk enthusiasts reclaim their understanding of the music from the established authorities on tradition. Thus, many significant individuals in the second revival may not have been involved in expropriation from another class, they may not have set down definitions from on high, but they would appear to fit Becker's template of

⁷³ J Storey, *Inventing Popular Culture* (Blackwell, Oxford, 2003), p14.

⁷⁴ M Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp18-19; 48-51.

⁷⁵ The 'lantern slides' comment is from Bob Davenport: B Davenport, interviewed by author, 16th March 2005, recording in my possession; also P Webb, 'Davenportal', *fRoots*, issue 261, March 2005, 36-41, p37. See also G Melly, *Owning Up* (Penguin, London, 1970), p134: this describes Lomax's interminable and patronizing introduction of Bill Broonzy at the Conway Hall in London, 'I found Lomax extremely paternalistic. I knew he'd done a great deal for the blues ... but I got the impression that he felt he owned them.'

‘moral entrepreneurs’, ‘active in pursuit of causes, which they justifi[ed] in terms of fundamental ethical, religious or political principles’, who made it ‘their business to promote the status and reputation of a particular artist or musical genre’⁷⁷ Within this scenario, every club organizer or performer within the revival and outside of the continuous tradition became a mediator of sorts, regardless of their origins.

Yet it is undoubtedly the case that class issues continue to loom over any discussion of folk mediation, and these are best characterized by contrasting two opposed conceptions of the folk clubs. A L Lloyd’s 1963 account of the Birtley folk club, then at the Three Tuns:

the colliers aren’t obscure men in flat caps: they are smartly, even sharply dressed and one might take them and their womenfolk for a superior roadhouse clientele – until they open their mouths to sing.⁷⁸

differs sharply from Leslie Gofton’s portrayal of ‘singarounds’,

“It’s like folk clubs,” one pub manager said with a grin, “a middle class game.”

I know just what he meant. I remember going into a local folk club with two miners who were just having a pint before the ten-at-night shift. A local social worker, who was lustily singing one of Jack Elliot’s pit ballads, could hardly suppress his astonishment at the invasion. The audience, who seemed to be either schoolteachers or town planners, turned to stare at the aliens.⁷⁹

The problem with the latter analysis is that the authentic “folk” are equated solely with the industrial working class. Many of the new mediators – regardless of

⁷⁶ I MacDonald, *The People’s Music* (Pimlico, London, 2003), p193. A similar pattern has been noted by N Crowe, ‘Melody Makers’, *Prospect*, Issue 124, July 2006, <http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/printarticle.php?id=7538>.

⁷⁷ H S Becker, *Outsiders* (New York, 1963), paraphrased in P J Martin, *Sounds and Society: Themes in the sociology of music* (Manchester University Press, 1995), pp184-185.

⁷⁸ A L Lloyd (producer Douglas Cleverden), *Songs of the Durham Miners, Part 1*, BBC Third Programme, pre-recorded 18th September 1963.

⁷⁹ L Gofton, ‘Real Ale and Real Men’, *New Society*, 17 November 1983, 271-273, pp271-272. See also J Lowe, quoted in C Irwin, *In Search of Albion* (Andre Deutsch, London, 2005), pp216-217: ‘One of my mates said ‘If you were working down there, you wouldn’t be singing about it in pubs every night.’

whether or not they were now social workers, teachers, or town planners - had their origins within that class.⁸⁰ They derived their 'outsider' status from post-war circumstances, particularly one significant discontinuity from earlier social structures: the rise of further and higher education.

The impact of the 1944 Education Act and, later, the Robbins Report in creating a new meritocratic layer of intellectuals was felt throughout Britain, but in an area so predominantly working-class as the North East, the expansion of educational opportunity was sure to have a disproportionate effect. Prior to this, the region may not have been an educational desert (there were Sunday schools, trades union and WEA education, scholarships, and civic institutions like the 'Lit & Phil' and the Miners' Institute), but for the majority of inhabitants destined for shipyard, colliery or hill-farm, opportunities for learning were not easy to grasp, and were not great forces for social mobility.⁸¹ Those activities that were made available by cultural improvers – such as the settlement houses in Bensham and Spennymoor; the Left Book Club and Mass Observation, or the library rooms in working men's clubs - could be seen as precursors of the folk clubs: built on voluntarism often coupled with the inspiration of bohemian mediators who moulded the artistic expectations of their students, they relied on a self-help ethos among the target community.⁸² Such

⁸⁰ See also H Hopkins, *The New Look: A Social History of the Forties and Fifties in Britain* (Secker and Warburg, London, 1963). pp38-39 explain how this demographic shift had already taken place within the Parliamentary Labour Party, who had set the agenda for much of the post-war consensus. Harker has discussed some parallel 'migrants and getters-on' - the songwriters who caricatured Geordies in the early nineteenth century, but they appear to differ from the 1950s generation in attitude, with the early nineteenth century writers displaying their 'superiority' and disdain for those unable or unwilling to defer gratification. This became more blurred by the mid-century as at least partly shared political aims led to an 'overlap between skilled labour and radicalised ... petit-bourgeois': D Harker, 'The Making of the Tyneside Concert Hall', *Popular Music*, 1, 1981, 25-56, p41 and p45.

⁸¹ For instance, it is reported that Tom Clough, "the prince of pipers", was prevented from taking up a scholarship at the Royal Grammar School because the coal owner insisted (on threat of dismissal of their father and eviction of the family) on the next generation of Cloughs joining their father down the mine. C Ormston and J Say, *The Clough Family of Newsham* (NPS, Morpeth, 2000), p21. Regarding the WEA, Newcastle's branch was established in 1912.

⁸² Regarding settlement houses and their arts clubs, see N Vall, 'Cultural Improvers in North East England 1920-1960: "Polishing the Pitmen"', *Northern History*, 41/1, 2004, 163-180, and N Vall, 'Bohemians and 'Pitmen Painters' in North East England, 1930-1970', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 5/1, 2004, 1-21; also W Feaver, *Pitmen Painters: The Ashington Group 1934-1984* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1988). Regarding the Left Book Club and Mass-Observation (and their largely middle-class participants), see J Hinton, 'Middle-class Socialism: Selfhood, Democracy and Distinction in Wartime County Durham', *History Workshop Journal*, 62, Autumn 2006, 116-141. M Benney, *Charity Main – A Coalfield Chronicle* (Allen & Unwin, London, 1946), pp102-103, demonstrates this trend within the local clubs: referring to a library room at the back of East Tanhope's (the town was a fictionalized composite of the Durham colliery villages Benney

educational projects were mostly aimed at enriching existing lifestyles, and were sometimes preoccupied with the paternalistic concept of enabling the working classes to ‘make the “right use of leisure”’.⁸³ Further, there is evidence that some who were involved in voluntary intellectual activity felt marginalized and struggled with what Hinton has termed the ‘paradox of democracy [an expressed belief in equality] and distinction [an underlying Arnoldian sense of cultural superiority]’.⁸⁴ Rarely did these projects radically change their participants’ social status, and even more rarely did they position the ‘primitive’ artist on an equal footing with their bohemian discoverers.⁸⁵ From the 1950s, however, the more fundamental widening of mainstream educational opportunities meant that children from blue-collar families were no longer almost inevitably bound for the same social stratum: it became possible for much larger numbers to escape into the office, art school, teacher training college, “redbrick” university or polytechnic, all without necessarily having to leave the region. Education and intellectual growth were even enshrined in town planning:

The centres of excellence are clustered around brains, not coal. So far as the North was concerned in 1950, we had to try to get people to understand that it was not just a question of pulling down houses and rebuilding, but of entering into a dialogue on the enrichment of life.⁸⁶

visited) working men’s club, it further highlights considerable interest in WEA classes, local history and obtaining scholarships to Ruskin College. See also J Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (Yale University Press, 2001), and C Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Harvard University Press, 2006) which disputes Rose’s argument regarding the decline of the autodidact tradition.

⁸³ A Olechnowicz, ‘Unemployed Workers, ‘Enforced Leisure’ and Education for ‘The Right Use of Leisure’ in Britain in the 1930s, *Labour History Review*, 70/1, April 2005, 27-51, p28. He further (p39) emphasizes the tensions between volunteers’ democratic self-governance and the settlements’ interest in rational recreation, citing an occasion when Farrell, the warden of Spennymoor Settlement – however much he believed in ‘experiential’ over didactic education - overruled the men’s decision to turn the ‘common room’ into ‘something resembling a Bar parlour’.

⁸⁴ J Hinton, ‘Middle-class Socialism: Selfhood, Democracy and Distinction in Wartime County Durham’, *History Workshop Journal*, 62, Autumn 2006, 116-141, p119.

⁸⁵ A very few artists from the settlement houses, such as Sid Chaplin and Norman Cornish, moved out of their previous occupations to become professional artists, but these were exceptional examples. See N Vall, ‘Bohemians and ‘Pitmen Painters’ in North East England, 1930-1970’, *Visual Culture in Britain*, 5/1, 2004, 1-21, p7, and p14. This has a parallel with Cecil Sharp’s relationship with morris dancer and musician William Kimber, which, though a genuine friendship, could not be considered one where either man considered the other his social equal. The quoted paradox is from a case study of the construction of the self derived from Mass Observation diaries by two County Durham schoolteachers: J Hinton, ‘Middle-class Socialism: Selfhood, Democracy and Distinction in Wartime County Durham’, *History Workshop Journal*, 62, Autumn 2006, 116-141, p119.

⁸⁶ T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle, 1970), p30.

Dan Smith saw benefits in Newcastle's newly independent university and polytechnic remaining within his modernist city centre: 'student and businessman and shopper together, there could be all-round enrichment'.⁸⁷ Thus the nationwide expansion of the Stundertry found a considerable and visible concentration on Tyneside.

In his study of the commodification of country music from the 1920s onwards, Richard A Peterson has offered an explanation of the relationship between tradition and the modern mediators (including architects of modernity like Henry Ford) who sought to preserve it:-

they tended to see country music and its makers ... as the mirror image of their own aesthetic and goals. It was country to their city, the unchanging past to the rapidly changing present, the rear-guard to their avant-garde.⁸⁸

This raises a significant issue. Were the mediators who most keenly sought out the old-time traditions those whose own lives had been most touched by modernity? This theme is further developed by Livingston, who suggests that revivals arise out of an oppositional discourse usually initiated by a core group of middle-class individuals alienated in some way from the mainstream, who seek authenticity in the endangered music of a historic 'golden age'.⁸⁹ In the case of North East England from the 1950s to the 1970s, this would appear to have some validity. It serves as an explanation for why Dan Smith should initiate the *Blaydon Races* centenary celebration (discussed more fully in Chapter Six) alongside his vision of a modern, educated and technological Newcastle. And it provides a more attractive solution (compared to the common depiction of revival as middle-class costume party) to why

⁸⁷ Ibid, pp42-43. Regarding Newcastle University, it broke away from its former status as King's College, Durham University in 1963.

⁸⁸ R A Peterson, *Creating Country Music – Fabricating Authenticity* (University of Chicago Press, 1997), p57. Ford's concern for indigenous music stemmed not only from his famed dislike of all 'foreign' influences, be they European, African or Jewish but also from a belief that the evils of modernization and urbanization – in which he ironically had a large hand - had to be eased through temperance and a regression to more 'innocent' cultural forms.

⁸⁹ Livingston, T E, 'Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory', *Ethnomusicology*, 43, Winter 1999, 66-85, p70

higher education spawned so many folk enthusiasts.⁹⁰

While any extension of higher education was sure to cause a cultural shift, it has been influentially argued that the art schools in particular represented a cauldron of change that melded high art expectations and analyses with pop cultural expressions.⁹¹ These colleges, open to the less academically dedicated, provided a new forum for working class youth, and turned them into self-aware mediators of their own culture. This is clearly evident with respect to the pop musicians (such as John Lennon and Eric Burdon) who could produce raw rock'n'roll but also understand and deconstruct their own work in the language of fine art. Within the genre of folk, this influence was obvious among the 'cool', 'boho' youth who introduced their peers to such obviously poetic or political figures as Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, or Roy Harper and John Martyn. In the North East, Graeme Miles honed his songwriting skills while at art college, and Geoff Heslop, who was to have considerable say in which songwriters and which traditional source musicians were recorded and distributed by Impulse and (later) his own Black Crow studios, first heard folk music through being introduced to recordings of Bert Jansch while studying at art college in the mid-'60s⁹².

This was not unproblematic: the involvement of bohemians (generally perceived as individualistic) in folk music (generally perceived as collective), was seen as contradictory, as Karl Dallas indicated:-

Despite the early influence of Woody Guthrie, a true folk poet ... most of the solo singer-songwriters from Bob Dylan onwards are Byronic rather than

⁹⁰ Nonetheless there were elements of role play. J Crinson, *Standard English, the National Curriculum, and linguistic disadvantage: a sociolinguistic account of the careful speech of Tyneside adolescents*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1997, p226, has highlighted how dialect and non-standard English are most widespread in areas of lower educational achievement and social mobility, and therefore some from the new generation of academic opportunity must have opted back in to their local dialect, at least while performing.

⁹¹ See S Frith and H Horne, *Art Into Pop* (Methuen, London, 1987), pp2-10. See also D Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (Little, Brown, London, 2006), p65, which reinforces all of Frith and Horne's comments but adds that at the time Britain had more art schools per head than any other country.

⁹² H Dene, 'Geoff Heslop: Standing on the shoulders of giants', *Living Tradition*, 62, May/June 2005, 24-26, p24. Regarding Graeme Miles, M Howley, 'Graeme Miles – and a vision of a Teeside [sic] tradition', *Living Tradition*, Issue 35, November/December 1999, 20-23, p20.

folk, which is hardly surprising when one considers their middle-class, college-educated background.⁹³

In a sense, several of the Geordie songwriters typify this pattern – Alex Glasgow and Alan Hull being the most obvious examples, though it should be noted that both of these artists worked largely outside of the folk scene. Glasgow firmly aligned himself with ‘the people’ while voicing his frustration at ‘highbrow’ attempts to perform in a uniform ‘folk’ style devoid of personality: ‘What such people forget is that this is entertainment ... artiness, rather than art, takes the upper hand.’⁹⁴ In any case, is this dichotomy - of folk-versus-individual expression - valid? The Byronic turn was seen as a departure from a past where folk was acknowledged as collective music, but this collectivist idea itself was forged in the late nineteenth century by ardent cultural nationalists and then taken up by leftists steeped in the ideologies of a proletarian dawn. Viewed at a more distant perspective, in sight of some of the music’s known originators, the matter is slightly different. There was little collective, and plenty Byronic, about the ‘mad, bad’ eighteenth century Northumbrian piper, Jamie Allan. The ideal of collectivism was one more layer of mediation.

Additionally, as Frith and Horne contend, ‘there’s a significant strand of bohemian thought that romanticizes normality’, and this has obvious relevance to traditional music.⁹⁵ As discussed above, earlier folk mediators had been mostly genteel visitors to the exotic land of “the folk”. By the 1960s the new bohemians had sprung from “the people”. Like the young poets who were rediscovering Basil Bunting at the Morden Tower (where Alan Hull claimed to have played his first ‘gig’), these intellectuals - or as Tom Pickard has it, ‘spotty, beautiful struggling youth’ - were as likely to have originated from a council estate as from a leafy suburb.⁹⁶ They

⁹³ K Dallas, ‘The Roots of Tradition’, in D Laing, K Dallas, R Denselow, & R Shelton (Eds), *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock* (Methuen, London, 1975), 83-136, p130.

⁹⁴ A Grimes, ‘What Have Highbrows Done To Folk Songs?’, *Evening Chronicle*, Thursday 9th July 1964, p6.

⁹⁵ S Frith and H Horne, *Art Into Pop* (Methuen, London, 1987), p21. See also N Vall, ‘Bohemians and ‘Pitmen Painters’ in North East England, 1930-1970’, *Visual Culture in Britain*, 5/1, 2004, 1-21, especially p3.

⁹⁶ T Pickard, interviewed 2002 by Chris Groom, Lindisfarne official website, <http://www.lindisfarne.de/home2.htm>. The reference to ‘spotty, beautiful’ youth, is from T Pickard, ‘Morden Tower’, *Muther Grumble*, Issue 13, June 1973. See also D Douglass, *Geordies, Wa Mental* (TUPS, Newcastle, 2000), p108 and p214.

adopted enough of the language of the academy to enable reinterpretation of traditions to suit their ideals. And these ideals would in turn shape which traditions they adopted. This democratization of bohemian lifestyles and intellectual interpretive tools was a clear break with both tradition and the first (more obviously mediated) revival. Just as Scott Dobson served a dual role within 1960s Newcastle – as a respected modern artist and as the originator of the nostalgia-heavy *Larn Yersel' Geordie* – , two leading folk performers of North Eastern origin, Colin Ross and Bob Davenport, were also products of the art schools, both as sculptors.⁹⁷ Davenport had to reconcile the intellectualism of the art world with his strongly held views on the egalitarianism of vernacular music. His championing of the incongruously populist Boldon Banjoes around the folk clubs proved as controversial as anything that might have emerged from the *avant garde*.⁹⁸ Ross was also able to deal with modernism and tradition simultaneously, encouraging the use of innovative sculpture materials such as polystyrene while also developing the skills of handcrafting ivory, wood and silver into Northumbrian pipes.⁹⁹

It was no accident either that Ross found employment in Newcastle Polytechnic's Department of Education: even more of an educational hotbed of folk music was to be found within the teacher training colleges.¹⁰⁰ While the art schools might encourage bohemianism and innovation that fed popular culture in general, the process of teacher training, focussed upon transmitting knowledge through the generations, was sure to emphasize the appeal of other inter-generational forms like traditional music. Schools had long been used as sites of folk music mediation: Sharp, Neal and Gillies Whittaker had all viewed folk music as an educational tool, and this attitude continued through BBC schools broadcasts such as *Singing Together*.¹⁰¹ Many teachers were therefore already well versed in traditional music

⁹⁷ S Dobson, *Larn Yersel' Geordie* (Frank Graham, Newcastle, 1970). This is further discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis. See also N Vall, 'Bohemians and 'Pitmen Painters' in North East England, 1930-1970', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 5/1, 2004, 1-21, pp13-14.

⁹⁸ The Boldon Banjoes were incongruous within the folk scene as they were far more likely to play *When the Saints Go Marching In* than *Lord Randall*. One informant recounts an uncomfortable evening at the Birtley club, where the only person in the room who appeared to enjoy the group's renditions of parlour songs and music hall ditties was their mentor, Davenport. D Sutherland, correspondence with author, 12th April 2005.

⁹⁹ 'Have-a-go at instant sculpture', *Whitley Bay Guardian*, 2nd May 1969, p19.

¹⁰⁰ 'Who Pays the Piper?', *Journal*, 21st November 1979, p8.

¹⁰¹ See Cox, G, 'The Legacy of Folk Song : The Influence of Cecil Sharp on Music Education', *British Journal of Music Education*, 7/2, (1990), 89-97; M Neal, *The Esperance Morris Book Parts*

and ideally placed to join the new wave of revival. Among the many North Eastern folk artists to emerge from teacher training institutions were Ed Pickford, Kim Bibby-Wilson, David Oliver, Jez Lowe, Keith Gregson, and Bob Fox, while Laurie Charlton, Johnny Handle, Alistair Anderson and Tom Gilfellow were all schoolteachers at some stage.¹⁰² Entire folk clubs, such as Ashington's Lampglass Arts Centre Folk Club and Hexham's Hydro were started by schoolteachers or trainees.¹⁰³ With a large number of teachers working influentially within the folk scene as organizers and performers, it is fair to surmise that a sizeable proportion of the audience also emanated from this source. And even those teachers with less influence over the folk clubs were able to set in train a form of mediation outside of the folk scene *per se*, as they introduced elements of folkloric knowledge to their pupils. Eventually, this form of tutelage would develop into the teaching sessions that became an integral part of most folk festivals (including the Northumbrian Gatherings), and would mature in very recent years to the establishment of educational initiatives such as Folkworks and the new BMus in Traditional Music (both North Eastern institutions). The infrastructure of folk clubs was, therefore, much less structured and formalized than the more obviously mediated tea dances and concerts of EFDSS, but the leading lights of both networks seemed to share a profound urge to educate.

Even when the students were not aspiring artists or teachers, though, there appeared evidence that further and higher education, or at least upward mobility were key factors in creating the new mediators that peopled – and moulded - the folk clubs.¹⁰⁴ Hebdige has drawn attention to the 'aspirational' aspects of Mod culture, but there was a sense in which the aspirations of many young people drawn to the folk revival were already so securely met by their qualifications and professional status that they

1 and 2 (Curwen, London, 1910 and 1912); Gillies Whittaker, W, *North Country Songs for Schools* (Curwen, London, 1921).

¹⁰² Schoolteachers had also been early catalysts for the Scottish folk clubs. See C Harper, *Dazzling Stranger: Bert Jansch and the British Folk and Blues Revival* (Bloomsbury, London, 2000), p56, which highlights the roles of teachers Morris Blythman and Norman Buchan of Allen Glen's Secondary School and Rutherglen Academy respectively.

¹⁰³ The Ashington club was initiated by a group of teachers from Seaton Hirst Junior School.

¹⁰⁴ This trend was to continue: by the time Niall MacKinnon compiled his 1986/7 survey of the folk scene, the folk clubs boasted a disproportionate number of people educated to degree level (35% of folk club attendees compared with 8% of the nation as a whole). N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1993) p140.

did not need an Italian suit to prove their worth: indeed, it was quite the reverse.¹⁰⁵ Many of the young people who populated the folk clubs had apparently already achieved something beyond that which was expressed by the Mods' conspicuous "white collar" consumption. They could therefore, like Ruth Katz's second-generation immigrants, afford to look backwards to their roots.¹⁰⁶ This was expressed by opting out of the trappings of showbusiness and into (as MacKinnon puts it) a 'construction of informality' in performance place and style (which will be further discussed in Chapter Eight)¹⁰⁷ and in elements of nostalgia for identities that many revivalists were escaping. Once again, this effect was particularly strongly felt in a region previously so heavily oriented to "blue-collar" occupations, and a vanguard of new Geordie patriots were born out of time spent at university. As Connell and Gibson have it, 'mobility triggers new attempts at fixity'.¹⁰⁸ The greater the possibility of leaving the region, the greater the personal significance of its culture, and the perceived need to retain its cultural capital.¹⁰⁹ The epiphanies of Louis Killen and Alex Glasgow while studying at Oxford and teaching in Germany respectively have already been noted in Chapter Two. David Oliver is a further example of this phenomenon:

I went to Leeds University and luckily got a place at Sadler Hall On my third or fourth night, after the evening meal, we were asked to assemble in the student common room, and a rapper team came in and danced ... It was electrifying and I was instantly won over. A couple of evenings later there was a 'session' (completely new concept to me) in the Warden's flat. The Warden was a Tyneside man who had danced with the Kings Men while at Kings College Durham ... It is ironic (but not uncommon) that I spent my entire childhood and upbringing in the North East and remained totally

¹⁰⁵ D Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Methuen, London, 1979), p55; p77; pp86-87.

¹⁰⁶ Ruth Katz noted that, while first generation immigrants were keen to integrate into their host culture, their children, more secure in their position, were keen to investigate their cultural origins. R Katz, 'Mannerism and Cultural Change: An Ethnomusicological Example', *Current Anthropology*, Vol 11, Issue 4/5, (Oct-Dec 1970), 465-475.

¹⁰⁷ N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Buckingham, 1993), p80. A film clip of Louis Killen, Anne Briggs and the Watsons discussing the 'larger-than-life' performances of some source singers indicates that some revivalists at least questioned this constructed informality: D Knight (producer/director), *The Watsons - Travelling for a Living* (1965, Topic DVD, TSDVD549).

¹⁰⁸ J Connell and C Gibson, *Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place* (Routledge, London, 2003), p46.

¹⁰⁹ This need to retain cultural capital was articulated through the relatively early interest within the region in "heritage": see Chapter 5.

unaware of the existence of Northumbrian Pipes, rapper and clog dancing , border ballads, ... until I left the area.¹¹⁰

The Warden described above is a clear example of these academy-based mediators, passing on the folk heritage he had learned while at university to the next generation who were in his care, and it is unsurprising that his own inspiration was drawn from one of the earliest revival dance sides in the North East. The Kings' College Morris Men were founded in 1949 by professor of civil engineering, Bill Cassie, and student Alan Brown with the initial intention of dancing on a rag week carnival float. Despite their nomenclature, the first dance they learned was not morris, but the Winlaton Rapper dance¹¹¹. As the side continued to develop throughout the 1950s, they became collectors and chroniclers of rapper and sword dances, which they then transmitted to the new sides they formed wherever they moved after graduation.¹¹² They also returned the dances to their traditional homes, on winter tours around the working mens' clubs and pubs of the pit villages:-

Ye're brave chaps comin' here," said one old miner to me; "this is whear the champeens come fra."

One of the pleasant aspects of these tours is that there is no need to explain to the audiences what it is all about. "The sword dancers!" they say when we appear, and settle down to enjoy the show. They have seen it often in the past, and there's not so much sword dancing now, but it warms their hearts to see it again. ...

The pitmen don't mind what dance is performed; to them it is just "the sword dance." At one time teams performed in every village, and figures were copied and interchanged; if the team could develop a new figure they did. The artificial 'freezing' of the rapper traditions by publication indicates a static condition which never existed ... [although]... We met many old sword dancers, and the leader of the old Prudhoe team said he had seen someone on

¹¹⁰ D Oliver, responses to questionnaire devised by author, 22nd April 2005. This is also put very succinctly in David Holmes' response to a questionnaire returned to the author on 1st March 2006: when asked when he became aware of North Eastern musical specialness, he responded 'When I left it'.

¹¹¹ 'Team History', *Newcastle Kingsmen Sword Dancers* website, <http://www.kingsmen.co.uk/team/teamhistory.php>.

¹¹² Alan Brown formed the Monkseaton side in 1955, while other university teams sprang up from former Kings' Men teaching at Leeds and Keele.

the wrong foot! “The Winlaton men neevor dae that!” said one old boy in a disapproving tone.¹¹³

This last paragraph seems central to the way the new mediators worked. The prescriptive and definitive tone of a Sharp, a Child or a Scott has been replaced by an understanding that groups such as the Kingsmen are maintaining living traditions that are not owned by them.

Once again, the shift was symptomatic of a general trend towards democratizing culture, encouraged by intellectuals politically aligned with ‘the people’. Lancaster highlights some of the most powerful of these mediators, who brought popular culture, folklore and iconography to a broad audience in the interests of regionalism:-

it was two men from a far-left background, Frank Graham and Dan Smith, and the bohemian Scott Dobson, together with the left-leaning Frank Atkinson, who served as the impresarios of the post-war Geordie cultural revival.¹¹⁴

Dobson and Graham are discussed more fully in Chapter Five, while the roles of Smith and Atkinson in developing notions of North Eastern heritage are explored in Chapter Six. Suffice it to say here that these figures were, indeed, mediators and with a wide sphere of influence far beyond the more limited demographics of the folk scene. Yet their backgrounds and aims meshed very closely with several leading mediators who were an integral part of the folk music revival. Although the linkage between far-left politics and the folk clubs was far less formal in the North East than elsewhere (particularly London) much of the music available carried a political subtext. Much of the fascination with ‘the people’s music’ derived from the left. And some of the national folk revival’s politicised vanguard were highly active in the region.

¹¹³ B Cassie, ‘Rollicking Rapper’, *English Dance and Song*, 16/4, Feb/March 1952, 120-121, pp120-121.

A L Lloyd's role in the rediscovery of many North Eastern miners' songs has already been noted in Chapter One, and his work with North Eastern artists for the BBC and for Topic Records will be discussed in Chapter Five. Many of his pronouncements on the region's songs were rapidly absorbed and accepted as truisms, even those that were overstated, such as his insistence that the vibrancy and modal nature of tunes within the industrial villages was due almost exclusively to Irish influence.¹¹⁵ His role as a mediator was largely in relation to the perception of repertoire: for instance, he extended and romanticized the relevance of *The Blaydon Races* beyond anything to do with Harry Clasper, beyond anything regional, and into the realms of Marxist class identities:-

from being a Geordie anthem, it has become a piece of national property, part of the cultural baggage of the entire English working class.¹¹⁶

Although he visited the region's folk clubs frequently, he did not appear to have a direct impact on the manner in which they functioned, indeed, his performance style was distinctive enough from that found in the North Eastern clubs that it was often viewed as positively exotic, and something to be appreciated rather than imitated.¹¹⁷

By contrast, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger's influence over parts of the North Eastern revival extended beyond the power of their recordings and broadcasts. Even their forays into the local clubs were not necessarily the most powerful way in which

¹¹⁴ B Lancaster, 'Sociability and the City' in R Colls and B Lancaster (Eds), *Newcastle upon Tyne: A Modern History* (Phillimore, Chichester, 2001), p337.

¹¹⁵ One such statement can be heard in A L Lloyd (writer/presenter), D Cleverden (producer) *Songs of the Durham Miners Part 1*, BBC Third Programme, pre-recorded 18th September 1963. Chapter Three has already noted claims that the Irish musical influence was overstated, but see also J Murphy, *Heritage and Harmony: Case Studies in Folk/Popular Music and the construction of historical identities within the North-East of England, 1877-1988* (MA dissertation, University of Sunderland, 2003), p81.

¹¹⁶ A L Lloyd, 'The Hullabaloo at Blaydon', *Sing Out!*, 14/2, April/May 1964, 34-37, p35. That the song reached beyond the region is undoubted, but many might see it less as a form of 'glue' unifying the English proletariat and more as a symbol of difference with which different regional identities might belittle each other

¹¹⁷ D Sutherland, 'If Only ... A L Lloyd', 'Aalll Mek Baalls and Sing', *Traditions at the Tiger* magazine, Autumn 2003.

they could mediate their version of folk music to the people of the North East.¹¹⁸ They were able to shape the agenda more directly by educating and influencing the region's own mediators. This was achieved by a great deal of personal contact, from recording the Elliott family for Folkways to inspiring Killen, Reavey and Handle to follow the 'policy' if not to the letter at least in spirit, as Killen recalls:-

I'd spent the summer down in London working with MacColl on *Song of a Road* ... in '59. ... In '61 I'd been down there working all the early part of the summer or late spring on the Big Hewer and all this time I'd stayed at MacColl's ... I came back and Johnny had been down with MacColl and getting some of the influence there. I think John [Reavey] was the one who was insisting that everyone in the club, even the floorsingers, should just sing British material. Folksong and Ballad became known as a British-only club, and you'd be damned if you sang any American material. I remember Laurie Charlton saying 'It's terrible you know, I love all those old American ballads' ... but he was the chairman and he went along with it.¹¹⁹

Thus, for some of Folksong and Ballad's leading figures who had first entered the folk realm via blues and skiffle, the patronage of the London folklorists subtly altered the mental space in which folk song existed. By extension, the club's floorsingers and audience would also find their conception of folk music changed. Even for the staunchly independent Elliotts, the folklorists' patronage both encouraged them to set up their own club and, via the Smithsonian release, created the framework in which the rest of the world (and perhaps the Elliotts themselves) perceived their lives, songs and stories. The North East was once again counterposed as a site of proletarian authenticity against the artifice of London:-

Whereas the heroes of the Cockney music-hall songs are, all too often, sentimental dustmen or costermongers vending Panglossian chestnuts, the heroes of the North-East music-hall songs are pitmen, rowdy keelmen and fishwives ready to fight at the drop of a hat. It is true that they are often presented as a drunken, roystering, hell-raising crew but this is not always the case; there are times when we get glimpses of striking miners and starving children and, whether they are drunk or sober, these heroes and heroines

¹¹⁸ For an example of these visits, see Advertisement for Folksong and Ballad Club with Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger as guest artists, *Sing*, 6/8, April 1962, p87.

¹¹⁹ L Killen, interviewed by author, 30th March 2004, recording in my possession. *Song of a Road* was transmitted by the BBC on 5th November 1959. *The Big Hewer* was transmitted on 18th August 1961.

insist on bringing us face to face with a real world in which the Saturday night 'booze-up' is followed by the Monday morning hangover.¹²⁰

There is little in this contrast with which the Elliotts were likely to disagree, however, the oppositional terms in which it is stated are clearly the work of mediators with a specific agenda. It is striking that this agenda could be a negative force, for instance when traditional sources appeared at odds with a folklorist's wider critique. In the case of the North East, at least one interviewee has reported that MacColl's diktats regarding polished performance caused Jack Elliott to contemplate retirement.¹²¹

Whether positive or negative, people like MacColl and Seeger were setting in motion chains of mediation that travelled downwards through the folk scene from the recognized folklorist through the club committee, via the performers, eventually touching even non-participant members. As discussed in Chapter One and earlier in this chapter, the Elliott family represented the same type of 'poacher-turned-gamekeeper' as Bob Copper or Séamus Ennis. These were source musicians who, through involvement with the revival and its institutions, also became mediators of other aspects of the tradition. As the organizers of one of the region's seminal clubs, from which many others sprang, the Elliotts' ethos would have a powerful influence over the region as a whole. And, strong though their convictions were, their self-image and awareness of their role within folk music was undoubtedly altered by the perspectives of those outsiders who interpreted their music.

A similar process, by which traditional musicians redefined themselves as a result of a mediator's gaze, was underway in the Northumbrian tradition. This time, though, the mediation did not derive from the left but from the old Establishment. During his short spell as EFDSS's North East Area Representative, Peter Kennedy found 'remnants of tradition' (the assumption was almost always that these were no longer ongoing, but only recently deceased), that prompted him to collect and categorize,

¹²⁰ E MacColl and P Seeger, Sleeve notes to *The Elliotts [sic] of Birtley* (Smithsonian Folkways LP, FG3565, New York, 1962), p3.

¹²¹ B Davenport, interviewed by author, 16th March 2005, recording in my possession.

proselytize and institutionalize.¹²² His recording of Tommy Edmondson playing the *Trumpet Hornpipe* found its way into the BBC library where it gained lasting fame – thought not in Edmondson’s name - as the theme for *Captain Pugwash*.¹²³ Kennedy also claimed to have instituted the fiddle contest at the previously piping-oriented Alnwick Gathering.¹²⁴ And, inspired by Jack Armstrong’s promotion of the old music via the ‘Barn Dance’ (something already moulded by the broadcast media, as discussed above and in Chapter Five), Kennedy

set about trying to put this idea across in different kinds of circles. I gave sample Barn Dances to adult and youth clubs, community centres, colleges ... I included, too, a talk about the traditional music and played examples of reels, jigs, hornpipes.¹²⁵

The question arises whether many of the village ‘hops’ so symbolic of continuity to the young urban revivalists were in actual fact offshoots of Armstrong’s and Kennedy’s projects, though the likelihood is that Kennedy was inflating his own importance in the process by overlooking the dances that were organized outside of his own ambit. Where Kennedy’s role was undoubted was in his discovery and mediation of style

I soon discovered that more important than the actual tune was how to play them. To spread the techniques over a wider area we had to get the shepherds into the ear of the public.¹²⁶

EFDSS approval could only consolidate existing ways of playing among the ‘source’ musicians, and this was further compounded by the self-censoring of repertory that was common among informants when faced with a collector:-¹²⁷

¹²² P Kennedy, ‘Discovering ‘The Barn Dance’ in the North East’, *English Dance and Song*, 15/1, July 1950, 10-11, p10. Kennedy was NE Area Representative from 1947-1950.

¹²³ P Kennedy, email correspondence with the author, 6th April 2005, states that the tape’s acquisition by the BBC was inadvertent, but it would be hard to imagine its finding its way into their library without Kennedy’s name being involved.

¹²⁴ P Kennedy, interviewed during *Folk Britannia Part I* (BBC4, 3rd February 2006).

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, pp10-11.

¹²⁶ P Kennedy, ‘A Singer’s Notebook’, *Sing*, 5/3, July 1960, p42.

¹²⁷ For a very concise, if polemical, account of selectivity and the self-censorship of informants, see D Harker, *Fakesong: The manufacture of British ‘folksong’ 1700 to the present day* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1985), p207.

I searched out traditional musicians and exchanged tunes with them ... The older dancers racked their brains and the younger ones soon forgot that quicksteps were the 'done thing'.¹²⁸

Once again, mediation could be viewed as shaping the style, repertory (canon formation) and philosophy of not only the revivalists but also of those still within the tradition.¹²⁹

So far, the mediators discussed have been individuals, but the mention of EFDSS in relation to Kennedy serves as a reminder that there were also institutionalized forms of mediation. The long term impact on the region (albeit mostly within a small coterie of enthusiasts) of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society was to gradually cement the sound of the pipes into the popular imagination as a soundtrack to 'Northumbrian-ness'. Since the early nineteenth century, mediators had taken it upon themselves to safeguard this instrumental tradition, and the Society had existed, in two separate incarnations, from 1877.¹³⁰ It used familiar forms of stylistic control: competitions, membership requirements and tutelage, while repertory was approved via its publications.¹³¹ Yet its influence on 'source' practitioners might be considered less widespread than might be expected, indeed there are some instances where the reverse applied. The acknowledged giant of smallpiping in the 1950s and '60s was Billy Pigg, whose idiosyncrasies (cascades of decorative notes and borrowings from the open-fingered Irish and Scottish piping traditions) marked him

¹²⁸ P Kennedy, 'Discovering 'The Barn Dance' in the North East', *English Dance and Song*, 15/1, July 1950, 10-11, p11.

¹²⁹ Analyses of canon formation include: B Filene, "'Our Singing Country": John and Alan Lomax, Leadbelly, and the Construction of an American Past', *American Quarterly*, 43/4, December 1991, 602-624; V Gammon, 'Folk Song Collecting in Sussex and Surrey, 1843-1914', *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 10, Autumn, 1980, 61-89; Dave Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British 'folksong', 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes, 1985); Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester, 1993).

¹³⁰ J Murphy, *Heritage and Harmony: Case Studies In Folk/Popular Music and the construction of historical identities within the North East of England, 1877-1988*, (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Sunderland, 2003), pp21-52.

¹³¹ Sometimes these publications were linked to other arts institutions, such as the North-east Association for the Arts: TWA 924/113 contains a July 1966 circular which confirms that the North-east Association for the Arts will financially assist the publication of W A Cocks and F J Bryan, *The Northumbrian Bagpipes* (NPS, Newcastle, 1967). Regarding the control of style via membership requirements, Item 4 of the Society's 1960 Rules (TWA 924/155) states, in continuation of earlier policy, that 'only those persons who shall have played to the satisfaction of the Executive Committee ... shall be eligible for election as Playing Members'.

out as anything but a Society-approved purist.¹³² Proving once again that tradition and mediation were permeable, each drawing aspects from the other, Pigg was highly influential upon young revivalists even beyond the North East, such as Richard Thompson.¹³³ Perhaps, in an era that revelled in the technical brilliance and individualistic expression of Hendrix, the wider musical world was simply ready for Billy Pigg, and this interaction of tradition, mediator and *zeitgeist* will be discussed below.

Meantime, the North East branch of EFDSS, under the guidance of organizers such as Tony Foxworthy, continued to promote and publicize traditions.¹³⁴ They gave prominence to North Eastern sword dance sides (as they had done since the Society's inception), and also gradually established links with the folk clubs, particularly in collaborative events that showcased Northumbrian 'source' musicians such as Billy Conroy, Jimmy White and Billy Pigg.¹³⁵ EFDSS's enthusiasm for festivals may have been a catalyst for the establishment of the various Northumbrian 'Gatherings', indeed their 1949 Hexham Festival (the same year as the first Alnwick Gathering) was advertised as 'a new kind of Folk Dance Holiday' and hailed retrospectively as 'A Landmark'.¹³⁶ The process of mediation that defined North Eastern traditions in terms of 'otherness' was evident in Douglas Kennedy's account of the event:

¹³² Irish uilleann pipes and the Highland bagpipes both use open-fingered chanters that emit a sound perpetually and where repeated notes have to be separated from each other by grace notes, or "cuts"; Northumbrian pipes have a closed fingering system, which means that when all fingers are on the chanter, no sound is emitted. This leads to players being able to separate notes easily, and to a distinctively *staccato* articulation.

¹³³ R Thompson, quoted in C Irwin, *In Search of Albion* (Andre Deutsch, London, 2005), p203. Thompson proclaimed 'I had no idea English music could sound like that ... suddenly I heard someone who played with the same passion that Maria Callas sang.'

¹³⁴ Examples of publicity given by EFDSS to North Eastern traditions include *English Dance and Song*, Special Edition: The Folk Music of Northumbria, Spring 1970; and *The Geordieland Folk Directory* (EFDSS, undated, c1975).

¹³⁵ Many issues of *English Dance and Song* contained references to rapper sides appearing at EFDSS sponsored events, but some examples are as follows:- 'National Colliery Music Festival, Haringay Arena', *English Dance and Song*, 12/2, May 1948, p32; 'The Northern Festival', *English Dance and Song*, 14/1, January 1950, 4-5; 'Festival Performances at the Royal Albert Hall', *English Dance and Song*, 15/5, March 1951, p169. An account of a collaborative event between the folk clubs and EFDSS is given by J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

¹³⁶ *English Dance and Song*, 13/1, January 1949, p2; D Kennedy, 'The Hexham Festival – A Landmark', *English Dance and Song*, 13/4, July 1949, 56-58.

The inhabitants are English, but to a Southerner the spoken word, the songs, the dance-steps and the rhythms are such that he might think he was in a foreign country.¹³⁷

and this exoticism was useful to those wishing to revivify the cultural centre: 'many more must go North to Hexham next year, and each year something of this live tradition must be imported south.'¹³⁸ While stressing the vitality and continuity of the regional tradition, however, EFDSS overlooked a key aspect of the social context of some of their performers' lives: because this was an Easter event, 'none of the shepherds off the fells was able to come because lambing was in full swing'.¹³⁹ The needs of the mediators were therefore prioritized over those whose music provided their source.

It might be argued that similar processes were underway in the organization of the folk club or festival committee, who could dictate on behalf of their membership what traditions would be favoured, and in what form of presentation.¹⁴⁰ This was touched on previously in relation to the influence of MacColl and Seeger on *Folksong and Ballad's* policy. Regarding institutional aspects, festival committees were obvious filters which sorted the 'folkloric' from the 'fake'. Alnwick Gathering began in 1949 with George Mitchell, stalwart of Alnwick Pipers Society and Cheviot Ranter, as prime mover. Morpeth Gathering followed in 1966: initiated and dominated by teacher and passionate Northumbrian Roland Bibby.¹⁴¹ Both carried forward the previous revival's fascination with 'Northumbrian-ness' and its mechanism of stylistic control: the competition.

The folk clubs themselves held few more powerful tools of mediation than their 'residents', those more adept and established performers who were sufficiently committed to a particular club (and often part of its committee) that they could be expected to open and compère each evening's session. Sometimes, there was cross-

¹³⁷ D Kennedy, *Ibid*, p56.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p58.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p56.

¹⁴⁰ The North East Folk Federation might have seemed a similarly likely candidate in this mediation of what was appropriate, but appears to have remained more strictly organizational in its approach

¹⁴¹ S McGrail and S Harley, 'The Moothie Man', *Living Tradition*, Issue 45, Nov/Dec 2001, 25-26, p26.

fertilization with other modes of mediation: Foster Charlton was both a founder of Folksong and Ballad and Secretary of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society.¹⁴² As regards internal club politics, the cachet of becoming President or 'Hon Sec' of similar interest-based organizations was perhaps less evident: official titles were out of place in the levelling ethos of the revival. Interviews and questionnaire responses give a general impression that many club organizers, secretaries and doorkeepers fell into their task by default, as rare individuals willing to undertake thankless administrative chores in order to further their enthusiasm.¹⁴³ However, whether or not there was any personal gain, and whether or not they sought to dominate, club residents shaped the hierarchies and sense of connoisseurship that represented each club's version of folk music.¹⁴⁴ As Livingston puts it, such mediators joined with acolytes (who turn lone voices into a movement) to 'create a new ethos, musical style, and aesthetic code in accordance with their revivalist ideology and personal preferences'.¹⁴⁵ Club residents subtly dictated acceptable repertory through the distribution of song sheets, and modes of performance (such as 'tasteful' accompaniment) – as well as the reception these might gain from the audience.¹⁴⁶ Folksong and Ballad was noted as a club with a particularly daunting arrangement in this sense: floor singers and guest artists alike were expected to perform with the residents seated on the platform behind them, almost like a judging panel.¹⁴⁷ All but the latter were widespread facets through which organizers could mould a club's perception of what was acceptable as 'folk music', and most clubs coalesced into identities built around their residents' particular refractions of the tradition. Hence,

¹⁴² Charlton was NPS Secretary from 1960-1969.

¹⁴³ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession; J Bentham, questionnaire response, 31st March 2006; P Lucas, questionnaire response, 10th April 2006.

¹⁴⁴ See M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), pp110-122. Further examples of hierarchy within a folk club are given in J L Smith, 'The Ethogenics of Music Performance: A Case Study of the Glebe Live Music Club', in M Pickering and T Green (Eds), *Everyday Culture: Popular Song and the Vernacular Milieu* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987), 150-172, pp156-157.

¹⁴⁵ Livingston, T E, "Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory", *Ethnomusicology*, 43, Winter 1999, 66-85, p70

¹⁴⁶ Folk Song and Ballad Club, *Broadsheet No 8: 'The Unquiet Grave'* (Newcastle, 1962): songsheets and the rapid turnover of material among resident performers was another borrowing from MacColl's *Ballads and Blues* club, see Ewan MacColl, *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1990), p287; also C Irwin, *In Search of Albion* (Andre Deutsch, London, 2005), p151. Regarding prescriptive attitudes to accompaniment, see L Charlton, 'Notes on Accompaniment', *Spin*, 2/2, 1962, 10-11.

¹⁴⁷ N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1994), p26. C Fyffe, interviewed by M Sutton, 5th August 2004, recording in my possession, noted the sense of exclusion that some floor singers felt in the presence of the Bridge residents.

while Folksong and Ballad was built around enthusiasts of local tradition, The Viking at Jarrow, run by members of Hedgehog Pie and contemporary duo Lamplight, would lean towards the singer-songwriter, and South Tyne Folk & Blues Club developed around a coterie of blues connoisseurs such as Pete Mason and Jim Murray. Of course, (as highlighted in Appendix One, enthusiasts travelled between clubs and there was therefore considerable overlap between the genres, but loyalty to a particular club usually involved a corresponding belief in the version of folk music supported by its residents.¹⁴⁸

This raises the question, does the mediator create the scene or does the *zeitgeist* create the mediator? Stanley Fish has suggested that cultural leaders may in fact respond to ideas negotiated within 'interpretive communities' that act 'in accord with pre-established, albeit not necessarily articulated, habits and conventions'¹⁴⁹. This returns the discussion to Finnegan's 'urban pathways' discussed previously: perhaps the mediators were not so dominant as might be supposed, and perhaps they were already travelling along tramlines laid down by a critical mass of ideas from an interested sector of the public. There can be no doubt that some of the more general arts policies that touched the folk movement were reactive, responses by those in power to cultural changes already underway in society, nor that some cultural discontinuities were spurred by structural elements, creating a cyclical pattern of change from below and its adoption and moderation from above. Melly described it as turning a 'revolt into style'¹⁵⁰ which neatly summarizes the ways in which raw rebellion can be tamed and adapted into a recognizable generic type. Archer takes this pattern and develops it into a more nuanced understanding of the interplay

¹⁴⁸ P Lucas, Questionnaire response, 10th April 2006: 'As a club organizer what kinds of music/song did you try to promote?'; 'It was more important to book artists who would fill the club. The audience, in effect, chose the style of music'.

¹⁴⁹ Fish's ideas are here summarized by R C Holub, 'Rewriting an Ideological Consensus: Institutions, Nationalism, and the Function of Literature', *MLN*, 106/3, April 1991, 699-711, p706.

¹⁵⁰ G Melly, *Revolt into Style: The Pop Arts in Britain* (Lane, London, 1970).

between culture and agency. Again, the path is cyclical, with each 'revolt' (periods of radical restructuring, or *morphogenesis*) developing out of the existing 'style' (periods of consensus, or *morphostasis*), and these changes becoming consolidated into new stable cultural practices which in their turn will be challenged (Figure 2)¹⁵¹:-

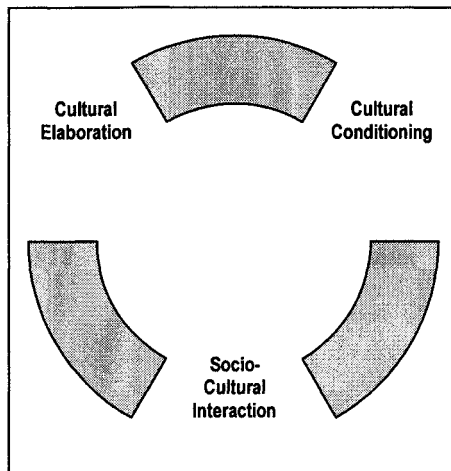


Figure 2: Diagram representing Archer's conception of culture and agency

This constant dialectic between established cultural practices and those who challenge them applies very well to the development of a tradition. It is also a vital force in the making of a mediator: one who mediates between the structure and the

agents. Many of those mediators described above originated out of a *zeitgeist* of mistrust in the system, and then, ironically, became leaders of a new folk Establishment against whom dissent was directed. Others followed a more Sharpian route, whereby they were already part of an Establishment that sought to develop and encourage popular culture as a social salve.

Louvre has highlighted how 1950s political thinkers like Crosland observed a move away from entrenched assumptions about culture:-

To speak of the cultivation of leisure, beauty and grace in the context of a programme of legislation was to depart from that line (joining Arnold to Leavis) that saw 'cultivation' as naturally self-propagating, too subtle and profound for political tinkering. To conceptualize cultural life in terms of social as well as narrowly aesthetic pursuits (as cafes and fashion styles as

¹⁵¹ In this diagram, I have paraphrased the way Archer applies structural analysis to the cultural in M Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp xxiv-xxv, and p315. This analysis has already been applied to aspects of popular music by J Watson, *Northern Beats: The impact of North American popular music in Leeds and Newcastle upon Tyne, a comparative study, c1956-c1963* (unpublished MRes Dissertation, University of Northumbria, 2006), pp 6, 7 and 19-20.

well as concerts and novels) and to speculate on cultural opportunities for the masses was to break with the elitism of liberal theory.¹⁵²

While acknowledging that culture was broadening to include the coffee houses, folk clubs and teenage consumption, this way of thinking also placed culture within the remit of government planning. Both local government and the Arts Council that had grown out of the wartime (Keynesian and patriotic) CEMA¹⁵³ were involved with promoting certain cultural strands in this perceived new leisure society:-

Keynes told his listeners ‘We of the Arts Council are greatly concerned to decentralize ... the artistic life of the country. Nothing can be more damaging to the nation than the excessive prestige of metropolitan standards and fashions. Let every part of Merry England be merry in its own way.’¹⁵⁴

Despite the rhetoric of provincialism there were hints of tokenism. The North-east Arts Association’s President, Owen Brannigan, was a famous operatic bass and a noted interpreter of Geordie and Northumbrian songs, which he used in TV advertisements for Scottish & Newcastle beers, but also frequently as encores to more serious programmes: the vernacular arts might be considered similarly, as ‘added extras’ to the main agenda. State funding was prioritized for prestige events of the kind that might not be ‘self-propagating’, so in the feverish climate of theatre and arts centre building¹⁵⁵, there were strong echoes of the old cultural improvers’ educational drive, with the arts councils subsuming or replacing many existing voluntary educational projects.¹⁵⁶ Within the North East, alongside the birth of Northern Sinfonia and the championing of Pasmore’s modern sculpture, the folk

¹⁵² A Louvre, ‘The New Radicalism: the politics of culture in Britain, America and France, 1956-73’, in B Moore-Gilbert and J Seed (Eds), *Cultural Revolution? The Challenge of the Arts in the 1960s* (Routledge, London, 1992), 45-71, pp51-52.

¹⁵³ Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts.

¹⁵⁴ Weight, R, ‘Building a new British culture’: the Arts Centre Movement, 1943-53’, in Weight, R and Beach, A (Eds), *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (Tauris, London, 1998), 157-180, p159.

¹⁵⁵ For instance, the National Theatre’s South Bank home opened its doors in 1963, the same year as the Nottingham Playhouse. Newcastle’s new University Theatre opened in 1970.

¹⁵⁶ Regarding the cultural improvers who aimed to bring enlightenment via the settlement houses and arts clubs, see N Vall, ‘Cultural Improvers in North East England 1920-1960: “Polishing the Pitmen”’, *Northern History*, 41/1, 2004, 163-180 and N Vall, ‘Bohemians and ‘Pitmen Painters’ in North East England, 1930-1970’, *Visual Culture in Britain*, 5/1, 2004, 1-21; also W Feaver,

music event that attracted most funding from the regional arts association in this era was a large-scale display of diversity in a part of the region not noted for cultural infrastructure: Teesside International Industrial Eisteddfod.¹⁵⁷

This apart, any case for governmental tinkering in the North Eastern folk revival is far from proven: indeed state-funded initiatives appear to have made relatively few inroads into the promotion of North Eastern folk music. The pattern of arts funding in the region is instructive. In 1967/8's projected expenditure, music took the bulk of the budget (£53,550 compared to Drama's £31,800 out of a total budget of £159,960), but vernacular forms were comparatively poorly funded:-

MUSIC	Provisional Allocations 1967/8 ¹⁵⁸
Northern Sinfonia Orchestra	35,000
Concerts by Visiting Symphony Orchestras	3,000
Music, Choral and Orchestral Societies	2,000
....	
Teesside Industrial Eisteddfod	1,750
...	
Jazz ¹⁵⁹ ,	2,800
Folk Music	750

Even though EFDSS's presence as an umbrella organization for traditional music and dance may well have led to a shortfall in funding from other sources, and government grants were likely to be targeted more generic events that included folk music (such as Newcastle Festival), it is evident that the Arts Association still gave low precedence to vernacular music.¹⁶⁰

Pitmen Painters: The Ashington Group 1934-1984 (Chatto & Windus, London, 1988), particularly pp17-22, pp128-134.

¹⁵⁷ North East Arts Association, *North East Arts Report '67* (Newcastle, 1966), p19. The Sinfonia was founded in 1958. See B Griffiths, *Northern Sinfonia: A magic of its own* (Northumbria University Press, Newcastle, 2004); Regarding Pasmore, see T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle, 1970), p140. North East Arts Association founded in 1961 which later became Northern Arts.

¹⁵⁸ North East Arts Association, *North East Arts Report '67* (Newcastle, 1966), pp27-28.

¹⁵⁹ Jazz North East became Britain's first grant-funded jazz-promoting organization with its inaugural concert on March 31st 1966: 'North -east passage', *Jazz UK*, 68, March/April 2006, p9.

¹⁶⁰ Heather H Aitken noted some similar issues, *Northumberland Village Halls* (Northumberland Rural Community Council, Newcastle, 1959), pp23-24:- 'Events organised by the Arts Council had been enjoyed in several villages, but the Arts Council must beware of getting a name for being too heavy and highbrow. Concerts by local people were the most popular suggestion.'

Yet undoubtedly, there were moments when government and local councils did mediate folklore. Such promotion legitimized the music, which in turn legitimized the event. The 1962 Blaydon Races Centenary event might have seemed hollow regional boosterism or nostalgic propaganda had it not been for its Festival of Traditional Arts and Dancing held at the Mayfair Ballroom.¹⁶¹ This event accounted for £343 of the £1776 Musical Entertainments budget which also funded a brass band concert and a 'Pageant of Youth'.¹⁶² The implication underlying such events was that Dan Smith and his council did not need to invent traditions in order to create such potent *lieux des mémoires*: the traditions were still in place and ready for the youth to carry them forward. Once again, a duality is evident: mediators emphasized continuity but they were important factors in maintaining that continuity.

The Northumbrian Traditional Group, formed by full-time businessman and part-time accordionist Joe Bennett specifically for the opening night at Balmbra's, were key players in the Blaydon Races event. As such, their role would appear to be as mediators of tradition. Yet their links with still working miners from Backworth and Shiremoor (who became the dance and comedy group, The Shiremoor Marras) and their performance practice demonstrate another example of the blurring of continuity and mediation so prevalent in the North East. One informant recalls seeing Bennett, 'debonair in a smart blue blazer' accompanying the Shiremoor Marras or other sword teams, as part of a mixed evening's entertainment in local CIU clubs:

Sometimes local TV personalities Mike Neville and George House would be billed, sometimes top comedians Bobby Thompson or Dicky Irwin. I remember a 'Shadows' cover group called 'The Phantoms'....Back then, and back there, rapper often had to 'cut the mustard' alongside the very best in general entertainment. ... it was hard to stay in your seat once Joe got started, the tunes he used were all 'music hall', where rapper surely had a second home, if not it's [sic] first. ... at the end of these concerts, pop groups, comedians, magicians and all, you'd hear comments like, "By, but them sword dancers were good, mind," as you filed out.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Advertisement, *Evening Chronicle*, June 8th 1962.

¹⁶² Newcastle upon Tyne City and County Council, Minutes, Blaydon Races Centenary Committee, 19th December 1962, pp19-20.

In accounts such as this - as with the Elliott Family, with Jack Armstrong and Billy Pigg, and with Alistair Anderson's promotion of the three shepherds (Hutton, Taylor and Atkinson) - it is difficult to ascertain where continuity from the village hop or the music hall stopped and mediation by the revival began. As noted throughout this chapter, this was a source of pride:-

Folksong and Ballad – is unique among the clubs which form the backbone of the folksong scene in this country. It is a club formed and run by revivalists in a part of the country where the tradition is still very much alive.¹⁶⁴

This is an overstatement: the blend of revival mediation and source performers was a distinctive element in north eastern folk music but it was not unique. North Eastern Scotland provides a notable comparison, as does Sussex, with traditional performers like Scan Tester welcomed into the local clubs, and the Copper family's own club (a mix of traditional transmission and revival infrastructure) clearly paralleling the Birtley club of the Elliot family.¹⁶⁵ What is rather more unusual is the linking of such continuity with a specific regionalism, something that separated North Eastern folk culture from the rest of England, and this has more in common with the nationalisms associated with the Celtic countries – in this case mirroring, not their quest for political separation, but their declarations of cultural distinctiveness.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ F Lee, 'Why Those Tunes?', <http://www.the-nut.net/>.

¹⁶⁴ Anthea Joseph, 'Dovetailing into the Tradition on Tyneside', *Sing*, Vol 1, No 5, January 1962, 48-49, p48.

¹⁶⁵ See C Bennett, *Sussex Folk: The Folk Song Revival in Sussex* (Country Books, Bakewell, 2002), especially pp169-192; R Hall, *I Never Played to Many Posh Dances': Scan Tester, Sussex Musician, 1887-1972* (Musical Traditions, Essex, 1990); and T Hendry, 'Will Duke & Dan Quinn – Music for Lungs and Bellows', *Living Tradition* 57, March/April 2006, 18-19, p19. For North-East Scotland, see I Russell, 'Competing with Ballads (and Whisky?): The Construction, Celebration, and Commercialization of North-East Scottish Identity', *Folk Music Journal*, 9/2, 2007, 170-191, p179 refers to just the same kind of source-revival mix.

¹⁶⁶ Or, in the case of Cornwall, Celtic counties. Cornwall has its own very particular blend of regionalism. Like the North East, it is an area at the farthest reaches of England, and therefore only too aware of its peripheral status, but, unlike the North East, it also has an element of pan-Celtic nationalism. See P Payton, *The Making of Modern Cornwall: Historical Experience and the Persistence of Difference* (Truran, Redruth, 1992). In the cases of other continuous traditions, such as those in Norfolk and Sussex regional identity is less strongly stated (the emphasis is more on a sense of distance from the engines of change), while some industrial areas with equally chauvinistic regional sensibilities – such as Lancashire - are less prone to citing continuous folk traditions as the source of their specialness.

This, then, is the construct that holds together the continuities, discontinuities, and the mediators: that a key indicator of North Eastern particularity was to be found in its unbroken folk traditions. It may have derived from the narratives of folklore 'experts', but it permeated beyond the regional folk scene, into the wider revival and, more significantly, into the implied discourses that underpinned regional identity. The following chapter will analyse a sector that was pivotal in disseminating these concepts: publishing and the media.

Chapter Five

Selling Coals to Newcastle: The media and publishing in relation to North Eastern folk music

Almost unnoticed, the jungle is closing in. The amusement industry, which formerly ignored traditional music begins to feel that money is to be made from the folk song revival.

A L Lloyd, 1961¹

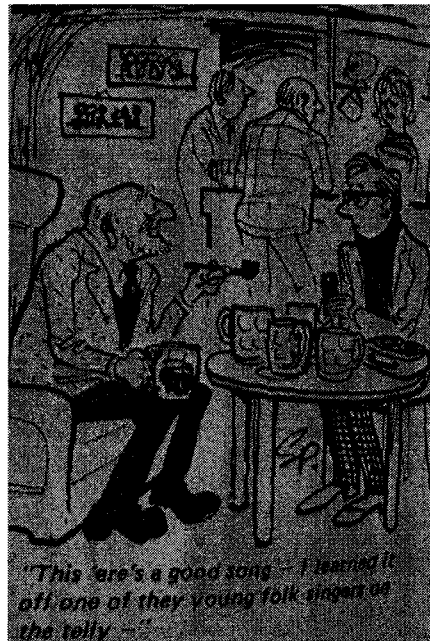


Figure 3: Cartoon from *Club Folk* magazine, 1968²

¹ A L Lloyd, 'Who Owns What in Folk Song?', *English Dance and Song*, Special Edition, New Year, 1961, 15-18, p15.

² Uncredited cartoon, *Club Folk*, 1/7, November/December 1968, p14.

The relationship of folk revivals to the media and the cash nexus is inevitably fraught with difficulties. While the above quotation and cartoon relate to the wider (inter)-national folk scene, they illustrate the problems inherent in presenting any tradition in a commercial setting. On the one hand, the professional expertise of publishers, broadcasters, record companies and distributors was necessary (prior to the internet) to disseminate music however passionately it was promoted by amateur enthusiasts. On the other, such dissemination is mediation of a very pervasive nature, and it undermines the idea that folk music is a handmade, localized art. Furthermore, textualization, whether through print, broadcast or recording, fundamentally fixes a piece of once-evolving tradition into the appearance of ‘permanence’ and ‘stability’, legitimized by ‘authority’.³ These, then, are the key issues that underpin this chapter: how did the media and publishing aid the North Eastern folk revival, and how, in the process did they transform the traditions they promoted?

I will begin to explore this topic by analysing some general issues and parallel cases that help to contextualize what occurred within the North East. Next, as each medium had its own particular impact upon the revival, each will be considered in turn, beginning with radio and television, followed by sound recordings and publishing. Some theatrical presentations are closely analysed elsewhere in this thesis, particularly in Chapter Seven, therefore I have opted to concentrate here on those media that provided dissemination over a wider range than a live audience, with the bulk of the chapter weighing on those media that underwent most rapid growth in this period, namely radio, television and recordings.⁴ Regarding film, apart from one abortive project for Jack Armstrong in which ‘Burl Ives ... visited Jack many times and invited him to Hollywood to make a film which was to be called *The Pied Piper of Hamelyn*’, any North Eastern iconography evident in the rare feature films set in the region (such as *Get Carter*) did not exploit traditional

³ D Atkinson, ‘Folk Songs in Print: Text and Tradition’, *Folk Music Journal*, 8/4, 2004, 456-83, pp457-458.

⁴ One other theatrical production in particular should be noted. Phil Woods’ *Byker-Byker* (which dealt with the wholesale redevelopment of the area which resulted in the ‘Byker Wall’) was presented at the Newcastle Playhouse/University Theatre in 1974, and featured Benny Graham as a performer and music written by another local folk musician, Greg Stephens. Details from B Graham, email correspondence with author, 3rd April 2007; G Stephens, email correspondence with author, 3rd

music.⁵ This is worthy of note but as there appears to have been no clear relationship between film and folk music in the region it will therefore not form part of the subsequent discussion.⁶

First, then, to an understanding of the general themes relating to folk music and the media. Traditions can be moulded either actively by or reactively against the media: as Connell and Gibson put it:

Music flows across space (from oral traditions to Internet distribution) in directions and along pathways that are sometimes directed, often random, but always mediated by (or constituted as reactions against) flows of capital, new technologies or styles.⁷

There is, therefore, a constant negotiation between practitioners and the media in order to maintain a semblance of authenticity within largely commercial enterprises.⁸ But, as Chapter Four has highlighted, the question arises whether any anti-commercial preciousness is the province of those self-consciously involved in folk music (the revivalists) as opposed to those who have grown up within the tradition and are simply glad of a little remuneration. Particular instances that highlight this issue will be discussed below.

March 2006, and Doollee playwrights' website, <http://www.doollee.com/Playwrights/W/woods-phil.html>.

⁵ Fraser-Smith, D, 'Jack Armstrong: The Northumbrian Minstrel', *Northumbriana*, (No 14, Autumn 1978), 8-9, p9.

⁶ Even local film producers can recall only one example of the use of North Eastern folk music prior to 1975 and this was not in a feature film. In 1969, Amber Films produced a ten-minute 'short', entitled *Maybe* (M Martin and G Denman (Producers), *Maybe*, (Amber Films, 1969)) which was intended for television but not broadcast at the time. This used a recording of Louis Killen performing *Sair Fyeld Hinny* as theme song and soundtrack to a Shields ferry engineer looking back on his life before retirement. This narrative of ageing and change has clear resonance with the discussions below of *Bedlington Miners' Picnic* and *Sunderland Oak*, while the song *Sair Fyeld Hinny* is further explored in Chapter Seven. Amber's assertion that the film was rejected by BBC North East because the Northumbrian song was 'unintelligible' is rather surprising, given that *Sair Fyeld Hinny* was a familiar part of the repertoire of such media-friendly performers as Owen Brannigan. See Amber Films' website: <http://www.amber-online.com/html/maybe.html>.

⁷ J Connell, and C Gibson, *Sound Tracks: popular music, identity and place* (Routledge, London, 2003), p18.

⁸ For a discussion of folk enthusiasts' rejection of the enterprise aspects of the media, see M Brocken, 'The Tarnished Image? Folk 'Industry' and the Media', *Merseybeat* internet journal, <http://www.merseybeat.org.uk/default.htm>; article tarnim082.pdf.

Whether or not it provoked misgivings, by the 1950s there was a constant interplay between folk music and the media. This dialectic between the dominant culture and music at the periphery indicates that the commercial media, far from swamping folk culture out of existence, utilized it, while traditional musicians in turn made use of mass culture, thus setting up a dialogue between dominant and vernacular genres which shaped both. Even EFDSS adopted the new technologies, applying for membership of the Performing Rights Society and frequently using records for tea dances, though concern was voiced that 'new-fangled' records that played at 33¹/₃ and 45 rpm might be more prone to jumping than '78s'.⁹ Clearly even this longstanding organization saw the media as an integral part of the evolving tradition. Robinson, Buck and Cuthbert have noted the contemporary combination of 'residual and current endogenous and exogenous musics into original forms, some of which will become the dominant forms of the future'.¹⁰ This clearly happened when commercial pop music met rhythm and blues to produce rock and roll, but skiffle and the protest-folk boom were also products of a similar dialogue. This process could be seen as having existed from whenever humans first travelled and traded between different cultural groups, but it was incrementally accelerated by each innovation in mass communications.¹¹

Regarding the period under study, in an age when the radio and gramophone penetrated the most far-flung regions, local traditions were no longer local by default - by the lack of any alternative - but by choice. The tendency to discover regional traditions by way of New Orleans and Mississippi has already been noted in Chapter One. As a result of commercial enterprises and the US government's Library of Congress projects, there was a great deal of recorded American music available, albeit still subject to mediation and selectivity. This was not simply a question of what producers chose to record, but also of what enthusiasts chose to collect (thus it has been argued that a fascination with marginality among a group of New York

⁹ 'Dancing to LP's and EP's', *English Dance and Song*, 23/1, January 1959, p7 and p10. Regardless of whether or not the records jumped, using recorded dance tunes would set each dance at a metronomic tempo far more firmly than 'live' musicians.

¹⁰ D C Robinson, E B Buck and M Cuthbert, *Music at the Margins: Popular Music and Global Cultural Diversity* (Sage, California, 1991), p108.

¹¹ See Chapter Three for elements of this process. See also L Shepard, 'Broad-sides and the Oral Tradition', *Folk Scene*, Issue 5, February 1965, 3-6, which found considerable continuity between broadsides and gramophone records and their interchange with oral traditions. This gradual

collectors kept the Delta blues alive).¹² Music as a recorded artefact allowed for an even more precise selectivity than printed music: it involved not just the selection of a song or tune (as had been the case in printed collections), nor just a performer (where 'live' audiences could make their preferences felt), but of a single individual performance.

External influences were also key factors in the BBC's presentation of folk music. Technological innovations, such as increasingly portable tape recorders, allowed for more widespread location recording. Yet the expectation of purity and immediacy such recordings created was in itself a construct. Bob Davenport has argued that there were times when overdubbing a single performer playing different instruments would have produced a recording closer to its original style and context than an artificial 'session' of disparate musicians assembled by a broadcaster or record company, but that the use of studio 'trickery' was deemed inappropriate to the genre.¹³ Further developments were imported: American methods and style shaped the broadcasts themselves: Alan Lomax's arrival in Europe during 1950 and his subsequent collaboration with Peter Kennedy in recording material for both the BBC and the Library of Congress shifted presentation styles away from dinner-jackets and Received Pronunciation to a more relaxed style with a contrived 'folksiness'. These developments all lent weight to a new perception of the heritage value of vernacular music performed in a 'natural' context.¹⁴ As BBC sound archivist (and EFDSS member) Marie Slocombe proclaimed in 1952:

The actual style and personality of the performer can be preserved, as well as some of the subtleties of tune and rhythm which defy notation, and the living tradition can be studied and experienced by a wider public in a much more direct and vivid way ... we can play a part not only in preserving them

development towards ever wider dissemination – via radio and gramophone - was further noted by J Handle, 'Where Are We Going?', *Spin*, 2/7, 1963, 18-19; and 2/8, 1963, 16-19.

¹² M Hamilton, 'The Voice of the Blues', *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 54, 2002, 123-143; also M Hamilton, *In Search of the Blues: Black Voices, White Visions* (Cape, London, 2007).

¹³ B Davenport, interviewed by author, 16th March 2005, recording in my possession. The main focus of this part of the discussion was in relation to Topic's *English Country Music* LP, featuring Walter and Daisy Bulwer, playing alongside revivalists Melvyn Plunkett and Reg Hall. Walter Bulwer could have overdubbed instruments that he had occasionally used in his dance bands, such as cornet, but, even if the instrumentation had been approved, the necessary technology was not.

¹⁴ See E D Gregory, 'Lomax in London: Alan Lomax, the BBC and the Folk-Song Revival in England, 1950-1958', *Folk Music Journal*, 8/2, 2002, 136-169.

[traditions] but in giving them back to the people.¹⁵

This was part of a longer trend: the BBC had made efforts to include folk music prior to the 1950s. Sian Nicholas has traced the BBC's wartime shift in presenting the patriotic Briton from an archetypal John Bull to a more everyday John Citizen in keeping with the notion of a 'people's war'.¹⁶ Key to this was the inclusion of people outside of the metropolitan upper and middle-classes:-

Talks, discussions, features and light entertainment programmes incorporated a cross-section of regional dialects and class accents. The intention was twofold: to demonstrate to listeners in every part of the country that they too were being heard, but also to foster a sense of communal identity by portraying a democratic and inclusive nation proud of its diversity.¹⁷

It is uncertain whether the post-war interest in the vernacular would have been so apparent had it not been such a clear refutation of the kind of media manipulation seen in fascist regimes. Whatever, there was now an acceleration of interest, reflecting a trend towards acknowledging a broader concept of culture which would

¹⁵ M Slocombe, 'Round Britain with a Recording Machine – The BBC as Collector', *English Dance and Song*, 17/1, August/September 1952, 12-13, p12.

¹⁶ For example, the Cornish tune *Boscastle Breakdown* was recorded by Richard Dimbleby in October and December 1943 (BBC Sound Archive 6796 and 6918). Details from Cornish Folk Arts website: http://www.an-daras.com/music/m_tuneindex_p_boscastlebreakdown.htm tune. Similar examples of this new celebration of the heroic to be found in apparently mundane everyday life include Humphrey Jennings' *Listen to Britain* and W H Auden's *Night Mail*.

¹⁷ S Nicholas, 'From John Bull to John Citizen: images of national identity and citizenship on the wartime BBC', in R Weight, and A Beach (eds), *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (Tauris, London, 1998), p43. Interestingly, Cecil McGivern, a producer and eventual Controller of BBC Television (from 1950-1957) who originated at BBC Newcastle, is widely considered to have been the pioneer – along with Richard Kelly -within Britain of the *vox pop* interview, and of the American-style news magazine programme ('Pioneer of local radio passes away', *Evening Chronicle*, 14th March 2007). Thus, there was an early impetus within the North East towards vernacularization of broadcasting. Despite the rhetoric of 'the people's war', however, the BBC was cautious about which of 'the people' should be given a voice, restricting wartime appearances by known communists such as Ewan MacColl, see 'BBC Banned Communists in Purge', *Observer*, 5th March 2006. There were practical reasons also for the increase in vernacular styles acceptable to the BBC: Wilfred Pickles (who wished his listeners a Northern 'good neet' and who was another purveyor – via the radio programme *Have a Go* - of the *vox pop*) was employed as a national newsreader 'in December 1941 as part of Brendan Bracken's wartime strategy to foil Nazi propagandists who had become adept at imitating BBC Oxford accents' (J A Hargreaves, 'Wilfred Pickles', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004-2007).

come to fruition in the 1960s with movements such as 'history from below'. Radio, as a widely disseminated sound medium, was ideally suited to presenting folk music and vernacular culture as marketable national treasures similar to castles and cathedrals.¹⁸ This, in turn, would fuel more recordings, more broadcasts and, ultimately, further heritage projects as cultural capital was 'given back' to the people, many of whom no longer necessarily felt much affiliation with it.¹⁹ From a North Eastern perspective, however, the beginning - not long after VE Day - of the populist and popular programme *Wot Cheor Geordie* (discussed below) demonstrated that there were pockets in which the preservation of vernacular heritage and commercial/popular acceptance were not mutually exclusive.²⁰ This relatively comfortable interplay between commerce/media and folk/vernacular is a recurring aspect of local particularity and is more closely discussed later.

By and large, however, the greater power of national and international media rendered the products of London and America commonplace and those of the provinces exotic. It would be necessary for the technology, infrastructure and especially finance to be available to smaller scale companies for this situation to change. This was hampered at first by post-war austerity, which affected even those London-based companies who followed less obviously commercial routes. Topic Records, an offshoot of the politically partisan (communist-linked) Workers' Music Association, lurched financially from crisis to crisis, especially due to a miscalculation which left them in 1941 owing a 'dreadful bill' of £40 in purchase tax.²¹ Even allowing for the strictures of war and changes in the cost of living, the threatened collapse of a company over a £40 bill suggests that what would become Britain's leading folk label was a small-scale, impoverished operation when compared to the 'majors'. Bill Leader emphasizes that the pressures on such specialist companies were slightly eased by 1950s format changes:-

The important thing about LP Records, was that the unit price was significantly more than 78s. At that time a 78 sold for about six shillings

¹⁸ See also Chapter Six.

¹⁹ For an example of this phenomenon of the target community rejecting their rediscovered heritage, see N Crowe, 'Melody Makers', *Prospect*, Issue 124, July 2006, <http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/printarticle.php?id=7538>.

²⁰ PasB notes Monday July 30th 1945, BBC WAC Caversham.

²¹ Topic Record Club newsletter, May 1941, quoted in M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), p56

whereas an LP was about two quid (six times the price). So this little organisation that was trying to do its best for the culture of the working classes ... its turnover shot up because the few hundred people out there that wanted to buy these records were spending two quid a time, instead of six bob a time. ... It didn't only affect Topic, of course, it affected other specialist music like Jazz; it suddenly became viable despite crippling purchase tax at the time.²²

Viability was possible, then, but usually precarious. It would follow that record companies outside of the capital would face even bigger struggles, although, as the discussion later in this chapter highlights, the broad-based, populist nature of North Eastern culture allowed for substantially greater flexibility (and viability) in what was considered worthy of release. Meantime, North Eastern musicians had considerable impact on Topic's national sales, and again this is discussed later in this chapter.

While much vernacular music was just beginning to find currency in the national broadcast media, there was also traffic in the opposite direction. The following section will examine the impact of external traditions - imported via the media - on regional folk music, beginning with some comparative observations before considering examples of this phenomenon within the North East.

As the cartoon at the start of this chapter suggests, the output of commercial mass entertainment was sometimes co-opted into more localized performance traditions and musical vocabularies: Richard Hoggart noted the pub pianist who 'played songs that were sung seventy years ago and hit-tunes from the latest American musical, and there was no sense of a break in manner'.²³ And there was now far more rapid seepage between different traditions than was possible in the days when print, broadsheets and market-days provided the chief forums for dissemination. Shetland fisherman Thomas Fraser's first introduction to music could not have been more traditional: an older brother gave him a fiddle. But this same brother was also in the

²² Bill Leader, quoted in P Heywood, 'Bill Leader: 50 years in the recording industry part 1', *Living Tradition*, 68, May/June 2006, 26-30, p28. See also *English Dance and Song*, 23/2, April 1959, p87, which listed amended EFDSS and other folk record prices due to changes in purchase tax:- a 78rpm was indeed usually around 6/-; a 45rpm EP was 10s7½d; and LPs were between 26s6d and 34s1½d. LPs were clearly the better investment.

²³ R Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1957, Peregrine ed, 1986) p156.

Merchant Navy and returned with gramophone records from America. Fraser learned to yodel and play guitar in the style – and accent – of country and blues artists such as Jimmie Rodgers. This in turn affected his own tradition because he played among other musicians in Shetland dance bands, thus shaping what was perceived to be acceptable in the context of local music.²⁴ In a community like Shetland, culturally isolated except for the radio and records brought in by sailors, such a striking example of fusion is, on reflection, less surprising than might be expected. In which case, would the inroads made by the media have less impact upon a long established ‘melting pot’ such as Tyneside?

At least in the rural hinterland, there were clear parallels with the situation outlined in Shetland. The gramophone and radio accelerated the process whereby tunes and songs from elsewhere were adopted and adapted into the tradition. Broadcasts and recordings of Larry Adler influenced Will Atkinson’s technique, while Chapter Three has already noted the influence of Jimmy Shand’s recordings upon The Cheviot Ranters, Billy Pigg and Jack Armstrong.²⁵ Similarly, Hannah Hutton’s absorption of a rich repertoire of Scottish songs at least partly from record and radio has already been discussed.²⁶ An early development at Folksong and Ballad was to alternate the club’s Tuesday night ceilidhs with talks or record recitals, paralleling the significance of recordings to the Critics’ Group, jazz appreciation societies, and the rhythm and blues scene. Meanwhile, in country and town, a generation of children were exposed to folk songs (albeit in standardized, orchestrated, and mediated form) through the schools broadcast *Singing Together*, a typical edition of which featured *The Skye Boat Song*, *The Golden Vanity*, and *The Lass of Richmond Hill*.²⁷ This programme (alongside the widespread educational use of Gillies Whittaker’s *North Countrie Songs for Schools*) has been noted as an early inspiration

²⁴ A further instance of this cross-fertilization is to be found in the jazz-tinged guitar style of another Shetland traditional musician, ‘Peerie’ Willie Johnson. For brief biographies, see <http://www.thomasfraser.com/biography.htm> and <http://www.shetland-music.com/mgpwilie.htm>.

²⁵ W Atkinson, and W Taylor, interviewed by A Anderson and at Folkworks Northumbrian Workout, Alnwick, 19th October 1996 (recorded by Anthony Robb and available on Radio Farne: www.folknortheast.com).

²⁶ See Chapter Three. I am indebted to Alistair Anderson for this insight, given during my interview with him on 5th March 2004, recording in my possession. It is also of note that Armstrong and Shand both recorded for the Beltona label, noted specialists in Scottish music – see B Dean-Myatt, ‘Beltona Records and their role in recording Scottish Music’, Musical Traditions internet journal, Article 150: <http://mustrad.org.uk/articles/beltona.htm>.

²⁷ *Singing Together*, BBC Home Service, Monday January 21st 1963.

by several local participants in the 1960s folk revival.²⁸

The prevalence of outside influences also affected musicians who would be instrumental in the revival's first wave. Bob Davenport recalls his lifelong passion for and promotion of Irish music being spurred by

Ceilidh Hour from Radio Athlone. After the explosion [the family home was destroyed by a gas explosion] my mother and I were put in a council flat next to my grandfather and auntie My father and grandfather were killed in the explosion, and we had a bit of compensation, my mother and I, so she bought a radiogram ... it was quite a powerful one ... The Iredales lived above us and they used to knock down for *Ceilidh Hour* and they used to dance ... When I came to London and was taken to The Bedford, it was like *Ceilidh Hour* live.²⁹

Almost contemporaneously, Johnny Handle absorbed 'standards' and 'trad' jazz from radio shows in what was effectively a new form of oral transmission:-

Having a capability of picking stuff up by ear I used to come home from school at a great rate of knots because there was a programme on the wireless called *Rex Harris and Lord Donegal's Rhythm Session* and this was on at half past four for half an hour and they played jazz recordings and I was greatly taken with this. It wasn't a strictly 'trad' programme but they had a lot of material that was peripheral to traditional jazz and I heard recordings of Bunk Johnson, George Lewis, Louis Armstrong and Fats Waller and then Jelly Roll Morton and I decided this was the music for me.³⁰

By contrast, Louis Killen discovered be-bop via records brought from the USA by a brother in the Merchant Navy, but he also found the radio to be a source that gave him access to folk traditions from near and far, particularly recalling Francis

²⁸ K Gregson, interviewed by author, 12th February 2004, recording in my possession; J Spence, interviewed by author 21st October 2004, recording in my possession. W Gillies Whittaker, *North Countrie Songs for Schools* (Curwen, London, 1921).

²⁹ B Davenport, interviewed by author, 16th March 2005, recording in my possession. Davenport's mother had bought a powerful radio receiver with compensation money from a gas explosion which had flattened their home and killed her husband.

³⁰ J Handle, interviewed by Mike Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession. For this extension of the oral tradition via the media, see K S Goldstein, 'The Impact of Recording Technology on the British Folksong Revival' in W Ferris and M L Hart (Eds), *Folk Music and*

Collinson's *Country Magazine*; John and Alan Lomax's broadcasts of cowboy songs; and MacColl and Lomax's *Ballads and Blues* (which featured Humphrey Lyttleton alongside British and American folksingers, thus underlining the ideological links between the various musics concerned with authenticity).³¹ Killen also cites a notable example of cross-fertilization between the various British regional traditions: Peter Kennedy's *As I Roved Out* broadcasts.³² Beginning in 1953, this programme featured field recordings (made by Kennedy, Seamus Ennis, Sean O'Boyle, and Bob Copper) garnered under the auspices of the BBC's Folk Music and Dialect Recording Scheme, but it aired to rather limited numbers of listeners in 'the Sunday morning 'dead air' slot'.³³ The BBC was reluctant to present full-length unaccompanied songs, opting for excerpts interspersed with what were perceived to be more accessible arrangements by professional musicians. Further, Kennedy's approach to ownership of traditional material has long been controversial: many songs he recorded for the BBC were copyrighted neither as 'Trad', nor the property of the performer nor even the BBC: instead Kennedy held the rights.³⁴ Nevertheless, through *As I Roved Out*, people in the North East of England could learn about the repertoires of East Anglia's Harry Cox and Scotland's Jeannie Robertson. Drawing on his time as EFDSS's North East Area representative, Kennedy also made use of contacts from this regional tradition, though he concentrated mainly on the music of rural Northumberland. These collages of folk music from around Britain featured Northumbrian dance music alongside songs from Jimmy White.³⁵ A programme dedicated to North Eastern music was broadcast on 17th August 1958, during the show's fifth and final series, and it 'discussed the

Modern Sound (University Press of Mississippi, 1982), 3-13, p4. Also P V Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World* (Indiana University Press, 1988), p140.

³¹ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p215.

³² L Killen, interviewed by author, 9th March 2004, recording in my possession.

³³ M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), p22.

³⁴ D Schofield, 'Peter Kennedy Remembered', *English Dance and Song*, 68/3, Autumn 2006, 20-21. Also, Bob Davenport, interviewed by J Murphy, 16th March 2005, recording in my possession, cites the difficulties that arose for Harry Cox when he tried to release his own version of *The Foggy Dew* on Columbia, only to discover that Columbia would have to pay royalties to Kennedy. This account is corroborated by similar stories from, among others Louis Killen: interviewed by author, 9th March 2004, recording in my possession. Conversely, other collectors, notably Hamish Henderson and Norman Buchan, fought publishers to persuade them to pay copyright for 'Trad' songs to their source singers: see H Glasser, 'Ray Fisher: A Tremendous Sort of Feeling', *Sing Out!*, 22/6, 1974, 2-8, p5.

³⁵ E D Gregory, 'Peter Kennedy and the BBC Folk Music Recording Scheme', in I Russell and D Atkinson, (Eds), *Folk Song: Tradition, Revival and Re-Creation* (Elphinstone Institute, Aberdeen, 2004), 218-240, pp222; 227; and n.30, p234.

Northumbrian pipes, the style of country dance music played by Jack Armstrong and His Barnstormers, and the Tyneside song tradition, as well as the music of the West Yorkshire countryside'.³⁶

Thus it is evident that while the North East absorbed external musical influences, its own music became part of the patchwork of exotic local traditions that were broadcast across the country by radio and television.³⁷ The following section will consider some examples of this. Some of these programmes were far reaching, while others portrayed the region to a purely local radio audience already rendered distinct by the inability of early transmitters to reach beyond the boundaries of the Pennines and the North Yorkshire moors.³⁸

Richard Kelly's pioneering programme, *Wot Cheor Geordie* was one such localized but influential carrier of regional signifiers. At its peak it was reported to have reached half of all local listeners.³⁹ This was a significant development. Northumbrian pipers had featured in radio broadcasts from Newcastle since the days of 5NO in the 1920s, and they reached a national audience when Jack Armstrong played alongside Margery Bell for Forces broadcasting in 1943, and for Cecil McGivern's Home Service wartime production, *Northumbrian Melody* (which also

³⁶ Ibid, p228 and n.82, p239. Kennedy's association with the BBC continued into the 1960s with shows such as the Home Service's *Calling the Tune*. Armstrong's music was particularly widely disseminated by the media, and he produced specialist dance recordings for EFDSS, such as *Jack Armstrong and His Northumbrian Barnstormers play Cumberland Square, La Russe, Morpeth Rant and Soldier's Joy* (HMV EP, 7 EG 8455, 1959).

³⁷ Although, as Sian Nicholas has pointed out, post war regionalization can be overstated:- 'With much fanfare, Director-General William Haley reinstated regional programming on the Home Service in 1946, specifically to foster 'those national and local cultures which are an enduring part of our heritage'; yet, the reintroduction of varying regional schedules prompted new disagreements over the definition of a 'region' for broadcasting purposes, controversy about the role and purpose of broadcasting to the regions and a questioning of the internal 'competition' that regional broadcasting purported to encourage. Ironically, the postwar BBC would be seen in many respects as more homogeneously 'home counties', middle-class and middle-brow than ever before.' S Nicholas, 'From John Bull to John Citizen: images of national identity and citizenship on the wartime BBC', in R Weight, and A Beach (eds), *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (Tauris, London, 1998), p54.

³⁸ Even Alan Plater, writing generically 'Northern' scripts for the BBC during the 1960s, felt that the North East was a completely separate entity: Tyneside 'was a largely unexplored patch within the larger landscape of the fictional 'North', and any actor from the region knew that his professional future depended on shedding the accent with speed of light'. A Plater, 'The Drama of the North East', in R Colls and B Lancaster (Eds), *Geordies: Roots of Regionalism* (Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 71-84, pp74-75.

³⁹ 'Pioneer of local radio passes away', *Evening Chronicle*, 14th March 2007.

featured the Northumbrian Singers and the Newcastle String Quartet).⁴⁰ But, these sops to ‘our brave Geordie lads’ aside, broadcasts by North Eastern traditional musicians appear to have been sporadic or small scale. By contrast, *Wot Cheor Geordie*’s promotion of local material – urban and rural - provided a regular and broad platform, not only for performers such as Bobby Thompson, the Northumbrian Serenaders, and Owen Brannigan in vernacular mode, but also for more obviously traditional musicians such as Jack Armstrong.⁴¹ Joyce’s observation that dialect literature’s ideology was more to do with populism and regionalism than class could hardly be better illustrated.⁴² Song choices weighed heavily on the ‘canny Tyneside’ output of Jack Robson (*Wherever Ye Gan, Yer Sure To Find A Geordie*) and, inevitably, Catcheside-Warrington, but also featured tunes, such as *Morpeth Rant*, from much further back in the tradition.⁴³ The programme also served as a timely reminder to North Easterners that they had a culture of their own: and its region-wide applicability was emphasized by location recordings from working men’s clubs and welfare institutes throughout the area, as opposed to centralized studio-based transmissions.⁴⁴ As discussed in Chapter Two, this radio programme was often the only link between young Tynesiders of the 1950s and the older culture of country dances and smallpipes. The show’s demise in 1958 meant a gap of some years - before the revivalists brought them back into prominence - where the work of local

⁴⁰ Correspondence between Northumbrian Pipers Society and BBC, 15th October and 25th October 1929, TWA 924/88 shows that the extension of the Newcastle-based station to wider range transmissions led to caution in broadcasting things perceived to be of interest only to the city, one of which was, ironically, Northumbrian piping. Regarding Armstrong on Forces broadcasts, see *The Times*, March 16th 1943, ‘Broadcasting’, p8. *The Times*, January 20th 1940, ‘Broadcasting’, p2.

⁴¹ The impact of this has been recalled by, among others, B Davenport, letter to author, December 2003; J Handle, interviewed by Mike Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession; and C Ross and R Fisher, interviewed by author, 7th March 2005, recording in my possession.

⁴² P Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class 1848-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp289-292.

⁴³ A script for the show *Wot Cheor Geordie* (BBC, Newcastle, transmitted on 3rd October 1955, Tape No TNC6606) includes two songs each from the Jack Robson and Catcheside-Warrington repertoire, as well as *Morpeth Rant*.

⁴⁴ BBC radio scripts from 1951, *Wot Cheor Geordie* (BBC, Newcastle, 1951 held in Newcastle City Library Local Studies Department) give the locations as: Gateshead Town Hall; In BBC WAC N9/53 (Caversham) some locations given are as follows:- The Methodist Hall, Ashington (4 Feb 1948); Co-operative Hall, Ashington (16 Mar 1948); Queen’s Hall Ballroom (3 Nov 1948); Castle’s Ballroom, Annfield Plain (15 Dec 1948); Town Hall Spennymoor (13 Jan 1949); Rex Hotel, Whitley Bay (17 Mar 1949); Northumberland Hall, Alnwick (13 Oct 1950); Cowpen and Crofton Miners’ Welfare Institute Hall, Blyth (20 Oct 1950); Mechanics Institute, Jarrow (5 Feb 1951). A Tyne Tees documentary, *Bobby Thompson – The Little Waster* (MWM Video, Newcastle, 1986), features Kelly’s recollection of a recording in Ferryhill.

tradition carriers fell out of regular coverage by the mainstream media.⁴⁵ As it was, radio was redefining public and private space in ways that allowed collective identities to be internalized almost subliminally. As Simon Frith puts it:-

It was radio that shaped the new voice of public intimacy, that created Britain as a mediated collectivity, that gave ordinary people a public platform (creating the concept of 'ordinary people' in the first place). ... And it was radio ... that established the possibility of music as an ever-playing soundtrack to our lives. ...

... Radio has also been important in developing the skill of switching attention, moving back and forth between hearing music and listening to it, treating it as background or foreground.⁴⁶

This new soundtrack could, almost unnoticed, reinforce and shape each individual's sense of locality, no matter how strong the existing regional identity on which they were building. It was especially pervasive in the case of populist programmes such as *Wot Cheor Geordie*, and in the familiar presence on radio of artists such as The Barry Sisters and The Five Smith Brothers.⁴⁷

A more specialized audience was targeted by *Barn Dance*, which began contemporaneously with *Wot Cheor Geordie* and continued sporadically on both radio and television until the mid-1970s.⁴⁸ The first edition (like most of the shows until 1965) was produced by Richard Kelly, and it broadcast to the BBC's North and Northern Ireland regions on August 24th 1945.⁴⁹ More shows were produced over subsequent years, featuring Willie Walker's Country Dance Band, non-traditional players (Walker had played in Geraldo's orchestra) who more usually played for

⁴⁵ A Anderson, interviewed by author, 5th March 2004; and Johnny Handle, interviewed by author, 3rd February 2004, recordings in my possession. The last entry for the show is given as 12th August 1958, Radio Programme Index Entries, BBC WAC, Caversham.

⁴⁶ S Frith, 'Music and Everyday Life', in M Clayton, T Herbert and R Middleton (eds), *The Cultural Study of Music: a critical introduction* (Routledge, New York, 2003), 92-101, pp96-97.

⁴⁷ See 'Smiths' Disc', *Evening Chronicle*, 13th June 1979, which states that the Five Smith Brothers' career (with *The Blaydon Races* as their signature tune) had begun in the 1930s and had encompassed 'countless' radio appearances. A similarly eclectic formula was applied to the later (1976 onwards) Tyne Tees Television series *What Fettle?*, which was produced by Heather Ging, and featured local comedians, music hall revivalists and folk singers such as Johnny Handle. See G Phillips, *Memories of Tyne Tees Television* (Durham, 1998), p71.

⁴⁸ The initial programmes were entitled *Northumbrian Barn Dance*.

⁴⁹ R Kelly, et al (producers), *Barn Dance*, PasB notes, August 24th 1945; and *Barn Dance*, Radio programme index entries 1949-1975, BBC WAC Caversham.

ballroom dancers in Fenwick's department store and Tilley's Restaurant.⁵⁰ Peter Kennedy suggests that Kelly's initial choice of performers was dictated by their perceived acceptability to the BBC, who were happiest with players who abided by the tempered scale:

I did have an ironic experience with Richard Kelly when I arranged an audition of players in the Queens Hall in Hexham. Jack Pearson's Band attempted to change themselves into what they thought the BBC wanted (probably to be more like Willie Walker) and introduced a cornet. I can still see Kelly with his head in his hands looking considerably unhappy.⁵¹

Nevertheless, Kelly had evidently succeeded in selling the idea of a country dance programme to the BBC, and enough interest was sparked by the sporadic initial broadcasts for a series to be commissioned, which ran weekly from 23rd November to 28th December 1950. This run of the programme was broadcast entirely from Dinnington Village Hall and it now featured artists from within the tradition such as harpist Alice Ellis, The Bardon Mill Bellringers, and Jack Armstrong's Barnstormers, with Armstrong adopting the fictional and stereotypical role of 'Farmer Bewick'.⁵²

1951 saw two series, which ran fortnightly during the summer, and weekly during October and November. The show's pattern settled into the same peripatetic style as *Wot Cheor Geordie*, with venues shifting around the region from Hexham to Spennymoor, and with a virtual repertory company built around Jack Armstrong's Barnstormers (playing tunes from *Winster Gallop* to *Geordie Ha'ad the Bairn*), caller Bill Scott and singer Bill Robinson (performing songs such as Whittaker's

⁵⁰ 'Gentleman of Music, Willie Walker dies', *Evening Chronicle*, 18th April 1969.

⁵¹ P Kennedy, email correspondence with author, 18th April 2005. Kennedy also told this story to *Sing* magazine, 5/2, p42, stating that Pearson had actually bought a wireless in order to adapt to the BBC style – this version states the novel instrumentation as saxophone and electric guitar. It must be remembered that the gap between traditional and 'tea dance' musicians was not necessarily very great: traditional players' repertoires included quicksteps and waltzes; and those of dance hall bands featured Dashing White Sergeants and the like. Instrumentation and use of written scores might, however, have been more of a gulf.

⁵² Armstrong's radio alter ego is described in P Kennedy, 'Discovering the Barn Dance in the North East', *English Dance and Song*, 15/1, July 1950, 10-11, p10.

arrangement of *Elsie Marley*).⁵³ Several of the shows were picked up by the Light Programme, disseminating North Eastern traditional dance music over a national network. While this might have indicated good prospects for the region's musical profile, it must be remembered that the 11:15pm timeslot allocated to *Barn Dance* on the Light Programme (it was broadcast locally in the early evening) was hardly conducive to large audiences. The summer of 1952 saw a similar spate of programmes, then in 1953 only two shows were broadcast – and those only in the North and Northern Ireland - with no radio coverage whatsoever for 1954. This does not necessarily suggest that interest in regional vernacular music had subsided: a televised version of *Barn Dance* was broadcast on 16th October 1954, which rather implies experimentation with the visual medium after the Coronation (and, locally, the May 1953 opening of the Pontop Pike television transmitter) had caused an upsurge in television ownership.⁵⁴

Presenting a dance-orientated show as a visual experience would seem a logical progression, although this first programme - on location from Gosforth Drill Hall - was clearly a 'one-off', with two years before it would be revived. The public danced the *Circassian Circle* and *Corn Riggs*, while the roster of featured performers drew from a broad span of the region's traditional music. Dance demonstrations by clog-dancer Jackie Toaduff, the Royal Earsdon Sword Dancers and the Tyne Folk Dancers were balanced by musical performances from singer Jimmy White; Jack Armstrong on pipes; Margaret Hewitt on voice and harp; and Gerry Swordy on bones.⁵⁵ This illustrates a healthy living tradition from which broadcasters could draw – and suggests that those local revivalists who later travelled out to Northumbria did not need to struggle to unearth obscure, forgotten players from the past. North Eastern traditional performers were already aware and proud of their status.

The first televised edition of *Barn Dance* may have concentrated exclusively on the North East region, but subsequent transmissions from 1956 through to 1965 covered

⁵³ Ibid; *Barn Dance*, programme entries for 27th March 1951; 26th October 1951; and 23rd November 1951; R Kelly, (producer), *Barn Dance*, PasB Notes for Friday 23rd November 1951, 23:15; BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham.

⁵⁴ 'The Tradition that Started with 5NO', *The Journal*, 14th November 1972.

a more wide-ranging definition of the North. Rather than problematic outside broadcasts, the recordings were now made at the BBC's Manchester studios.⁵⁶ The show's producers and hosts were now from the BBC's central pool of talent, and the scope of the programme was increasingly broad.⁵⁷ While Jack Armstrong; Billy Miller's Cheviot Ranters (see Figure 4), and Jackie Toaduff still featured, Bill Cain (Caller from 1958 until 1965) hailed from Cumbria, as did the Stanwix Sword



Dancers.⁵⁸ Further mainstream appeal was provided by another

Figure 4 - Billy Miller's Cheviot Ranters recording Barn Dance, 1962 – Tradition alongside revival

mainstay of *Wot Cheor Geordie*, The Barry Sisters.⁵⁹ More significant,

however, was the introduction of revival performers from 1962, some of whom had already cut their broadcasting teeth on shows such as the BBC's *Tonight*. The North Eastern revival was represented by Johnny Handle, but the inclusion of figures from the national and international scenes (The Spinners; Steve Benbow; the Ian Campbell Folk Group; David and Marianne Dalmour; and folk dancers from the Baltic) indicated an attempt by the broadcasters to tap into a

⁵⁵ D Burrell-Davies, (prod), *Barn Dance*, Television PasB Notes for Saturday 16th October 1954, 10.36pm, BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham.

⁵⁶ With the exception of one more date broadcast from Alnwick Castle on 2nd November 1960 (PasB notes BBC WAC Caversham), which Keith Gregson recalls as a special children's broadcast (correspondence with author, 3rd May 2005).

⁵⁷ *Barn Dance*, Television Programme Index, BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. These producers included Trevor Hill 4th May 1958 – 2nd November 1960 (Hill was also a driving force behind BBC 'Children's Hour' and 'Blue Peter'); Barney Coleman, 23rd August 1956, (Coleman also produced 'The Good Old Days'); and the longest serving, John Ammonds, 11th July 1962 – 13th September 1965 (Ammonds was better known as a comedy producer for artists such as Morecambe and Wise). Hosts included Roger Moffat, 17th April – 20th May 1963; Brian Redhead, 26th May 1964 – 27th September 1965; and Frank Bough, 5th – 26th September 1963.

⁵⁸ Regarding Cheviot Ranters, *Ibid*, 11th July 1962 – 17th April 1963. The still photograph from the show was published in 'Sing Goes to a Barndance', *Sing* 6/12, August 1962, p129; Regarding Jackie Toaduff, *Ibid*, 16th August 1965; Regarding Cumbrian acts, see K Gregson, interviewed by author 12th February 2004, recording in my possession. Gregson was a member of the Stanwix Dancers, a junior team trained by Bill Cain. *Barn Dance*, Television Programme Index, BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham, 11th July 1962.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 11th July 1962 – 13th September 1965.

burgeoning international movement.⁶⁰

It is also inescapable that these were, on the whole, more populist entertainers, and the BBC's old Reithian values were under increasing pressure from independent television. Ironically, just as the Geordie renaissance was gaining critical mass within the region, the national television outlet for North Eastern music was receding.⁶¹ Viewing figures in 1962 had reached the heady heights of 'at least five to seven millions', prompting extra editions of the programme, but over time *Barn Dance's* change of emphasis evidently failed to reach sufficient audience figures (perhaps now targeted more accurately by pop programmes) and it was not televised after 1965.⁶² It should be remembered that the coming of television had not only opened up a new performance space: it also caused others to recede. Especially after ITV's populist programming, such as *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, was available, the importance of the village hall 'hop' was bound to diminish (as discussed in Chapter Four): television was effectively diverting audiences away from the very barn dances that it had attempted to capture. Much the same pattern afflicted the radio show, with the introduction of a more wide-ranging incarnation signalling a change in the *zeitgeist* and increasingly sporadic runs of the programme until it ceased broadcasting after a 1974-5 attempt at reviving it on Radio 2.⁶³

Meanwhile, the network provision of televised folk music was perceived by those involved in the revival as inauthentic and dull: Karl Dallas decried:

⁶⁰ Regarding The Spinners, *ibid*, 6th September 1965; Regarding Steve Benbow, *Ibid*, 10th April 1963; 17th April 1963; 27th September 1965; Regarding the Ian Campbell Folk Group, *Ibid*, 17th April 1963; Regarding David and Marianne Dalmour, *Ibid*, 13th September 1965; Regarding East European dance groups, *Ibid*, 13th and 20th September 1965 – the shows featured dancers from Latvia and Lithuania.

⁶¹ This appears a genuine paradox: as the national folk magazines were most interested in North Eastern music during this time, it is evident that the Geordie renaissance was unlikely to have been a reaction against being overlooked by television alone. Regarding the development of more accurately targeted pop programming, the squeezing of folk music out of the daytime radio schedules was aggravated by the launch of BBC Radio One in 1967. See M Brocken, 'The Tarnished Image? Folk 'Industry' and the Media', *Merseybeat* internet journal, <http://www.merseybeat.org.uk/default.htm>; article tarnim082.pdf.

⁶² 'Barndance gets an extension', *Sing*, 6/12, August 1962, p127.

⁶³ The last show produced by Richard Kelly was introduced by Alex Glasgow and broadcast on 11th January 1965. After this date, the show dropped its Northumbrian artists in favour of the St Helen's Country Dance Band, The Wurzels, The Greensleeves Band, and Dick Witt and the

The Arctic wastes of *Singalong* and its BBC-2 counterpart, *Folk in Focus*...

... What we are asking is presumably what you are trying to give: folk music programmes that are entertaining. You could scrap your existing programmes tomorrow and not one protest would come from any lover of folk music. ... Only a sigh of relief.⁶⁴

It appears such complaints had little effect, perhaps even confirming to broadcasters the treacherous nature of folk music and forcing them onto ever-safer 'crossover' territory. As the national broadcasters' reach became near-universal and the new generation of local stations were in their nascent stages (Richard Kelly would be the first manager of Radio Newcastle when it opened in 1971), Northumbrian music would be left to regional coverage while the south was re-established as providing the core of quintessentially English dance music.⁶⁵ The main British folk music to retain a foothold in the national schedules was, of course, that of Scotland, and the North East's proximity (both geographical and stylistic) meant that it could easily be overshadowed.

It may be the case that the 1960s drive noted by Briggs towards local radio stations and the expectation that these would stress provincial 'topicality and community involvement' had the unexpected effect of returning regional culture to the periphery. Northern television and radio campaigners may have lobbied for broadcasting to redress the southward osmosis of economic power, but this led to local, as opposed to regional stations, lacking the necessary reach to retain talent and shape agendas.⁶⁶ At least these local broadcast media had not completely abandoned regional music. Some general folk programmes began with the advent of local radio stations, crucially as their original remit – later loosened – was governed by a requirement to cover minority interests.⁶⁷ BBC Radio Newcastle's first folk music show, which

Cotswold Folk. BBC Written Archives Centre, radio programme index entries, 18th March 1965 - 28th November 1975.

⁶⁴ K Dallas, 'Memo to the BBC', Folk Music, Vol 1, No 10, 1965, p3.

⁶⁵ By folk rock bands such as Steeleye Span and the Albion Band.

⁶⁶ See A Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: V: Competition, 1955-1974* (Oxford University Press, 1995), pp627-661.

⁶⁷ The first broadcasts from each local radio station were as follows: Radio Newcastle – 2nd January 1971; Radio Teesside (which became Radio Cleveland in 1974) – 31st December 1970; Metro Radio – 15th July 1974; Radio Tees – 24th June 1975. Source: <http://www.transdiffusion.org/rmc/reference>. Regarding the requirement of franchisees to reflect

featured Ray Fisher as regular presenter, began in 1971.⁶⁸ Metro Radio auditioned and employed Benny Graham as the first commercial folk presenter prior to the station's inception on 15th July 1974, and the show 'Recorded Folk' opened during the first week of broadcasting.⁶⁹ Such programmes, however, built on the consciousness of the folk scene as a whole, often highlighting external artists who were visiting the region. Other than BBC North East's three part television series, *Ballad of Northumbria* (which featured Tyneside music performed by The High Level Ranters and the Northumbrian Traditional Group, alongside George House and Mike Neville), specifically North Eastern content was put to different uses.⁷⁰

Rather than being foregrounded as the primary purpose of a show, regional folk music would be used atmospherically, or, even more commonly, as a commentary. Alex Glasgow was a regular presenter and contributor of topical 'protest' songs. From 1964, he became part of the virtual repertory company (alongside Henry Livings, Alan Plater and Sid Chaplin) that broadcast Radio Three's *The Northern Drift* out of BBC Leeds.⁷¹ David Wade commented in *The Times* that the show belonged on Radio 3, not the broader church of Radio 4, due to the pungency of the commentary and the personal investment of the show's author/presenters: 'There's something alien here in Southern ears, a response to geography and to social history we don't know much about'.⁷² Similarly, Glasgow was a regular feature of BBC Newcastle's *Voice of the North*, which broadcast to an estimated audience of 50,000 Cumbrians and North Easterners every weeknight for ten years until it was axed to make way for the impending reorganization of local broadcasts under Radio Newcastle's banner. Its final broadcast on 2nd April 1970 'ended with an old signature tune, *Adam Buckham*, played by the Cowpen and Crofton Workmen's

local culture, see also D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), p189.

⁶⁸ N Davison, 'Folk Spot for Radio Newcastle', *The Journal*, October 15th 1971, p10.

⁶⁹ B Graham, correspondence with author, 18th May 2005; also Metro Radio details of first broadcasts: http://homepage.ntlworld.com/gillian.fleming2/Metro2_The_Early_Years.html

⁷⁰ T Kilgour (producer), *Ballad of Northumbria*, BBC TV North East, broadcast 12th, 19th and 26th February 1974: Press release, 13th February 1974. Other performers included Royal Earsdon Sword Dancers; Hilton Pomeroy and the Shiremoor Marras.

⁷¹ Virtually the same team would create *Close the Coalhouse Door*, the stage production of which is discussed in Chapter Seven: the play was broadcast by the BBC in 1969. Alan Plater et al, *Close the Coalhouse Door* (BBC tx 22/10/1969).

⁷² D Wade, 'Social Problems', *The Times*, 15th March 1975, p10. See also D Wade, Radio column, *The Times*, March 6th 1971, p16; Alex Glasgow, *An Anthology* (Robbins Music Corp, London, 1971), p11. See also H Livings, A Glasgow, et al, *The Northern Drift* (Blackie, 1980).

Band', while Glasgow's song *Farewell Voice* suggested (in the type of message that Johnny Handle criticized as 'sneering and unconstructive') that he would 'See you at the dole on Monday'.⁷³ The programme's juxtaposition of such contributions with dialect features by Leonard Barrass and wider articles of local interest by presenters like David Bean was an example of the use of folk music in imagining a regional community with a shared heritage and common issues to deal with in the present.

Both Louis Killen and Johnny Handle were called on by local news programmes to provide topical songs in the manner of the *Tonight* programme.⁷⁴ Killen was involved in the nascent Tyne Tees Television, a station whose initial programming concentrated more on light-entertainment variety programmes such as *The One o'Clock Show*. He was hired as a freelance contributor to *North East Roundabout*, a weekly news magazine programme which broadcast every Friday evening from the station's opening week in 1959.⁷⁵ Killen worked alongside producer Kurt Lewenhak and researcher David Bean:

I sang songs related to historical anniversary events Dave would dig up the events and between us songs to match them. One of the first I sang was *Blackleg Miners* marking the beginning of the Northumbrian Miner's Union, and another I wrote for the commemoration of the conscription riots in Hexham. ... It was when we couldn't find a song that we would compose something appropriate. Sometimes together, sometimes me alone ... I can't remember how many times I performed. Every second week or so.⁷⁶

The requirement of attending studio layouts in the afternoon and broadcasts in the evening cost Killen his day job.⁷⁷ But his consequent decision to become a full-time

⁷³ 'Voice of the North Silenced', *Evening Chronicle*, 3rd April 1970, p10. J Handle, quoted in 'The High Level Ranters', *Muther Grumble*, Issue 7, July 1972.

⁷⁴ *Tonight* began in 1957, as the BBC rescinded its nightly 'toddlers' truce' shutdown between 6 and 7pm. From the very start, it featured tropical calypsos by Cy Grant, soon to be followed by folksingers like Robin Hall and Jimmy McGregor, Rory McEwan and Alex Campbell: the cover of *Radio Times*, February 17th-23rd 1957, features a photograph of Cy Grant as part of the new programme's line-up.

⁷⁵ The programme first broadcast on 16th January 1959. It is unlikely that recordings of Killen's appearances are extant as Roy Hartnell (correspondence with author, 21st March 2005) asserts that Tyne Tees had no recording equipment of its own at this stage.

⁷⁶ L Killen, e-mail correspondence with author, 18th May 2005; G Phillips, *Memories of Tyne Tees Television* (Durham, 1998), p44. Lewenhak also made a 1960 documentary about the Durham Miners' Gala and produced *Spotlight*, a weekly Tyne Tees programme which dealt with controversial issues of the day.

⁷⁷ This job was in the wages department of Mackley & Co in Gateshead.

professional musician was dealt a body blow when

Lewenhack [sic] got fired for carving up the then Tory Minister of Fuel and Power over the pit closures that were occurring then. Of course, every one who worked with him who was not under contract to TTT were anathema to the management and we were out, too. I never worked for Tyne Tees again after that.⁷⁸

This minor incursion of politics into the broadcasting of folk music was hardly as significant as the battles being fought in America over the *Hootenanny* programme: artists like Judy Collins and Peter, Paul and Mary boycotted the show and thus ‘relegate[d] it to mediocrity’ over its refusal to employ the still controversial figure of Pete Seeger.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, this story confirms that there was a link between folk music as presented by the local media and representations of the region as a political entity.

This richness of context was made even clearer by programmes like Philip Donnellan’s shipbuilding documentary, *Sunderland Oak*, which was nationally broadcast by BBC television on 19th September 1961. Donnellan had worked at BBC Birmingham alongside Charles Parker, and was keenly interested in adapting the *Radio Ballads*’ montage style of actuality, vernacular speech and folk song for television. *Sunderland Oak* represented his first real foray into this genre and the mark of the *Radio Ballads*, particularly *The Big Hewer* (which was developed contemporaneously), is evident. Johnny Handle, who wrote the songs for *Sunderland Oak*, had furnished MacColl with North Eastern mining contacts for *The Big Hewer*, and Louis Killen and Isla Cameron – whose voices were also used in the television programme – had both sung for MacColl’s radio project.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ibid. This was not the only time that Lewenhak used folk music as a commentary – he also worked with Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger as well as Cyril Tawney – nor the first time he found himself out of a job for political reasons: his documentary *Under Fire* helped mobilize public opinion against Anthony Eden over Suez, and led to Lewenhak’s exile to cover *Zoo Time*. Source: BECTU obituary sent to author June 2005.

⁷⁹ D Laing, R Denselow, K Dallas and R Shelton, *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock* (Methuen, London, 1975), p19.

⁸⁰ J Handle, interviewed by the author, 3rd February 2004, recording in my possession. As discussed throughout this thesis, *The Big Hewer* had considerable input from North Eastern folk singing sources, not only Handle and Killen, but also Jack and Reece Elliott. Already there was evidence from the renegotiation of appearance fees (Killen and Handle received more than double the fees of sources such as the Elliott brothers) that a gap had emerged between the ‘source’ singers and

The format is even more strikingly similar than the line-up. In *The Big Hewer*, the opening sound of a cutter is overlaid with a Welsh miner stating that ‘When you hew a lump of coal, you know that you are the only one that’s seen it’.⁸¹ Before the opening credits of *Sunderland Oak*, the machine noises and images of the yards are intercut with excerpts from an interview given by a shipyard worker: ‘Steel, man, that’s what our ships is made of – steel’.⁸² (The archetypal heroic worker of popular left-wing imagination is never far from such editing in a sense almost unimaginable since the discourse was altered by the strife of the 1970s and subsequent Thatcherite attacks on the union movement.) The opening credits are accompanied by a Johnny Handle song, sung by a group of male voices:

Now frames and beams and plates are steel
 But we’re still the boys to lay the keel
 For we can do it just as weel
 As when we had Sunderland Oak, me boys
 When we had Sunderland Oak⁸³

As the lyric indicates, the overwhelming subtext of *Sunderland Oak* and the songs it contains is an awareness of change and the omnipresent memory of how drastically a one-industry town – with a quoted 90% of Sunderland dependent on shipbuilding – was hit by the Depression. This preoccupation with change and decline, as dealt with in another song (*Is There Ought Secure?*) from the programme, is further discussed in Chapter Seven. It is a prevalent subtext throughout the period: *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* counterposed the contemporary, upwardly mobile Bob Ferris against the ‘traditional’ Geordie, Terry Collier, and asked ‘What

professionalized elements of the folk scene, with Killen in particular (already a part of the London scene) adept at ensuring appropriate payment for his work. See BBC WAC M31/1, 593/1.

Further projects with less notable impact came from similar line-ups, such as the MacColl/Parker collaboration entitled *Cradle to Grave*, which used songs by Johnny Handle, such as ‘The Old Pubs’, in the programme dedicated to pubs (J Handle, interviewed by author, *Ibid*). For further discussion of the *Radio Ballads*, see R Groves, M Baker and P Donnellan, ‘The Charles Parker Archive’, *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 16, Autumn 1983, 147-152.

⁸¹ E MacColl, C Parker and P Seeger, *The Big Hewer* (BBC Radio Ballad, first broadcast 1961, Topic CD, TSCD 804).

⁸² P Donnellan (producer), *Sunderland Oak* (BBC TV documentary, first broadcast 19th September 1961, now available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nationonfilm/topics/ship-building/>).

⁸³ J Handle, *Sunderland Oak* (song), in P Donnellan (producer), *Sunderland Oak*, *ibid*.

became of the people we used to be?'.⁸⁴ And *Like A Candyman's Trumpet*, John Mapplebeck's 1967 BBC2 documentary, featured Alex Glasgow's renditions of Tyneside songs intercut with bands (playing both songs from the Tyneside music hall and current pop hits) at the Durham Miners' Gala while 'a girl wanders through the crowds looking for a boy friend who has left the neighbourhood where coalpits close'.⁸⁵ Such associations were satirized by Dave Walker's 1974 drama *The Hooky Mat*, which featured music from Jarrow folk duo Lamplight, and told the tale of 'Mrs Cannybody who wants to replace her fireside mat and comes up against the 'Geordie Culture Act'.⁸⁶ Other voices of dissent were raised when the clichés ran too freely. Journal television critic, Harry Thompson suggested that local people were 'bored by oppressive 'Geordieism' unless, and judged by the highest standards, it has class.'⁸⁷

In the case of *Sunderland Oak*, however, the selection of a North-Eastern location was more an act of contingency than deliberation. A film about shipbuilding which featured this narrative of decline could equally have been made in Glasgow or Northern Ireland, and the choice of Sunderland as a location was ultimately due to Donnellan's concern about the balance of the series as a whole - to 'avoid having too many Scotsmen in a series of three'.⁸⁸ It must be remembered that this occasional focus on a disappearing industrial working class was a preoccupation of the national media as a whole and not specific to the North East: simply that this area provided rich pickings in a number of industries.

⁸⁴ D Clement and I La Frenais (writers), J Gilbert (producer), *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* (BBC TV, 1973). The theme song lyric concluded with 'Tomorrow's almost over/Today went by so fast/Is the only thing to look forward to/The past?' and the show's credits also featured a backdrop juxtaposing demolition sites in Scotswood against new developments in Cruddas Park and Manors. Russell, however, highlights that the show, co-written by a Geordie and a native of Essex, was far from an unadulterated product of Tyneside, with Rodney Bewes not 'deviating from his native West Yorkshire' and Brigit Forsyth playing the first nine episodes in a 'posh Manchester accent' before being told by James Bolam that she was supposed to be playing a Geordie. See D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), p194.

⁸⁵ J Mapplebeck (Producer), *Like a Candyman's Trumpet* (BBC TV, first broadcast on BBC 2, 11th July 1967). Glasgow performed *Dance to thi Daddy* as well as *Cushie Butterfield*, from which the programme's title is taken. The near ubiquitous Isla Cameron also recorded some of the vocals for this broadcast. The description of the action is from *The Times*, 'TV as a positive force', 12th July 1967, p6. Another single drama *The Clippy Mat*, featuring songs by Jarrow folk duo Lamplight, ⁸⁶ *Evening Chronicle*, 10th May 1975, TV Page, p3, and 'Dawn of Lamplight', p7. The play was originally broadcast in 1974 as part of BBC North East's contribution to Newcastle Festival but was given a national airing on 10th May 1975. Lamplight were Dave Price (cousin of Alan) and Derek Soden.

⁸⁷ H Thompson, 'Tyne Tees or BBC North-east? Quality First', *Newcastle Journal*, 11th January 1971, p6. Thompson suggested that at least 'Alex Glasgow possesses this quality'.

⁸⁸ BBC Internal Memo, 17th February 1961, BBC WAC T32/1, 638/1 Sunderland Oak TX 61.09.19

Music is shown as integral to this receding community, as it is in Ken Russell's 1960 film about the *Bedlington Miners' Picnic*, which profiles John Gibson of Pegswood Colliery brass band (euphoniums were certainly more ubiquitous in the pit villages than Northumbrian pipes during this period).⁸⁹ The music remained a functional part of the village's celebration and self-imagining, but there was little faith in the industry's continuity. Gibson stated: 'What I'd like is to have five shifts a week till I'm 65 and I'd be a very happy man', but said this was unlikely considering prevailing trends.

This could only reinforce the region's identity with the 1930s – cloth caps, banners and 'towns that were murdered' - in both the national imagination and, arguably, that of North Easterners. Absent from so many of these representations is any sense of the region having undergone the swinging 'sixties of myth: the youth of the North East might have identified with Dylan, the Beatles and Harry Palmer, may have dressed in miniskirts and flares and gone to nightclubs but the portrait of the region (and its folk music) that reached the media remained firmly retrospective. While *When the Boat Comes In* dramatized inter-war strife on national television, *Sunderland Oak* featured a tea-break discussion where the wisdom of putting a son into so capricious an industry was the primary topic.⁹⁰ This segment was criticized for 'the fatal stagey-ness we associate with speakers who know that they are being overheard by outsiders', and doubtless there is an element of the workers giving Donnellan what they presumed he wanted, just as Cecil Sharp's informants tended to self-censor their bawdy and music-hall material.⁹¹ If so, the question arises whether the preoccupation with change and decline that ran through these broadcasts (and is further discussed in Chapter Seven) was exogenous, created by *auteurs* in search of a theme, and, if this is the case, how far this external narrative affected the way in which songwriters created their soundtracks to the programmes and to the North East in general. Johnny Handle recalls that

the local council didn't like it [*Sunderland Oak*], because the men interviewed

⁸⁹ K Russell (director), *Bedlington Miners' Picnic* (BBC TV, 1960, excerpts now accessible on www.bbc.co.uk/nationonfilm/).

⁹⁰ Ironically, one father spoke of his son's wisdom in joining the growing trade of motor manufacture.

⁹¹ *The Times*, Wednesday September 20th 1961, 'Interesting Piece of Pioneering', p16

were forecasting the end of the yards. They proved right. Phillip [sic] then started another film about a typical Durham mining village but nowt came of it, the powers-that-be said it was too controversial.⁹²

The rough-cut of Donnellan's abortive documentary, *Private Faces*, focussing on Jack Elliott and his family, was completed in 1962, but was immediately rejected by the BBC Commissioning Editor, Grace Wyndham Goldie.⁹³ Though the stated reasons for rejection were 'aggressive editing', some mild swear words, and direct questions regarding the family's atheism, Donnellan was certain that this decision was a form of political censorship, based on the fact that this articulate family did not conform to the conventional image of a deferential working class:

With the Elliotts, reinforced by the rough vigour of film-style and address, she [Wyndham Goldie] was alienated by the presence of a masterful and dignified couple whose conclusions from their experience were personally and politically objectionable to her and were outside the conventional norms of the department's programmes. Used to command, she found her assumptions about the representation of mining people comprehensively challenged and subverted.⁹⁴

The interviews Donnellan had recorded with Jack Elliott would eventually form a recurrent thread in his 1968 memorial to Elliott, *Death of a Miner*, which was shown on BBC1 in two parts on consecutive Sundays, 27th October and 3rd November 1968.⁹⁵

What is supremely evident from the film is its continuity of mood with *Sunderland Oak*. Although it is above all a tribute to Jack Elliott it is also a wake for Harraton's 'Cotia' pit (which closed in 1965) and the way of life that accompanied what was

⁹² Johnny Handle interviewed by S McGrail, 'And Hey for Bonny Newcastle!', part 2, *Living Tradition* 61, March/April 2005, 20-22, p21.

⁹³ It was Donnellan who introduced the Elliotts to Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger. Source: Doreen and Bryan Henderson, interviewed by the author, 13th December 2004, recording in my possession.

⁹⁴ Phillip Donnellan, *We Were the BBC* (unpublished memoir, 1984), quoted in National Film Theatre, *In Fact: Philip Donnellan: Poet and Partisan* (programme notes, February 2001).

⁹⁵ Appropriately for a film about a confirmed atheist, the broadcasts went out at 6.15pm when many church-goers would be away from their televisions, although it may not be possible to establish whether this aspect was considered by the schedulers. A similar suggestion has been made with regard to some live location broadcasts of *Voice of the North*, whose potentially bawdy material

already perceived as a desperately threatened industry. Indeed, the film's full title was *Death of a Miner: in memory of a man, a pit, a community*, and the opening sequence – accompanied by the Northumbrian smallpipes - intercuts Elliott's coffin being loaded into the hearse with shots of the wrecking ball demolishing Harraton pit.

This portrait of a man who was also a folksinger is distinctive from specifically musical documentaries (such as *Travelling for a Living*, about the Watsons) in that it treats folk song, not as an end in itself, as a subsection of the arts, but as a functional part of one man's life, his political and atheist ideas, and his community.⁹⁶ The whole Elliott family: Jack, Em, and their children (Pete, Doreen, Len and John) had all been interviewed in 1961 and, once again, the echoes of hard times during 1926 were seen as still actively shaping present values, with bitterness against blacklegs and memories of feeding a family on an 8/- weekly Co-op voucher clearly etched deep. Interviewed for the memorial programme, Doreen recalled that she saw her father as a seven-foot-tall hero (almost *The Big Hewer* himself?) when he came home from the pit, and that he made much of the humour of pit work:

The only time ... where there was any bitterness or any really deep feeling was in the songs that he sang about the miners, and then all the bitterness and all the pathos came out in these songs.⁹⁷

Once again, folk song's function as a device of collective memory and bitter campaigning is foregrounded. In a region whose club-based revivalists attempted to avoid the internecine political squabbles of London, the tradition itself had long had direct political and practical uses. Film of a still-used lamp cabin is accompanied by Elliott's rendition of *Jowl, Jowl*, reminding miners that

There's many a marra missin', lads,

was scheduled for Sunday morning church-time slots. See David Wade, 'Radio', *The Times*, March 6th 1972, p16.

⁹⁶ D Knight (director), *Travelling for a Living* (BBC television documentary, recorded 1965, broadcast 1966, available on Topic, London, TSDVD549). Louis Killen appears in this film as a house and club guest of the Watsons.

⁹⁷ Doreen Henderson, interviewed in P Donnellan (Producer), *Death of a miner: in memory of a man, a pit, a community*, BBC television, first broadcast 27th October and 3rd November 1968.

Because he wouldn't listen, lads⁹⁸

As discussed in Chapter Four, this song had not always been used by miners in the 'Cotia pit. Jack Elliott had learned it from a librarian, who was taught it by a schoolmaster, who in turn had learned it from a miner elsewhere in the region. The televisual portrayal is not, however, an example of disingenuousness: the programme goes on to show funeral bouquets presented by the Birtley and Felling Folk Song Clubs and by Folksong and Ballad, along with an acknowledgement of Jack Elliott's pivotal role in the local folk music movement, while interviews refer to London trips to perform at Islington Folk Club.⁹⁹ Eventually, the film cuts to a crowded evening at Birtley Folk Club, with Colin Ross and Foster Charlton playing *Salmon Tails up the Water* on small pipes, and Don Stokoe singing – aptly - *Farewell to 'Cotia*. This film of a real folk club, as opposed to a studio-based representation of folk singers, is a rare insight into the world in which most revivalists performed at the time.¹⁰⁰ The crowd is attentive and evidently involved in the music, in a manner that would be far less common in the kind of pub sing-song that would predate the folk clubs. It is surprising that even the most resolutely 'singaround' club in the region (and, quite probably, the country) gave 'the best of order' to those who were performing. Once again, of course, this may have been influenced and significantly altered by the presence of television cameras.

The presence of a BBC recording team was, however, not a new thing for the regulars at the Birtley club. It had already been considered of sufficient interest to merit a location recording for A L Lloyd's radio programme, *Songs of the Durham Miners*, which was broadcast by the Third Programme in September 1963. Lloyd's commentary, subverting 'pitman' stereotypes, was discussed in the previous chapter, but it was a significant observation to appear in the national arena: these people were portrayed, not as anonymous symbols of the proletariat, but as individuals with their

⁹⁸ *Jowl, Jowl*. A printed version, given as collected by Maxine Baker, and sung by Jack Elliott, is available in M Dawney (Ed), *Doon the Wagon Way: Mining Songs from the North of England*, (Galliard/EFDSS, London, 1973), pp14-15.

⁹⁹ Donnellan recalled Jack's horror that Westminster Abbey commemorated every war but the class war.

¹⁰⁰ Another folk club is shown in Derrick Knight's film about the Watsons, *Travelling for a Living* *ibid*. The lack of TV coverage of real, rather than studio-based, folk events was one of Karl Dallas's main criticisms in his 'Memo to the BBC' quoted above.

own tastes, identity and sense of history.¹⁰¹ This may be due simply to Lloyd's perceptiveness, however it would also imply a strength and depth of tradition that allowed the tradition carriers to dictate their own portrayal.



Figure 5 - LP Cover, 1969

And yet the 'cloth cap and muffler' stereotypical Geordie (or - in the case of *Andy Capp* - Teessider) was a key factor in the so-called Geordie renaissance, as exemplified by the covers – and scripts - of profitable local record releases of the 1970s, such as *Larn Yersel Geordie* (See Figure 5).¹⁰² This series of recordings and subsequent live shows featured local television personalities, Mike Neville and George House, performing excerpts from Scott Dobson's *Geordie Byeuks* (which will be discussed in more detail below).¹⁰³ Accompanying material included - at least partly folkloric - musical input from Joe Bennett and the Northumbrian Traditional Group, the Shiremoor Marras, and songwriter Eric Boswell.¹⁰⁴ The record industry had clearly discovered the potential of regional particularity.

¹⁰¹ Douglas Cleverden (producer); A L Lloyd (writer/presenter), *Songs of the Durham Miners* (BBC radio broadcast, Third Programme, Episode 1: 'The Older Stratum' September 18 1963; Episode 2: 'The Newer Seam', September 25 1963).

¹⁰² George House and Mike Neville, *Scott Dobson's Larn Yersel Geordie* (Mawson & Wareham, Newcastle, MWM101S, 1969). 'Muffler' is a dialect term for a scarf.

¹⁰³ Subsequent releases included: George House and Mike Neville with Dick Irwin, *Scott Dobson's Son of Geordie* (Mawson & Wareham, Newcastle, MWM 1004S, 1971); Mike Neville and George House with Joe Bennett and the Northumbrian Traditional Group, *Geordierama* (Mawson & Wareham, Newcastle, MWM 105, mid-1970s, re-released 1982).

¹⁰⁴ The Shiremoor Marras were 'a miners' comedy act; they performed in pit gear, but as they included retired Earsdon dancers (Nibs Pearson was one), there would be a rapper figure or two, or some clog dancing performed using pit shovels for extra percussion.' (Frank Lee, web article, 'Why Those Tunes?', <http://www.the-nut.net/>). Accordionist – and leader of the Northumbrian Traditional Group - Joe Bennett was their regular accompanist.

The following pages will discuss some key developments in the North Eastern recording industry in the period under study, as well as the ways in which artists from the region impacted upon the fortunes of national concerns. It will analyse some recordings that exploited the most established regional archetypes, consider regional labels and national releases, and assess which narratives these companies promoted. In this period, before the zenith of MacDonald's diffuse and democratized 'people's music' (emanating direct from bedrooms to the audience via independent labels, and eventually the internet) distribution of recordings was the remit of those who owned established record labels.¹⁰⁵ In this respect, these labels, however small, had considerable power: this was patronage just as much as was the indulgence of the gentry or the work of EFDSS. This section will therefore begin with an assessment of Mawson & Wareham Records, a local label that became closely associated with regional identity.

Records on this label, such as *Larn Yersel*' *Geordie* tapped into unusually well-established and populist markets for regional dialect material that had been in place since Tyneside had been a centre for chapbooks and continued via songs in the *Weekly Chronicle* and *Newcastle Courant*; a thriving and intensely local music hall; and the Catcheside-Warrington songbooks published by J G Windows.¹⁰⁶ It was, therefore, appropriate that Windows music shop was the training ground for Brian Mawson, partner in the Mawson & Wareham brand.¹⁰⁷ This entrepreneur, along with producer and future folk label director, Geoff Heslop, grasped the possibilities of recording such material for a 1970s audience that had been made freshly aware of

¹⁰⁵ I MacDonald, *The People's Music* (Pimlico, London, 2003), pp192-209.

¹⁰⁶ However, the intense localism of the Tyneside music hall – as early as Corvan's latter years - has been called into question by Harker:- 'What had happened was that big capital had seen a promising investment, and had bought up most of the 'machine tools' [the halls]. So when Ned opened at the Tyne, even in spite of his sustained popularity, he was continuously made to play second fiddle (so to speak) to the imported, London-based stars, to the foreign attractions like the Christy Minstrels and, most decisively of all, to the culture and ideology of the proprietors.' D Harker, 'The Making of the Tyneside Concert Hall, *Popular Music*, 1, 1981, 25-56, p54. This, of course, only reinforces the impression that local outlets and the cash nexus were early partners. Regarding J G Windows, this long-established record shop was disseminating the recordings of EFDSS from at least 1945: see Advertisement for *The Square Dance Record, English Dance and Song*, 10/1, Oct-Nov 1945, p3, which lists Windows as a leading stockist.

¹⁰⁷ The other partner was Derek Wareham, a director of Taylors music shop in Birmingham. MWM, as Mawson & Wareham is now known, is the label which has recently produced the massive overview of regional music, *The Northumbria Anthology* (MWM CD SP 31/50, Newcastle, 2003).

their particularity by a host of local politicians and media promoting (at least the idea of) a regenerated region.¹⁰⁸ Dialect recording was, like its print counterpart, nothing new within the North East: Catcheside-Warrington and J C Scatter had made pressings of the best-known Tyneside songs in the days of the wax cylinder.¹⁰⁹ By the late 1960s, though, Mawson drew the conclusion that (inter-)national companies such as Topic and Folkways were covering North Eastern material, but only that which accorded with a narrow definition of folklore. This definition excluded much of the aforementioned popular dialect tradition, where, for example, accompaniments from piano and pit orchestra were just as valid as concertina. It must be noted that contemporary record releases do not necessarily bear out this idea of limited coverage: a 1971 BBC compilation features the Washington Greys juvenile jazz band and The Marsden Rattlers alongside John Elliott, Colin Ross and the Monkseaton Morris Team.¹¹⁰

Of course, Mawson may have had another, more commercial impetus to start his label. The fact that a great many of the national releases would be available – especially to those North Easterners who read the advertisements in folk magazines – via Collet’s mail order service would obviously have rankled with a representative of a local outlet. And there was clearly room for a locally based label: the leading local studio, Morton Sound (and its forerunners, Northern Sound and Manor Records) had produced only sporadic 1950s releases (distributed, unsurprisingly, through J G Windows) for artists like Jack Armstrong’s Barnstormers before specializing in concert amplification plus ‘demo’ and educational discs.¹¹¹ This left a gap in the

¹⁰⁸ See T Dan Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriol Press, Newcastle, 1970), pp92-93. Smith acknowledged the role of the Thomson Press in building the idea of the region. Heslop was to become owner of Black Crow records, which released notable recordings of Alistair Anderson, Willy Taylor, Will Atkinson, Joe Hutton, and Kathryn Tickell.

¹⁰⁹ For example, J C Scatter, *Blaydon Races* (Edison Cylinder 13936, 1909; also Ariel Grand 80rpm disc, Jumbo 208, 1913); C E Catcheside-Warrington, *Sunderland v Middlesbrough* (Edison Bell Cylinder 6904, 1904) [This was supposedly a football commentary, which Catcheside-Warrington would record with alternative match results for release in each town]; also *The Neebors Doon Below* (Pathé 721, 90 rpm disc, 1907/08). For a more complete history of regional records up till 1943, see R Stephenson, *A Slice of Geordie Heritage* (PDC, Newcastle, 2000).

¹¹⁰ Various Artists: Jim Lloyd, (Editor), *BBC’s Folk on 2 Presents Northumbrian Folk* (BBC REC 118S, 1971).

¹¹¹ Jack Armstrong’s Northumbrian Barnstormers, recording featuring: *Cock o’th’ North; Dalkeith Strathspey; Earl of Errol; Eightsome Reel; Irish Washerwoman; Moneymusk Strathspey; New Scotland Strathspey; Popular Song Medley; Rakes of Mallow; Robertson Rant Strathspey; Tavern in the Town; and Waltz* (33rpm record, Morton Sound Recording Studio, 12 Oxford Street, Newcastle, November 1959). Johnny Handle’s first brush with recording was at Manor Studios in 1954, when he recorded a single-pressing demo disc with the Vieux Carre Jazzmen. Johnny

market relating to more general vernacular culture, which Mawson & Wareham exploited from its inception in 1969 by following the kind of pattern established by Dick Kelly's pioneering broadcasts. Thus, popular singers like Owen Brannigan and Alex Glasgow recorded broadly North Eastern (rather than specifically folk) material alongside releases from other kinds of entertainers such as comedians.¹¹² Indeed, Mawson claims the majority of the label's musical output was underwritten by the commercial success of the comedy releases.¹¹³ A similar trajectory was followed even by the label's more rock-oriented offshoot, Rubber Records, co-founded in 1970 by Mawson and David Wood of Wallsend's Impulse Studios. Impulse, and therefore Rubber, boasted the region's first multi-track recorder as well as engineers Heslop and Mickey Sweeney) capable of using it.¹¹⁴ They were thus able to attract rising folk-rock stars who now could (should they wish) opt out of the previously inevitable move to London. The various members of Lindisfarne originally came together at the studio, where they recorded a contribution to Rubber Records' first release as Alan Hull and the Brethren, and their stablemates included local folk artists like Pete Scott and Hedgehog Pie.¹¹⁵ Yet Mawson claims that Rubber's financial security was only finally established by the release of an album by a comedy folk star from outside of the region (*Rochdale Cowboy*, Mike Harding), while Mawson & Wareham found a later source of security in the 1978 release of Bobby Thompson's *The Little Waster*.¹¹⁶ The stylistic continuity from *Wot Cheor Geordie* could hardly be more evident.

Bizarrely, while local releases of North Eastern music were suffering in comparison to comedy, national and international labels were receiving financial boosts from the

Handle, interview with Mike Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession. Roy Hartnell, correspondence with author, 21st March 2005. Hartnell was the company's sound engineer and one of its proprietors, and is listed as a musician on the Jack Armstrong recordings.

¹¹² Brian Mawson, interviewed by author via telephone, 20th May 2005. The company's first release featured Sunderland Youth Brass Band. Brannigan's work was licensed from EMI. See also 'Smiths' Disc', *Evening Chronicle*, 13th June 1979, which reports a Mawson & Wareham re-release of the group's old 78 rpm recordings.

¹¹³ Brian Mawson, *Ibid.* It must be said that circumspection is always wise when considering a tax-aware company director's claims of unprofitable ventures.

¹¹⁴ Regarding Mickey Sweeney, see C Groom, J Watson and T Watson, 'Interview with Mickey Sweeney', *Lindisfarne* website: <http://www.lindisfarne.de/interviews/ivms0210.htm>.

¹¹⁵ D I Hill, *Fog on the Tyne: The Official History of Lindisfarne* (Northdown, Hants, 1998), pp21-26; Various Artists, *Take Off Your Head and Listen* (Rubber Records, Newcastle, RUB 001, 1970). Prelude – who would have major national success with their version of *After the Gold Rush* – were also featured on this album; 'Rubber Records', *Muther Grumble*, Issue 4, April 1972.

region's folk artists. In an era when Northern-ness had come to be an indicator of 'cool', from John Braine to The Beatles (and with The Spinners providing a folk counterpart to the Mersey sound), a vogue for records by North-Eastern folksingers with strong regional accents and attitude would be expected.¹¹⁷ Perhaps those outside the region were able to perceive a distinctiveness in the Tyneside traditions about which many local people were blasé. And, quite possibly, the success within the region of local artists on better-distributed national labels had a negative impact on the music disseminated through more parochial companies. Charisma's signing of Lindisfarne was quickly repaid by a string of chart successes. The Elliott Family recorded albums for Leader, but most notably for the American label Folkways.¹¹⁸ This release, *The Elliots [sic] of Birtley: A musical portrait of a Durham mining family*, was compiled from recordings made by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger at the Elliotts' home, and is acknowledged as influential not just on the local scene but internationally.¹¹⁹ *Spin* magazine enthused:

If any company is going to produce a finer folk record this year, they are going to need to find something absolutely extraordinary, for here is an album which I have no hesitation in recommending unreservedly to everyone, be they 'folknik' or 'ethnic'. ... Don't ask yourself if you can afford to buy this record. You can't afford not to buy it.¹²⁰

The LP's unique selling point, as implied by the 'folknik/ethnic' distinction, was evidently its presentation as a field recording. This record of a family singing and talking together as un-self-consciously as the presence of a microphone would allow, provided authentic music from what, to many of *Spin's* readership, was a culture every bit as alien and exotic as the Mississippi plantations.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Mike Harding, *Mrs 'Ardin's Kid* (Rubber Records, Newcastle, RUB 011, 1975); *The Rochdale Cowboy Rides Again* (Rubber Records, Newcastle, RUB 015016, 1975).

¹¹⁷ See R Samuel, edited by A Light, with S Alexander and G Stedman Jones, *Island Stories: Unravelling Britain – Theatres of Memory, Volume II* (Verso, London, 1998), p165.

¹¹⁸ Jack Elliott, *Jack Elliott of Birtley* (Leader, London, LEA 4001, 1969); The Elliott Family, *The Elliots of Birtley: A musical portrait of a Durham mining family* (Folkways, FG 3565, 1962).

¹¹⁹ See T L Fisher, *The Radical Revival: A History of the folk song revival, and other counter-cultural movements in Britain and America from the 1930s to the early 1970s* (unpublished MA Thesis, University of Birmingham, October 1973), p200.

¹²⁰ *Spin*, 1/8, June/July 1962, 'Coals To – Durham', p6.

¹²¹ See opening of Chapter Four, regarding MacColl's comment that the family's conversation was 'pure Chaucer': Doreen and Bryan Henderson, interviewed by author, 13th December 2004, recording in my possession. Record imports from London featured imports from the *Negro*

Without a doubt, though, the most striking example of North Eastern impact on the national folk record industry was in relation to Topic Records. A 1962 series of EPs featuring North Eastern songs performed by Louis Killen, Johnny Handle and Colin Ross were intended to be ‘an expression of the Northumbrian’s life’, to ‘jolt the memory of North-East miners’ and remind them of songs more relevant to their lives than the ‘pop market can produce’ and to introduce the music to people outside of the North East.¹²² The trademark regional eclecticism of ballad, orally-transmitted folksong and music-hall is evident with songs ranging from *Derwentwater’s Farewell* through to *Keep Your Feet Still*, though the expressed suspicion of concert piano and ‘folknik’ guitar attests to the impact of the national revival’s narrative.¹²³ But the most significant aspect of Topic’s ‘diving into the treasury of north-eastern music’ was its financial success, marking the beginning of a key turning point in Topic’s fiscal fortunes.¹²⁴ That this impact was broader than the immediate folk scene is evident from the fact that Philip Larkin selected Killen’s version of *Dollia* as one of his *Desert Island Discs* in 1976, while Larkin’s poem *Explosion* was said to have been inspired by the recording of *Trimdon Grange Explosion* on *Tommy Armstrong of Tyneside*.¹²⁵ Killen’s later *Ballads and Broadsides* was considered by *Ballads and Songs* magazine to be

the most important record to come out of the revival so far. Here is a young club singer, singing with the confidence of a Harry Cox or a ‘Pop’ Maynard;

Folklore series, such as *Texas Prison Songs*: see Advertisement for Record Imports Ltd, Folk Scene, Issue 11, September 1965; p2.

¹²² Louis Killen, Johnny Handle acc Colin Ross, *The Collier’s Rant* (Topic, London, EP, TOP74, 1962); *Northumbrian Garland* (Topic, London, EP TOP75, 1962); Johnny Handle, *Stottin’ Doon the Waal*, (Topic, London, EP, TOP78, 1962); Louis Killen, sleeve note to Killen, Handle and Ross, *Northumbrian Garland* (Topic EP, TOP 75, 1962); Louis Killen, sleeve note to Killen, Handle and Ross, *The Collier’s Rant* (Topic EP TOP 74, 1962).

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Tony Davis, ‘From the North-East’, *Spin*, 1/9, August/September 1962, p8; Regarding the revival of Topic’s fortunes after the releases of industrial songs, see M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival, 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), pp63-65; T L Fisher, *The Radical Revival: A History of the folk song revival, and other counter-cultural movements in Britain and America from the 1930s to the early 1970s* (unpublished MA Thesis, University of Birmingham, October 1973), p199 cites Bill Leader, then director of Topic, who stated that the release of the Handle/Killen discs was the point at which the company’s fortunes began to improve.

¹²⁵ D Telford, ‘Dearest Bun ...’, *Northern Review*, Vol 13, Winter 2003/2004, 69-96, p92. These recordings fit comfortably with Larkin’s well-known ideas about how jazz had been debased once the primacy of the human voice had been lost to instrumental pyrotechnics - how much more of an urban blues from the distant past could one find than Killen’s striking voice and those stark, modal melodies?

and what's more singing with a very sincere belief in the truth and beauty of his songs.¹²⁶

This was not strictly regional material and Killen was by now a national figure, but at this point there seemed to be no limits to the benefits of recording North Eastern musicians. Yet the flurry of intense national interest from the record companies in the Tyneside scene appeared to subside by 1966 to sparser coverage in keeping with the region's size.¹²⁷ This was perhaps because fresh narratives influenced by hippie culture and rock music began to hold sway: as Chapter One highlighted, the new counter-cultural generation that would peak in 1968 was responding to different challenges than the youth that emerged after World War II. It is certainly notable that the record companies' shift away from North Eastern music occurred at around the same time that the BBC's presentation of the region's music also retreated into more insular local coverage. Self-conscious 'Geordie-ism' and industrial heritage was beginning to raise its profile within the North East's own confines: this would imply a degree of defensive reaction in salvaging a cultural identity that appeared likely to be swamped.

Before this shift, though, the northern vogue that effectively saved Topic reached a 1963 peak with the release of *The Iron Muse: A Panorama of Industrial Song*.¹²⁸ This record was also notable in its rich variety of input from several artists who had been involved in the Centre 42 collaboration between the trades unions and the arts, discussed in Chapter One. And a significant number of those artists on this album (Killen, Davenport, and adoptive Tynesider Ray Fisher) hailed from the North East.¹²⁹ While some of the local folksong institutions, such as Folksong and Ballad, strenuously distanced themselves from party politics, local performers operating within national theatrical and recorded media were clearly aligning themselves with overtly left-wing organizations (Topic had been an offshoot of the Workers Music

¹²⁶ Louis Killen, *Ballads and Broadsides* (Topic LP, 12T126, 1965); *Ballads and Songs* magazine, No 6 (1965), Record Review, p20.

¹²⁷ See Chapter Six for a parallel in press coverage – which receded slightly later.

¹²⁸ For a typically glowing report of this record, see E Winter, 'Iron Muse is a Winner', *Sing*, 7/8, June 1963, p1.

¹²⁹ A L Lloyd with Various Artists, *The Iron Muse: A Panorama of Industrial Song* (Topic, London, LP, 12T86, 1963).

Association, and Centre 42's allegiances were self-evident).¹³⁰ Why this dichotomy should exist is difficult to explain. One possibility is that, while operating within the national folk scene, regional performers were able to participate in the burgeoning political and social movements that characterized the 1960s, but within the local scene the loyalties were to much older communities rooted in a mobilized labour movement rather than the 1960s radical counter-culture. Alternatively, as discussed previously, the relatively small potential audience available to professional and semi-professional performers within the immediate region might dictate some subtlety in handling political ideas to avoid alienating some listeners: this would still allow for the Birtley club's staunch socialism, as the Elliotts did not seek to earn their living from music. Whatever, it shows that these performers were not mere puppets of record companies, nor slaves to prevailing trends, but acted as individual agents and adapted according to the needs of their environment.

Given Brian Mawson's assertions of poor returns from folk music and Topic's evident financial instability, it would appear that specific folk music labels were unlikely routes to riches. Skiffle's brief flurry of success might have created an excess of optimism in this area of business but, by the 1960s, expectations were surely more realistic. Nonetheless, cleverly handled, these labels could earn their proprietors at least a comfortable living while affording the opportunity to disseminate a particular philosophy to like-minded people. Such combinations of small-scale capitalism and idealism suited the prevailing ethos – and the opportunities (via better affordable recording technology and relative prosperity) – of the 1960s admirably. For the majority of people who were not regulars at folk clubs, such media were their only point of access to folk music. How they portrayed the region's music was therefore key to perceptions of whether this was a heritage worth keeping. Meanwhile, the major labels tended to absorb the few obvious commercial successes from within the revival: the Dylans and Baezes and Donovans. As part of the pop milieu, such artists immediately became by-words for inauthenticity, leading to the internecine disputes discussed in Chapter Eight. Yet – contrary to such condemnation – these artists by their very ubiquity provided obvious influences and

¹³⁰ See Chapter Two and Appendix Three regarding Folksong & Ballad's claims to political impartiality.

inspiration for their counterparts in more local scenes.¹³¹

While the popular ‘folkniks’ extended their reach, the exotic ‘ethniks’ continued to record, and the cover art of their releases betrays a further subdivision: at least two competing narratives of ‘Northernness’ (see Figure 6). Jack Armstrong’s Beltona EP of Northumbrian Pipe Music, draws on the Scottish label’s house style and peddles the romanticized imagery of the border in its depiction of pipes, Northumberland

Figure 6 - Two competing narratives



tartan and heathery hills under a brooding Northern sky.¹³² It can be contrasted sharply with another kind of Northern romanticism altogether, in the artwork for the original sleeve of *The Elliots [sic] of Birtley*: winding gear in moody monochrome.¹³³ Both types of image have fed different aspects of the region’s heritage industry, but it is striking to see them so iconically presented and packaged within the context of what were recordings of ‘authentic’ performances.

For at least a few years, when North-Easternness was a selling point among the purists, the industrial narrative appeared to dominate record releases. When Topic released an album of songs by the pitman poet, A L Lloyd advised that *Tommy Armstrong of Tanfield* would not have any resonance for people outside of the North-

¹³¹ Even Alistair Anderson, with his strong allegiances to the country dance music of Northumberland, acknowledges early inspiration from Bob Dylan. Source: interview with author, 5th March 2004.

¹³² J Armstrong, *Northumbrian Pipe Music* (45 rpm EP, Beltona SEP43, 1969).

¹³³ Elliott Family, compiled and edited from original material collected by Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl, *The Elliots of Birtley: A Musical Portrait of a Durham Mining Family* (Folkways LP FG 3565, New York, 1962).

East, so the title became *Tommy Armstrong of Tyneside*.¹³⁴ This provenance was emphasized to ensure the right target audience - by suggesting to potential buyers that this was industrial rather than rural song, and in the music-hall rather than the oral tradition. In the early 1960s, this music was novel (and therefore marketable) when contrasted with the rural traditions of song and Morris dance better known to those in the south.¹³⁵ Furthermore, by identifying the recording with Tyneside as a whole rather than an obscure village in the west of County Durham, the LP would reach the widest possible internal audience ('Tyneside is extremely conscious of its traditional songs and it may well be that this record will find a ready market there outside the folk clubs') – feeding and subtly altering the region's perception of what constituted its own tradition.¹³⁶ Not that Topic concentrated exclusively on the urban tradition – their releases of Cheviot Ranters' recordings fed equally into the 'new Northumbrian' imagery conjured by Jack Armstrong's Beltona release.¹³⁷

This almost schizophrenic imagined community of the North East – heavily industrial but at the same time romantically wild and rural – was also featured in the publishing industry. And, once again, this was not simply a product of the post-war era but represented a long history of which this period in time was only a distinctive part. From at least the days of Bewick and Bell, this duality had been represented and celebrated in print. The region's antiquarians seemed – alongside its more commercial collectors - to embrace both the old worlds of the Roman Wall and the Reivers as well as the modern iconography of industry and the music-hall. So, from Bruce and Stokoe's *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* to Catcheside-Warrington's collections of Tyneside songs, *Sair Fyel'd*, *Hinny* and *Chevy Chase* nestle alongside *The Row upon the Stairs* and *Dol-li-a*.¹³⁸ That these are seen as aspects of the same tradition –

¹³⁴ Interview with Tom Gilfellon, 21st March 2003, recording in my possession; Killen, Gilfellon, et al, *Tommy Armstrong of Tyneside* (Topic LP, 12T122, London, 1965).

¹³⁵ A dialect glossary was provided with the sleeve notes.

¹³⁶ Ian Cannell, Review of *Tommy Armstrong of Tyneside*, *Folk Review*, Summer 1965, 14-15, p15.

¹³⁷ Cheviot Ranters, *The Sound of the Cheviots* (Topic LP, 12T214, 1972); Cheviot Ranters, *The Cheviot Hills* (Topic LP, 12TS222, 1972); also B Pigg, *The Border Minstrel* (Pigg, B, *The Border Minstrel* (Leader, LER 4006, 1971); and Various Artists, *The Wild Hills o' Wannie: The Small Pipes of Northumbria* (Topic LP, 12TS227, 1973).

¹³⁸ Samuel Reay, (ed/arr), *Album of Tyneside Songs Volume 4* (J G Windows, Newcastle, 1927), p1; J Collingwood Bruce and J Stokoe (eds), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy: A Collection of the ballads, melodies and small-pipe tunes of Northumbria* (Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle, 1882, facsimile edition Llanerch, Felinfach, 1998), pp1-24; E Catcheside-Warrington (ed/arr), *Album of Tyneside Songs Volume 2* (J G Windows, Newcastle, 1912), pp10-11; J Collingwood Bruce and J Stokoe (eds), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy: A Collection of the ballads, melodies and small-pipe tunes of*

a regional one – is a peculiarity perhaps born out of the size of the region and the importance of market towns and of colliery villages that were at once urban and rural. This imagery was perhaps even more keenly felt and preserved from the 1960s as the fundamental nature of the region’s industrial base began to shift away from its once distinctive patterns. The final section of this chapter will assess the ways in which publishing (of songs, music and related material) contributed to the region’s ‘written identity’.

Local publisher Frank Graham – who was to spearhead the resurgence of interest in printed local songs and tunes – had all the relevant components for a local antiquarian and a folklorist. Well-educated and politically radical (after studying classics at King’s College, London, he was a veteran of both the Spanish Civil War and the National Unemployed Workers’ Movement), he was also an educator and therefore concerned with communicating history and continuity of tradition.¹³⁹ Graham’s shift from WEA teacher to publisher began gradually when he found the existing guidebooks to Holy Island to be inadequate and decided to produce his own.¹⁴⁰ Thus, the man who was to disseminate Scott Dobson’s *Geordie Byeuks* and re-publish several of the most important volumes of Tyneside song began his career by examining the most isolated haunts of the early saints. *Plus ça change...*

A virtual cottage industry, with a claimed disregard for the profit motive, Graham’s publishing company was based on the belief that ‘if a book was worth publishing, we published it – irrespective of whether it would sell or not’.¹⁴¹ This conviction that North Eastern heritage was worthy of preservation led to Graham’s publication of facsimile versions of songbooks by Joe Wilson, John Bell and Geordie Ridley: again, it was the mix of antiquarianism and populism that set these books apart from, say, the *Penguin Book of English Folksongs*’ more narrowly folkloric material.¹⁴²

Northumbria (Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle, 1882, facsimile edition Llanerch, Felinfach, 1998), p117.

¹³⁹ ‘Bullets, Books and Milk Bottles’, *Northern Echo*, 14th January 1992, p7.

¹⁴⁰ K Dufton, ‘A Man in his Own Write’, *Sunday Sun*, 17th May 1987. Graham finally gave up teaching to concentrate on publishing in 1966.

¹⁴¹ ‘Publisher is all set to complete his century’, *Newcastle Journal*, 8th July 1970, p6; ‘Bullets, books and milk bottles’, *Northern Echo*, 14th January 1992, p7.

¹⁴² J Bell, *Rhymes of the Northern Bards* (Newcastle, 1812, reprinted Frank Graham, Newcastle, 1971); *Tommy Armstrong Sings* (F Graham, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1971); F Graham (ed), *The Geordie Song Book* (Frank Graham, Newcastle, 1971); G Polwarth (ed), *Come You Not From Newcastle: A Collection of North Country Songs* (Frank Graham, Newcastle, 1972); D Weatherley

Hence, the development of Scott Dobson's comic series that began with *Larn Yersel*' *Geordie*, and which developed into the recordings discussed above and eventually the *Geordierama* shows at Newcastle City Hall. A popular publication has immense power over repertory, as Johnny Handle has noted, 'Catchside-Warrington's selection of songs has been an artificial boost for them ... if he'd chosen other songs, they'd have been equally popular'.¹⁴³ Frank Graham's best selling songbooks may not have had the same ubiquity, but the *Geordie Byeuks* did: the output of the publishing house as a whole created a package of 'textualized' images, songs and dialect that helped to reinforce the perception of what it meant to be a Geordie.

When Graham retired, he decided not to sell his business to a major London publisher, preferring the less profitable option of retaining cultural capital within the region. Instead, Rothbury's Richard and Sheena Butler bought the company.¹⁴⁴ This was a considerable continuity with existing constructs of regional heritage and imagined community. As the Duke of Northumberland's piper, Richard Butler represented a link to the *Minstrelsy* and the Society of Antiquaries; as the son of Bill Butler, Director of the Northumbria Tourist Board, he had also absorbed more contemporary narratives of the region.

Such narratives were, as Chapters Six and Seven demonstrate, being actively promoted especially from the 1960s onwards. Paasi has highlighted a significant element:-

It is obvious that strong narratives on identity require strong regional media that exploit regional arguments in order to delimit the territories concerned. ... Provincial newspapers in particular are important in the construction of written identities, the past, present and the future of regions.¹⁴⁵

(ed), *Songs of Northumbria* (Frank Graham, Newcastle, 1973); J Wilson, *Joe Wilson Sings: A Book of Geordie Songs* (Frank Graham, Newcastle, 1971); *Geordie Ridley: 'Gateshead Poet and Vocalist' Sings the Blaydon Races* (Frank Graham, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1973).

¹⁴³ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

¹⁴⁴ K Dufton, 'A Man in his Own Write', *Sunday Sun*, 17th May 1987. After the period under study, Butler would also run a folk label, Northumbrian Records, alongside Alistair and Liz Anderson's White Meadow Records and Geoff Heslop's rather larger affair, Black Crow Records.

¹⁴⁵ A Paasi, 'Bounded Spaces in the Mobile World: Deconstructing 'Regional Identity'', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 93/2, 2002, 137-148, p143.

By stressing collective characteristics and fetishizing the region as an actor in competition with other regions, newspapers are key components that set in place a latent discourse of regional identity that can be manifested in more practical (economic or political) applications.¹⁴⁶ Dan Smith exploited this, commenting that the regional press, especially particular journalists such as the *Evening Chronicle*'s Eric Foster, and Harold Evans, then of the *Northern Echo*, were 'responsive to regional aspirations'.¹⁴⁷ As noted earlier, a special North Eastern characteristic from at least the nineteenth century was the local press's use of song to mobilize regional consciousness. John Stokoe had contributed local songs to the *Newcastle Courant* during the 1860s, and a century later the *Evening Chronicle* ran a regular column dedicated to songs from *Winlaton Hopping to Jimmy's Deeth*.¹⁴⁸

The North East could also boast its own contribution to the alternative press typified by *Oz*. *Muther Grumble*'s counter-cultural message was demonstrated by its first editorial, which ended: 'Power to the People'.¹⁴⁹ Chapters Two, Seven and Eight cite some examples of the magazine's mix of international, environmental and local politics, rock and folk. It may not have had the widest distribution but it reached the bohemian youth who are discussed in Chapter Four: it could therefore set the agenda or stimulate debate, as evidenced by the split in the North Eastern Folk Federation that was exacerbated by Tom Gilfellow's comments within the magazine.¹⁵⁰ By contrast, there appeared to be little need for a specifically North Eastern folk magazine, given *Spin*'s general bias towards folk clubs in the wider North, and the regular contributions therein by Johnny Handle and Laurie Charlton. Handle had

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. For a parallel analysis relating to discourses of 'the oriental' see also E Said, *Orientalism - Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Penguin, London, 1978), p206 and pp221-225.

¹⁴⁷ T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle, 1970), pp115-116.

¹⁴⁸ *Evening Chronicle*: 'The Poet Who Paid Tribute to the Miners', 12th July 1963; 'Satirist Switched to Character Sketches', 19th July 1963; 'Blinded Tyneside Builder Won Fame as a Song-writer', 26th July 1963; 'This Geordie Songster was Born in Edinburgh', 2nd August 1963; 'He Worked for Temperance Through Song', 9th August 1963; 'Irish by Birth, but Geordie by Nature', 16th August 1963; 'Geordie won Praise from Highbrows', 23rd August 1963; 'Painter in Demand as a Poet-Singer', 30th August 1963; 'Tyneside Oarsman Inspired a Famous Song', 13th September 1963; 'Tyne Songwriter Achieved Fame with One Work', 27th September 1963; 'Tribute in Song to Electric Light Pioneer', 4th October 1963; 'Newcastle was Waiting for Boney's Invasion', 11th October 1963; 'Two Anglers Formed Partnership in Poetry', 18th October 1963; 'Songwriter Vanished at Age of 29', 25th October 1963, p7; 'Dialect from a Politician', 8th November 1963; 'North's Mystery Man of Song', 15th November 1963; 'Threat of Invasion Inspired this Song', 22nd November 1963; 'Tyneside Told - Drink Beer for Safety', 13th December 1963; 'Neet they Caught the Moon', 20th December 1963.

¹⁴⁹ Editorial, *Muther Grumble*, Issue 1, December 1971.

¹⁵⁰ Discussed in Chapter Two.

briefly set up his own magazine, *Singing Teesside*, while working there in the early 1960s, and the North East Folk Federation published occasional newsletters.¹⁵¹ Further, a brief experiment with this format was made in late 1960s Sunderland, with *Image*, but it lasted no more than one or two issues.¹⁵² This suggests that, at home the local folk scene was most confidently expressed as part of the wider counter-culture or of the 'Geordie renaissance', while specialist folk music networks on the national scale provided an alternative 'urban pathway'. Folk musicians within the region therefore had two similar but separate communities to negotiate.

This 'bilingualism' appears to be at the heart of the distinctive relationship between the North Eastern folk scene and the media. Democratization and vernacularization of the media were widespread international phenomena after World War II, but within the North East, the cross-fertilization between tradition, revival and popular media had been in operation for far longer, with far less self-conscious demarcation of the boundaries between them, at least since the days of the chapbook. The broadcast and recording media were only the most recent examples along a continuum of patronage that had supported folk music in the region: from the Countess of Northumberland's support of Jamie Allan through the publications of Bell and Marshall, to the scholarly efforts of the Society of Antiquaries and the Northumbrian Pipers' Society. The form of patronage had changed, as had its speed of dissemination, but it is idealistic to assume there was necessarily an age of innocence during which 'the folk' created their music purely for themselves. This was functional music which had uses. The following chapter will assess a new form of patronage and utility for folk music: its role in constructing concepts of heritage that could be marketed by a region whose industrial base was diminishing.

¹⁵¹ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession.

¹⁵² *Image*, 1/1, Spring 1968 is the only copy I have so far uncovered.

Chapter Six

‘The Land of Three Rivers’: The Search for Heritage

In 1965 the material was not there from which to create the region I was exploring ways of planting the seeds of regional consciousness in the rich variety of our northern way of life an evocation of the region’s historic links with Rome, northern Europe and Scotland ... a creative exercise which, while rooted in the past had its economic parallel in our own times.

T Dan Smith¹

These words, from a man who placed himself at the centre of ‘creating the region’, neatly summarize the problematic inherent in any heritage project. Is there an acknowledged sense of collective history on which to build? If so, how can that past be refracted to suit present-day needs? If not, should it be ‘invented’ (or at least constructed from disparate strands) to meet those same contemporary needs? And will this constructed heritage be adopted into the collective memory of its host community?

This chapter deals with these issues and assesses folk music’s role in constructing, maintaining and changing notions of regional heritage. It will first explore some general theories relating to heritage and nostalgia, and their promotion in modern societies. It will further examine the different ways in which heritage can be viewed: as a cynical ploy to attract visitors; as ‘social glue’ in the production of imagined

¹ T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle, 1970), pp92-94. Although these words have been selected from a commentary on tourism and heritage in the region, they are not lifted out of context (except that Smith emphasized that he would wish to include Cumbria within his Northern tourist region): Dan Smith obviously understood and acknowledged the present-centredness of heritage projects.

communities; or as a simple attempt to retain cultural capital. These concepts will lead to some general questions raised by the use of folklore in the promotion of heritage, and brief discussions of some comparative folk heritage projects in other countries or regions. A further section analyses the ways in which the concept of a heritage specific to the region developed in the 1960s (significantly earlier than the date of 1975, when Iles suggests heritage seriously took root in the national consciousness), assessing some specific examples of how local folklore and folk music was co-opted into the creation of each aspect of 'destination North East'.² This leads to an examination of less obviously commercial ventures during the growth of the concept of North Eastern heritage, and, finally, to the fundamental question: was this heritage necessarily constructed and utilized only for external, pragmatic purposes; or was it internalized by its participants who had found a way of retaining cultural capital and a sense of belonging?

First, then, it is essential to map some of the terrain regarding heritage and its role in creating 'imagined communities'. Many academic studies of the search for heritage – of 'historicity' – are fundamentally negative, viewing it as subjective, present-centred, and dubious in its authenticity. Hobsbawm and Ranger famously, and controversially, delineated the construction from the eighteenth century onwards of a variety of national symbols, myths and rituals.³ Wiener echoed this analysis, dating the re-imagining of England as 'a garden' to the years after The Great Exhibition's trumpeting of scientific progress, and Girouard saw *The Return to Camelot* and chivalric values as a code adapted to suit the modern needs of those running the Victorian empire.⁴ Wright similarly viewed the nostalgic reclamation of the 'modern past' and 'collective particularities' as symptomatic of alienation in the age of rationalization. In a disjointed world run by scientific rules rather than the moralities

² J Iles, "'Gone With the Wind': Versions of History at Beamish', *Northern Review*, Vol 5, Summer 1997, 52-66, p52.

³ E Hobsbawm and T Ranger (Eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983). Controversy has arisen particularly from Hugh Trevor Roper's provocative piece on 'The Highland Tradition of Scotland' (pp15-41), which, some critics argue, overstates the level of invention with regard to the Ossianic ballads and the development of the plaid kilt. For a similar deconstruction of Nova Scotian mythologies, see I McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and cultural selection in twentieth century Nova Scotia* (McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 1994).

⁴ M J Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp42-51; M Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1981).

and traditions of earlier societies, people sought safe harbour in the more secure and intuitive everyday life of an imagined 'golden age'.⁵ Wright's general thesis is deeply critical of such preservationism, viewing it as ersatz, inherently conservative and a tool of hegemony. It is perhaps coloured by being written at the height of overtly political Thatcherite reclamations of 'national heritage': Plumb, writing in 1969, was optimistic that the subjective use of 'the past as sanction' was nearing its end.⁶ Yet at least some of Wright's critique could equally apply to the 1960s, when the intellectual 'Two Cultures' scuffle between C P Snow and F R Leavis, encapsulated the ongoing dialectic between scientific, modernist progress on the one hand, and the retention of heritage and traditional cultural values on the other.⁷ Evident from these deconstructions of heritage is their close parallel with the notions of 'staged authenticity' that will be discussed in Chapter Eight. As with the debate over authenticity, however, there are more positive readings of the uses of heritage that allow for a more nuanced approach.

Lowenthal calls for balance: although he begins from the premise that 'nostalgia tells it like it wasn't', he acknowledges that for every hegemonic version of heritage, there is an equally romanticized counter-cultural nostalgia, and that there is no reading of the past that is 'by contrast 'honest' or 'authentically true'. Nostalgia shares its presentist bias, if not its anodyne aims, with many other historical perspectives'.⁸ Corner and Harvey acknowledge that some heritage is commodified but other aspects are sincere attempts to retain cultural capital.⁹ And, despite his seminal role in the deconstruction of heritage, Hobsbawm also advises caution against assuming that even the most obviously 'invented' traditions are entirely top-down impositions: 'the most successful examples of manipulation are those which

⁵ P Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (Verso, London, 1985), pp19-27. See also R Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (Methuen, London, 1987).

⁶ J H Plumb, *The Death of the Past* (Macmillan, London, 1969).

⁷ D Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (Little Brown, London, 2006), p49; pp55-56; and p77 which deals with the rapid growth in availability to all sectors of consumer goods – a modern development which in turn fed the appetite for what Samuel has termed 'retrochic'. See also the contemporaneous myth-building of C S Lewis, *The Cosmic Trilogy* (Bodley Head, London, 1990) which pitted the forces of a Christian good against a scientific evil.

⁸ D Lowenthal, 'Nostalgia tells it like it wasn't' in C Shaw and M Chase, *The Imagined Past: history and nostalgia* (Manchester University Press, 1989), 18-32, pp27-28; p30.

exploit practices which clearly meet a felt – not necessarily a clearly understood – need among particular bodies of people’.¹⁰ This collective need features (with rather less emphasis on manipulation) in Raphael Samuel’s consistent defence of the ‘unofficial knowledge’ produced by and for the wider public of collectors and museum-goers. Samuel revealed the snobbery behind the heritage baiters’ cries of ‘false consciousness’ and suggested that, alternatively, we might place greater emphasis on agency by viewing

the invention of tradition as a process rather than an event, and memory, even in its silences, as something which people made for themselves. Rather than focusing on state theatricals, or the figures of national myth, it might [be] more profitable to focus on the perceptions of the past which find expression in the discriminations of everyday life.¹¹

The value of heritage is, therefore, deeply contested, but it does have uses to which it is consistently put, one of which has a direct bearing upon this thesis: territorial belonging, described by George H Lewis as the ‘idyllic and romantic image of a “homeland of the soul”, connecting ... psychic space with geographical location’.¹² This is particularly evident in a framework such as Nora’s *lieux de mémoire*, where mental processes of recollection are shaped by and literally located in sites of memory, such as statues, street names and memorials: as Lovell has it, ‘locality can be recreated as a particular place through the memory of its existence in the past’.¹³ And so ‘imagined communities’ develop, with a binding, cross-class sense of comradeship engendered by shared religious and moral values but especially by the heritage myths expressed through vernacular print and media. These have been mapped on the national scale by, among many others, Linda Colley and Benedict

⁹ J Corner and S Harvey, ‘Mediating tradition and modernity: the heritage/enterprise couplet’, in J Corner and S Harvey (Eds), *Enterprise and Heritage – Crosscurrents of national culture* (Routledge, London, 1991), 45-75.

¹⁰ E Hobsbawm, ‘Mass Producing Traditions: Europe 1870-1914’, in E Hobsbawm and T Ranger (Eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), p307.

¹¹ R Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (Verso, London, 1994), p17; and pp259-271. Of course, at times this presents dangers: the ‘discriminations of everyday life’ can be profoundly illiberal and run counter to the democratizing urge that gives them a platform.

¹² G H Lewis, ‘The Maine that Never Was: The Construction of Popular Myth in Regional Culture’, 16/2, 1993, 91-100, p91.

Anderson, while Weight and Beach have provided an analysis of national belonging and citizenship of particular relevance to the period in this study, assessing both the centripetal effects of wartime solidarity and post-war challenges, such as increased immigration, to this carefully cultivated sense of British identity.¹⁴

The more globalization eroded national identities, the more the focus further narrowed to the local and the regional, and since the 1990s studies of myth-construction on these smaller scales appeared throughout America and Europe.¹⁵ Of special significance to the North East are those explorations of the general Northern-English identity (as ‘other’ to the dominant South East) by Kirk and Russell.¹⁶ Russell not only assesses the use of cultural heritage in constructing identity from within (how Northerners imagined themselves through the cultural expressions of artists, writers and film-makers); he also summarizes the role of the ‘orientalist’ external gaze in creating and perpetuating Northern stereotypes, with a particularly telling quotation from television and radio character Uncle Mort: ‘Do you know, if I were to go to the taxidermists and get myself stuffed, I’d make a fortune being an ornament in some arty farty Hampstead parlour’.¹⁷ Most significant here is the understanding that the Northerner is fully aware of his ‘heritage’ status, and I will return to this later when considering the specific case of the North East. Russell further draws attention to a primary factor in the importance of heritage to the North

¹³ P Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’, *Representations, Special Issue: “Memory and Counter-Memory*, 0/26, Spring 1989, 7-24; N Lovell, *Locality and Belonging* (Routledge, London, 1998), p4.

¹⁴ L Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1992); B Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, London, 1991); R Weight and A Beach, *the Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (Tauris, London, 1998).

¹⁵ See, for example, I McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and cultural selection in twentieth century Nova Scotia* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 1994); G H Lewis, ‘The Maine that Never Was: The Construction of Popular Myth in Regional Culture’, 16/2, 1993, 91-100; P Sant Cassia, ‘Tradition, Tourism and Memory in Malta’, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 5/ 2, June 1999, 247-263; J K Walton, ‘Tradition and Tourism: representing Basque identities in San Sebastian and its province, 1848-1936, in N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of ‘The North’ and ‘Northernness’* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), 87-108; P Payton and B Deacon, ‘The Ideology of Language Revival’, in P Payton (Ed), *Cornwall Since the War* (Institute of Cornish Studies, Redruth, 1993), 271-290.

¹⁶ Regarding ‘otherness’ and the North’s identity as counter-culture to the South’s dominance, see N Kirk, Introduction to N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of ‘The North’ and ‘Northernness’* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), (ix)-(xiii), p(xii),

¹⁷ P Tinniswood, *Uncle Mort’s North Country* (1986) quoted in D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the national imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), p201. The concept of an ‘orientalist’ gaze is Edward Said’s, see E Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (Vintage, London, 1979).

and other regions in economic decline: its perceived importance to regeneration and ‘civic boosterism’, even though the encouragement of tourism has been far from a panacea for social exclusion.¹⁸ Once again, this has particular implications for the North East in the period under study and I shall return to it in greater detail later in the chapter.

The preceding pages have outlined the general historiography relating to the nature and uses of heritage: those following will explore how certain concepts of society lead to particular conclusions about the role of music, especially folk music, in cultural heritage.

Music’s ‘affective’ power can enable the listener to recall past moments within their own life vividly enough that they are emotionally tangible once again.¹⁹ Further, it can allow listeners to explore other lives, to build an imagined community with their ancestors, to ‘return to roots’.²⁰ It is even possible, as Hagen and Bryant argue, that this need to comprehend shared origins through music is an evolutionary adaptation: that the human brain’s neurological specialization for music and dance is based on the ethnographic importance of forming inter-group alliances.²¹ Musical forms are difficult to learn and easy to decode: they therefore provide an advertisement to any outside grouping that the performing coalition is longstanding, stable and a worthy ally in war and peace. This functionalist explanation from the earliest human origins is perhaps too blunt an instrument to apply to the complex and culturally diverse societies that experienced the folk revival. However, it may point to a truth about the presentation of music as heritage: its message is ‘we are one people; and this is our territory’.

¹⁸ D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the national imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), pp64-66. Also, D Russell, ‘Selling Bradford: Tourism and Northern Image in the Late Twentieth Century’, *Contemporary British History*, 17/2, Summer 2003, 49-68.

¹⁹ Philip Tagg provides a comprehensive analysis of ‘affect’ in popular music, which aligns musicology with semiotics and shows how the use of particular clichés and conventions can intentionally manipulate audience attitude, but is also suggestive of unintentional affective outcomes: P Tagg, *Kojak 50 Seconds of Television Music: toward the Analysis of Affect in Popular Music* (Studies from Gothenburg University, Dept of Musicology No 2, Gothenburg, 1979), especially the Diagram on p47. Probably the most direct account of the tangibility of the past through music is found in a work of fiction, N Hornby, *High Fidelity* (Putnam, London, 1995).

²⁰ J Connell and C Gibson, *Sound Tracks: popular music, identity and place* (Routledge, London, 2003), p223.

The phenomenon of music expressing collective heritage has been ably exploited by the tourist industries of, for example, New Orleans and Ireland (69 per cent of all 1993-4 visitors to Eire 'rated traditional Irish music as a 'very important' or 'a fairly important' determinant of their visit').²² Further, folk music and balladry was long (at least from the Romantic era) associated with the idealized past, as the number of references to 'minstrelsy' attest. But locating music in the past can open up the dangers of viewing culture as direct representation of a particular period and structure of society.²³ In the case of folk music, Alan Lomax's 'cantometrics' theory melded Tylorian and Sharpian notions of 'survivals' from the primitive past with the belief that musical style was directly homologous to social structures (for example, that individualized performance was found 'all along the highroads of civilization', while integrated, 'groupy' [sic] styles were more common among the 'simple people' of tribal societies; and that certain vocal qualities corresponded to levels of sexual permissiveness).²⁴ This analysis echoes an idea that underpins much of the use of music in heritage projects: 'this music demonstrates who we were and how we lived at this stage of our societal development'.²⁵ Despite the complexities in its presentation over several hundred pages, it is at its core a populist message that would sit comfortably on a museum interpretation board: it is therefore inevitably built into some of the ways in which music is interpreted as heritage, and some of these interpretations will be examined later in the chapter.

²¹ E H Hagen and G A Bryant, 'Music and Dance as a Coalition Signalling System', *Human Nature*, 14/1, 2003, pp21-51.

²² J Connell and C Gibson, *Sound Tracks: popular music, identity and place* (Routledge, London, 2003), p237.

²³ For a comprehensive discussion of the conceptual flaws of 'music as representation', see Martin's chapter on Adorno, P J Martin, *Sounds and Society: Themes in the Sociology of Music* (Manchester University Press, 1995), pp75-125.

²⁴ A Lomax, *Folk Song Style and Culture* (American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington, 1968), p16; pp195-196, and pp427-430. Also, A Lomax, 'Song Structure and Social Structure', *Ethnology*, Vol I, 1962, 425-451. See also P J Martin, *Sounds and Society: Themes in the Sociology of Music* (Manchester University Press, 1995), pp129-133. Lomax's approach would appear on the surface to have resonances with Weber's understanding of Western tonal music as a product of rationalization, but has more emphasis on rigid boundaries than on process.

²⁵ Lomax was keen to disassociate himself from 'the crude analogies which functionalism has so far provided ethnomusicology', yet although he took his analysis away from the simple functions of music: work songs, religious songs and so on, his understanding of the purpose of style itself remains surprisingly functionalist. See B Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory & American Roots Music* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2000), p175.

Yet, free of its original context, culture cannot simply reflect a past society: it is necessarily selective, as Williams explained in relation to the development of an accepted literary canon,

The traditional culture of a society will always tend to correspond to its *contemporary* system of interests and values for it is not an absolute body of work but a continual selection and interpretation.²⁶

And such selectivity represents a judgement of the significance of cultural products, either to the 'great tradition' of dominant culture or 'because they represent areas of human experience, aspiration and achievement, which the dominant culture undervalues or opposes, or even cannot recognize.'²⁷ Filene charts this process in relation to the construct of an oppositional American folk music heritage that emerged at the time of the New Deal and Popular Front politics:-

As with most canons, the canon of American folk music that the Lomaxes defined says as much about their tastes and values as about the 'reality' they documented. the Lomaxes' vision of America's musical heritage was shaped by their involvement in the politics and culture of the 1930s.²⁸

Selectivity even affected museums such as Beamish (more fully discussed below), which – despite a consciously eclectic approach to collecting - had to work within the strictures of, first, what artefacts were actually available, and, secondly, to choose which pieces in the collection merited prominent display.²⁹ As Chapters One and Eight highlight, a similar analysis of the relative value of folk artefacts (prioritizing 'authentic' forms over commercial upstarts) had been at work among the heritage-seekers from at least the days of the first revival.

²⁶ R Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Pelican, London, 1965), p68.

²⁷ See R Williams, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', *New Left Review*, 1/82, November/December 1973, 3-16, p12.

²⁸ B Filene, "'Our Singing Country": John and Alan Lomax, Leadbelly, and the Construction of an American Past', *American Quarterly*, 43/4, December 1991, 602-624, p604.

²⁹ Beamish's stated collection policy - 'you offer: we'll collect it' – was as open-ended and eclectic as one might imagine, F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p87.

A key driving force behind most attempts at cultural preservation, however selective, was the perception that past forms of expression were in imminent danger of being submerged by, as Lomax put it, ‘the cultural grey-out’ of modern communications, and that these older cultures needed to be ‘saved’ for the common good.³⁰ This urgency, based on prevalent notions about the demise of a way of life was undoubtedly accurate when related to obsolete industrial, domestic and agricultural artefacts. But Bill Leader has countered the parallel characterization of folklore as heritage, and music as museum piece:-

Cecil Sharp was convinced he had just collected the last song from the last folk singer in the country. They thought this because it is obvious that it is all going to die because it is old men, but the truth is that it is old men that sit around doing these things because young men have other things to do. So it is an illusion to think that it is dying because it is only old men that are doing it.³¹

Even when the folk forms were changing dramatically, the collectors’ conviction that they were ‘saving’ a heritage that would otherwise be lost appears an overstatement at least. It is clear that ‘the folk’ who had moved into towns during the industrial revolution did not instantaneously break with singing songs about ploughing – the change would come over generations (indeed, the greatest exponents of the supposedly rural Northumbrian piping tradition in the early twentieth century were pitmen).³² And Doc Rowe has commented on May Day celebrations:-

These events have emotional and demonstrative significance that is seriously upheld; they are, mostly, not staged as tourist attractions and have in some cases survived despite external pressures.³³

³⁰ A Lomax, *Folk Song Style and Culture* (American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington, 1968), p4.

³¹ Bill Leader, quoted in P Heywood, ‘Bill Leader: 50 years in the recording industry part 1’, *Living Tradition*, 68, May/June 2006, 26-30, p30.

³² J Murphy, *Heritage and Harmony: Case Studies In Folk/Popular Music and the construction of historical identities within the North East of England, 1877-1988*, (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Sunderland, 2003), p37.

³³ D Rowe, *May Day: The Coming of Spring* (English Heritage, Swindon, 2006), p7.

The retention of cultural capital is, therefore, not always a conscious effort. As discussed in Chapter Four, the boundaries between continuity and revival, and between active and inactive repertory are blurred and always shifting, and so preserving the cultural heritage of folk music involves a more complex arrangement than, say, displaying a horse-drawn plough in an agricultural museum.

This is not to argue that even continuous traditions are uninfluenced by the heritage sector or its economic ramifications. In the case of Irish music, Kaley Mason argues that ‘Tourist-related services aim to deliver the experiences that tourists are conditioned to expect prior to their departure’.³⁴ Particular signifiers are therefore anticipated – in the case of music these may include the sound of the dialect, the timbre of instrumentation, particular tonal or rhythmic lilt, social context and physical appearance – and those who provide musical heritage services will seek to accord with these expectations. Similarly, Wyn James has recounted the work of Welsh folk musicians ‘in those fields where business and culture intersect, such as printing and publishing, record production and crafts – to create Welsh-medium businesses in the traditional heartlands of the language, providing work for local people.’³⁵ But even where heritage projects are driven by the economic imperatives of tourism and civic boosterism, Cohen (whose work will be more fully discussed in Chapter Eight) has challenged the common belief that folk arts adapted for these markets are necessarily debased or ‘phony’. While not denying that such instances occur, he suggests instead that ‘it is more useful to approach them as another, albeit accelerated, stage in the continuous process of cultural change’.³⁶ It is arguable that the choral singer who is handed the music for a Geordie song to be performed at Beamish Museum may internalize that song and pass it back into something closer to its original context by singing it to their child. Or the visitor to a town festival may become fascinated by a rapper dance performance and choose to learn the dance or one of the accompanying instruments. In each case, a self-conscious ‘heritage’ performance is taken into a fresh context, which may be quite different from its

³⁴ K Mason, ‘Engaging Quests for Quintessential Traditional Music: An Irish Excursion’, *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music*, Vol 28, 2001, 15-23, p16.

³⁵ E Wyn James, ‘Painting the World Green: Dafydd Iwan and the Welsh Protest Ballad’, *Folk Music Journal*, 8/5, 2005, 594-618, p606.

³⁶ E Cohen, ‘The Sociology of Tourism: Approaches, Issues, and Findings’, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol 10, 1984, 373-392, p388.

origins but is valid nonetheless. I will return to this issue later in the chapter with some more specific examples from the North Eastern folk revival.

The general picture that emerges from this overview of approaches to heritage is one of a populist, present-centred (and consequently sometimes derided) version of the past constructed for economic reasons or to retain cultural capital. The use of folk music within heritage projects draws on fundamental expectations of its symbolic significance, but has been shown to be highly mediated and selective. Nonetheless, it is clear that such versions of the past can be used to shape the present and the self-perception of those who have inherited its corresponding sense of identity. The following section will examine how and why the North East from 1950-1975 was particularly fertile ground for heritage projects.

The title of this chapter derives from a 1958 book, *The Land of Three Rivers*, which found its way into the parlance of planners and the regional television audience and shaped the perception of a discrete North East region built around Tyne, Wear and Tees, larger than the old Northumberland and Durham, more modern and more precise than 'Northumbria', and distinct from the wider North that included Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool.³⁷ The implication was that, despite internal diversity, the region cohered around a sense of shared heritage, expressed both by the book's cover (featuring images of Bamburgh Castle, the Tyne Bridge and shipbuilding) and by Vin Garbutt in his song of the same title:-

Ah me name is John North from the South of the Forth,
In the Land of Three Rivers I dwell.
In the steelworks and pits I've worked with me mates,
Not a bad word against them I'll tell

.... In centuries gone our ancestral homes
Were prey to the Romans and Danes.
But Hadrian knew and Odin did too

³⁷ H G Bowling, L C Coombes and R Walker, *The Land of Three Rivers* (Macmillan, London, 1958). Dan Smith specifically referred to the concept of 'Three Rivers Country', T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriol, Newcastle, 1970), p105. Tyne Tees Television ran a Saturday morning children's show, *The Three Rivers Club* during 1964-66 and it featured a regular heritage slot by Frank Atkinson: F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p90 and p202.

That the North East was no place for games.
They tried to enslave us but all efforts failed
While the strength of Saint Hilda and Aidan prevailed.³⁸

This notion of a longstanding heritage of regional particularity and patriotism had to derive from something: the presence of the Society of Antiquaries from 1813 signified an existing attachment to local history (and, as the *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* demonstrates, this Society had an early interest in vernacular forms). This was followed by ‘the overarching epic’ of the North East’s rise to industrial greatness, and the past took on a different significance as the big cranes, the pit banners and the Jarrow Crusade took on a meaning as powerful as castles, cathedrals and Hadrian’s Wall.³⁹ In the years from 1950 to 1975, this past began to be used differently, and the effect of 1960s regionalism (itself sometimes the result of simple economic pragmatism rather than any higher aims) was its creation of an imagined community that included all these elements.⁴⁰

As the previous chapter noted, even before ‘the people’s war’ a patriotic heritage of British citizenship, tolerance and independence had been counterposed against those of other – say, fascist or Soviet - regimes. Colls notes how a 1929 Royal Commission had – abortively - called for the foundation of four national folk museums to represent the constituent peoples of Britain: ‘the idea of a national identity based on the structural properties of the people was everywhere.’⁴¹ This heritage built upon the people extended into unexplored areas, beyond the grand houses and into the workers’ cottages, accelerating during the growth of ‘history from below’ in the 1960s. Allied to this, post-war reconstruction and a contemporaneous extension of public policy into cultural provision (already noted in Chapter Four) created an atmosphere that was conducive to the growth of publicly funded heritage projects, and this was felt especially keenly in the localities most in

³⁸ V Garbutt, *The Land of Three Rivers*, released on V Garbutt, *Eston California Social Club* (Topic LP, 12 TS 378, 1977).

³⁹ B Williamson, ‘Living the Past Differently: Historical Memory in the North East’, in R Colls and B Lancaster (Eds), *Geordies* (Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 148-167, p151.

⁴⁰ See F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), pp92-93, which explains how Atkinson utilized the ascendant rhetoric of regionalism to ensure funding for his open air museum when Durham County Council appeared likely to withdraw revenue. Newcastle Airport had similarly been funded by a consortium of Local Authorities.

need of rebuilding. The North East of England was clearly ripe for a newly constructed sense of heritage.

Construction, as the opening quotation of this chapter implies, was very much at the forefront of thinking about regional heritage. David Matless takes Alison Light's concept of a 'conservative modernity' and adapts it to a 'moral modernity of the landscape': 'The attempt to improve places and people was a vision of Britain – and in particular of England – that allied tradition and modernity.'⁴² In the case of the North East, the industrial areas in particular were re-imagining their town centres and replacing vast tracts of slums with new social housing. These changes – especially in the hands of Dan Smith - had just this sense of 'conservative modernity' built into them: as Newcastle's Swan House roundabout swept away the original Royal Arcade, it retained the nearby Holy Jesus Hospital, meanwhile a replica Arcade was built into its underpass; and as the occupants of Scotswood Road were rehoused into tower blocks, they were encouraged to celebrate their past during the Blaydon Races Centenary.⁴³

The 1962 Centenary celebrations achieved national visibility through the attendance of notables such as Hugh Gaitskell, Ted Short and Jennie Lee.⁴⁴ A lasting repercussion of this brief festival was the re-opening – after a hiatus of more than half a century – of Balmbra's music hall.⁴⁵ Balmbra's developed an ongoing identity that sat somewhat uneasily with the nostalgia with which it was launched: much of the material was indeed aimed at preserving the heritage of traditional Tyneside music hall through the efforts of Joe Bennett's Northumbrian Traditional Group, Joe Ging and Dick Irwin, but the hall was far from immune to modern pop music – *Music to Watch Girls By* was a regular background instrumental and Allen Cutler performed acoustic guitar renditions of hits from The Shadows.⁴⁶ In some senses,

⁴¹ R Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2002) , p304.

⁴² D Matless, 'Taking Pleasure in England: landscape and citizenship in the 1940s', in R Weight and A Beach, *the Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* (Tauris, London, 1998). 181-199, p181.

⁴³ T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle, 1970), pp49-50; pp62-68; p98.

⁴⁴ C Lightburn, *Balmbra's: The Hall That Outlived Them All* (Bass Taverns/St Oswald's Hospice, Newcastle, 1998), p29.

⁴⁵ C Lightburn, *Balmbra's: The Hall That Outlived Them All* (Bass Taverns/St Oswald's Hospice, Newcastle, 1998), p24.Ibid, p8

⁴⁶ Ibid, pp12 and 17.

this was much closer to the spirit of music hall than any attempt to preserve it in its 1862 form. Even during the Centenary celebrations, a Festival of Traditional Arts and Dancing competed for participants with a mainstream ballroom event; however, heritage held sway, with the Festival of Traditional Arts taking up a fifth of the Centenary's music budget, with a further quarter going to a brass band contest.⁴⁷

These activities either precipitated or coincided with a peak of interest in North Eastern folk music heritage, as national folk magazines displayed, from 1962 to 1967, an unusual concentration of references to regional (with an emphasis on industrial) music.⁴⁸ Further, the Evening Chronicle ran a regular column on historically important North Eastern songs, which ran from 12th July to 20th December 1963. Combined with the Blaydon Races Centenary, such visibility could only help define this narrative of the region's past. A L Lloyd reached an international readership with his *Sing Out!* analysis of the song *Blaydon Races* in the

⁴⁷ *Evening Chronicle*, 8th June 1962, special advertising section, juxtaposed an advertisement for a Grand Carnival Dance at Exhibition Park led by Johnny Taws and his Orchestra with one promoting the Festival of Traditional Arts and Dancing at the Mayfair Ballroom. The ticket prices of 5/- and 3/- respectively possibly reflected the likely uptake. Council Minutes, City and County of Newcastle upon Tyne, 19th December 1962. The Festival of Traditional Arts drew £343 of council revenue while dance orchestras received only £152.

⁴⁸ A Joseph, 'Dovetailing into the Tradition on Tyneside', *Sing*, 6/5, January 1962, 48-49; J Makepeace, 'Treats from Tyneside', *Sing*, 7/1, September 1962, 12-14; E Winter, 'Tees-Tyne Tops and Traditions', *Sing*, 7/4, Jan/Feb 1963, p1; 'Geordie Black', *Sing*, 8/5, November 1965, p9; J Handle, 'Centenary of the Blaydon Races', *Spin*, 1/8, June/July 1962, 5-8; Review of 'The Elliots of Birtley', *Spin*, 1/8, June/July 1962, p6; T Davis, 'From the North East', *Spin*, 1/9, August/September 1962, p8; T Davis, 'A Canny Lad', *Spin*, 1/10, Oct/Nov 1962, p5; H Mousdell, 'Northumbria on Record', *Folk*, No 2, October 1962, p13; J Handle, 'Durham Big Meeting Day', *Spin*, 2/1, c1963, 6-7; L Charlton, 'The Northumbrian Scene: Notes on Accompaniment', *Spin*, 2/2, c1963, 10-11; T J Gilfellow, 'The Pitmen Poets', *Spin*, 3/1, c1964/5, 16-19; J Handle, 'Mining Songs of the North East Parts I and II', *Spin*, 2/4 and 2/5, c1963/4, 14-15; F Rutherford, 'Love Songs of the North East', *Spin*, 2/6, c1964, 18-19; J Handle, 'Where Are We Going?' Parts I and II, *Spin*, 2/7 and 2/8, c1964, 18-19 and 16-17; J Handle, 'The Road to Ellington', and J Handle, 'The Northumbrian Scene – The Melodeon', *Spin*, 2/9, c1964, p17 and 18-19; J Handle, 'Industrial Folk Music and Regional Music Hall in the North East, Parts I-III', *English Dance and Song*, 27th April 1965, 106-108, 27th May 1965, 138-141, and 28th January 1966, 6-9; 'Shew's the Way to Wallington', and J Handle, 'The Northumbrian Scene: The Small Pipes'. *Spin*, 3/2, c1964/5, p21 and 22-23; 'Johnny Handle' (cover picture and article), and J Handle, 'The Northumbrian Scene - Instruments in Folk Song Clubs Today', *Spin*, 3/3, c1965, p1, 14-15 and 16-17; L Charlton, 'The Magnificent Outlaw', *Spin*, 3/4, c1965/6, 11-13; Review of 'Tommy Armstrong of Tyneside', and J Handle, 'New Street Songs', *Spin*, 3/8, c1965/6, p10 and 20-25; J Handle, 'The Old Pubs' and 'Dust', *Spin*, 3/9, c1965/6, p29 and p31; J Handle, 'Jack Elliott of Birtley', *Spin*, 4/3, c1966, p9; 'Bob Davenport' (cover picture and article), and J Handle, 'The Kielder Hunt', *Spin*, 4/4, c1967, 1-2 and 26-27; J Handle, 'The Collier Lad', *Spin*, 4/6, c1967, 10-11. Before 1962, there was little reference to the North East and after c1970, the concentration of interest would appear to have been in the Northumbrian tradition. This may indicate the burgeoning Tyneside heritage iconography; it may equally indicate only the period of time when Topic Records saw a commercial opportunity in this music or when Messrs Handle, Gilfellow and Charlton were most readily available to write articles.

Spring of 1964. The article clearly subscribed to the belief that the region possessed a distinctive brand of heritage born of a longer, slower period of industrialization than that experienced elsewhere:-

Elsewhere the Industrial Revolution had meant unwelcome novelty, misery, a damping of the spirit; but on Tyneside it was accepted with a grin and a grimace.

The miners and ironworkers were used to blackness and smoke; they had it for generations, it was their element.⁴⁹

Johnny Handle's account of 'The Centenary of Blaydon Races' gave a more pragmatic assessment of the uses of this past, acknowledging that the festival stemmed from 'the importance of [the song] as advertisement for the Geordies'.⁵⁰ It would be of interest to question at whom this advertisement was aimed: as Frank Atkinson argues, tourism 'was never thought of in relation to North East England in the early sixties', although he also provides the most ready answer to this question in the rationale behind his museum policy: 'to help encourage the people of the North East to appreciate that the history of their forbears and their past way of life and work were worth remembering and something to be proud of'.⁵¹ The heritage of the North East was aimed primarily at North Easterners: they were to be the tourists visiting their own past. Chapter Eight will discuss how this impacted upon concepts of 'the authentic', however, this also has direct relevance to the ways in which regional heritage was presented. Howard locates this new 'core of cultural consciousness, the feeling of one's own culture within oneself' in those young people, discussed in Chapter Four, who were among the first generation to escape the inevitability of pit, shipyard, or farm labouring.⁵² Meanwhile, Williamson describes the ways in which children born ten years after their local pit closed had nonetheless absorbed the collective memory of the coalfield through their families' understanding of history.⁵³ It was in this 1960s context of a still tangible collective

⁴⁹ A L Lloyd, 'The Hullabaloo at Blaydon', *Sing Out!*, 14/2, April/May 1964, 34-37, p35.

⁵⁰ ; J Handle, 'Centenary of the Blaydon Races', *Spin*, 1/8, June/July 1962, 5-8, p8.

⁵¹ F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), pp86-87.

⁵² S Howard, 'History, Heritage and Region@ The Making of Beamish and Bowes, A Question of Class?', unpublished paper, University of Sunderland, 2001, p8.

⁵³ B Williamson, 'Living the Past Differently: Historical Memory in the North East', in R Colls and B Lancaster (Eds), *Geordies* (Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 148-167, p148.

past that several major heritage projects came to fruition. The Blaydon Races Centenary has already been highlighted, and the previous chapter has dealt with the promotion of a shared regional past through Scott Dobson's *Geordie byeuks*. The following section will examine two other cases – Beamish museum and the Allendale ‘tar barls’ festival - in which North Eastern folk heritage was exploited first, for those living in the region and, secondly (eventually) to promote the region to outsiders.

Beamish Museum was inspired by Yorkshire-born Frank Atkinson's ‘Saul of Tarsus’ moment in 1952, when he visited Lillehammer folk museum – at the time an established format in Scandinavia but not Britain.⁵⁴ After experimenting with setting up a folk museum near Halifax in 1958, he was appointed director of the Bowes Museum, which was then the only museum in County Durham, and dedicated to European high culture in a way that Howard views as reflecting the profound paternalism of the coal owners.⁵⁵ Immediately he began work at Bowes, he mooted – with the Council's approval - the idea of a full-scale open air facility dedicated to the everyday rural and industrial life of the region's ‘recent past’.⁵⁶ Beamish Museum eventually opened in 1971 and, despite having been described as ‘controversial’ only the previous year, its immediate success and massive queues emphasized that it had caught the regional *zeitgeist*.⁵⁷ Atkinson commented ‘There is little doubt that the concept which I have called Beamish could have been established in other places than North East England’ but, like the Scandinavian and Welsh museums, such a development needed ‘a pronounced regional awareness.’⁵⁸ Beyond this perceived regional identity and Atkinson's individual agency, there was another possible explanation why the open air ‘folk’ museum concept took root in the North East. This was the perceived urgency (emphasized by such influential figures as

⁵⁴ F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p9. In pp85-86 and p98, Atkinson does acknowledge that some largely rural British folk museums predated Beamish, such as Reading University's Museum of English Rural Life (1951); the Ulster Folk Museum; and the Welsh Folk Museum near Cardiff.

⁵⁵ S Howard, ‘History, Heritage and Region@ The Making of Beamish and Bowes, A Question of Class?’, unpublished paper, University of Sunderland, 2001, pp10-11.

⁵⁶ F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p73.

⁵⁷ F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p133; also ‘Museum Names First Director’, *Journal*, 14th April 1970, p6.

Newcastle University's Professor Daysh, and Harold Evans, then editor of the Northern Echo) spurred by rapid social change: 'Industry was changing, pit villages were being demolished, large areas of the population were being rehoused, and there was not a moment to lose'.⁵⁹

The belief that the old ways of life were imploding and in need of rescue had also inspired previous folk music revivals, and Beryl Davis' review of a High Level Ranters LP demonstrated that this continued into the 1960s folk scene:-

As the concrete faces of our cities grow increasingly alike, it will not be very long before the one way to tell one place from another will be by the regional accents of the local residents, so it is satisfying to know that there are people who collect the sayings and songs in the various areas and that they are available to us on record.⁶⁰

Likewise, Phil Ranson received funding from North Tyneside Libraries Department to document the region's musical heritage before it might disappear.⁶¹ The North Eastern attachment to images of decline is more closely examined in the following chapter. Here, though, it is important to note that, as Lowenthal suggests, this version of 'conservative modernity' was one of those that afforded distance,-

Few admirers of the past would actually choose to return to it – nostalgia expresses longings for times that are safely, rather than sadly, beyond recall ... Though people think themselves less happy than, say, their parents or grandparents, public opinion surveys show that few would opt to go back to the 'good old days' when the modern conveniences they now enjoy were as yet unknown.⁶²

⁵⁸ F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p11 and p169. S Howard, 'History, Heritage and Region@ The Making of Beamish and Bowes, A Question of Class?', unpublished paper, University of Sunderland, 2001, pp10-11.

⁵⁹ F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p88.

⁶⁰ B Davis, 'Regional Accents', *Sing*, 6/6, c1968/9, p11.

⁶¹ North Shields Local Studies Section, P Ranson lecture notes, circa mid-1970s.

⁶² D Lowenthal, 'Nostalgia tells it like it wasn't' in C Shaw and M Chase, *The Imagined Past: history and nostalgia* (Manchester University Press, 1989), 18-32, p28

Atkinson appeared to echo this with his statement ‘Those were the days, right or wrong, good or bad,’ though Williamson views it rather differently: ‘the bad old days become a benchmark against which to measure progress and bask in the heartwarming glow of a nostalgic past’, full of relevant iconography – Davy lamps, poss tubs and chapels – but ‘free of the squalor, the tensions and the defeats’.⁶³ Iles further highlights the ‘empathic interpretation’ of immaculately costumed staff – who are basically performers - creating a sanitized (and occasionally ill-informed) world, lacking the authentic ‘coal dust grime’ and disrepair, the crime, ‘drudgery and slavery’.⁶⁴ This, she suggests, alienated local people whose collective memory of the reality was rather more acute.⁶⁵

There are parallels, then, between the Beamish experience and the folk clubs, which were not the venue of choice for many of ‘the folk’ (with notable exceptions) from whom the songs had originated but who now preferred glossier entertainment such as that available in the working men’s clubs, city halls and discotheques. Meanwhile, the folksinger who performed *Trimdon Grange Explosion* or *Here’s the Tender Coming*, indicated a connectedness with the past without needing to go underground (again, with notable exceptions) or face a press-gang. This suggests a further paradox: Joe Ging was among those who remarked on the appearance of Beamish’s ‘dude mine’, yet he spent a great deal of his own energies in purveying similarly nostalgic Geordie mythology.⁶⁶ What is presented as heritage, or ‘living history’ is often necessarily liminal, with the threshold between past and present surprisingly easily negotiated, and this will be discussed more fully in Chapter Eight.⁶⁷ The people who participated in heritage events (who bought Scott Dobson’s *Geordie Byeuks*, who visited Beamish; or who sang *Byker Hill*) were not so gullible as some would suggest: they were aware of and had internalized this contradiction between

⁶³ F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p100. B Williamson, ‘Living the Past Differently: Historical Memory in the North East’, in R Colls and B Lancaster (Eds), *Geordies* (Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 148-167, pp155-159.

⁶⁴ J Iles, ‘“Gone With the Wind”: Versions of History at Beamish’, *Northern Review*, Vol 5, Summer 1997, 52-66, pp59-62.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p66.

⁶⁶ J Ging, *A Geordie Scrapbook* (Constable, London, 1990), p132. The term ‘dude mine’ was originally Bob Davenport’s – he imagined a Geordie equivalent to American ‘dude ranches’, not expecting they would become a reality.

⁶⁷ ‘Living History’ was the banner headline of the booklet celebrating Beamish’s opening. J Exelby, *Living History: Open Air Museum for the North of England*, (Beamish, 1968), cover page.

the past-as-destination and its harsher realities: it could be argued that they had developed heritage-literacy.

This is illustrated by the defence of a tradition whose heritage status was vital to a community's sense of belonging. In a recent book, Colin Irwin recounted his visit to Allendale's New Year *tar barrels* ceremony, where his queries regarding origins were met with 'the inevitable, all-purpose reply of 'it's pagan'.⁶⁸ Tylor's doctrine of survivals and Fraser's *Golden Bough* – beliefs in cultural fossils that provide an insight into a world beyond the mists of time - are clearly still at work in such assumptions. Clearly there are some resonances with similar *baal* festivals in Whalton (at old midsummer) and north of the border. Those who perform the Allendale tradition fiercely defend claims of distant origins, and in 1974 Venetia Newall met with strong resistance from the people of Allendale when she sought documentation of a far more recent and less romantic explanation of the ceremony. Evidently, around 1858 a Methodist silver band who were playing in the New Year were unable to see their music as the wind kept extinguishing the tallow candles above the music stands and a tar barrel was lit instead.⁶⁹ Further, the special costumes worn by participants were only introduced after World War II.⁷⁰ But it was clear that the people of Allendale much preferred the "mists of time" version⁷¹. The town had taken an expedient measure and invented or adapted a tradition that had worked well enough to become a genuine calendar event.

This aspect of heritage clearly demonstrates the symbiosis between the past and the present. Pegg argues that the emphasis on an increasingly elaborate procession with time-consuming preparation and growing community involvement was closely linked to a greater need for solidarity, for cultural capital.

⁶⁸ C Irwin, *In Search of Albion* (Andre Deutsch, London, 2005) p190. A recent example of this common assumption of pagan origins is given in N Schofield, 'Driving the cold winter away: songs and traditions of midwinter', *The Living Tradition*, 71, November/December 2006, p39. The ceremony can briefly be described as follows: at around 9pm each New Year's Eve, a select band of Allendale men – in fancy dress - parade through the town carrying blazing tar barrels before they go "first-footing" into the houses after midnight

⁶⁹ V Newall, 'The Allendale Fire Festival in Relation to its Contemporary Social Setting', *Folklore*, Vol 85, Summer 1974, 95-103, pp99-101.

⁷⁰ B Pegg, *Rites and Riots: Folk Customs of Britain and Europe* (Blandford, Poole, 1981), pp135-136.

In the case of Allendale, the seed incident, from which the present complex of events on New Year's Eve grew, occurred at a time when the region's lead-mining industry was at its most prosperous. Shortly after, in the 1870s, cheap Spanish lead caused world prices to descend rapidly, forcing the English miners to seek other employment, either in agriculture or in the coal fields and the industrial cities. Perhaps this threat to the community had a direct effect on the increasing elaboration of the Fire Ceremony, creating an event which, together with the previous months' preparations, asserted the unity of the remaining inhabitants of Allendale.⁷²

The indigenous evolution of this procession is clearly in contrast with more obviously invented parades: Lancaster highlights the 1931 'Historic Pageant of the North' held in Leazes Park as an event imposed by the local elite, and notes its lack of popularity compared with less rational recreations such as the 'Hoppings'.⁷³ Something more organic, more related to the much-mythologized folk process was at work in Allendale. By the time Brendan Quayle and Jennifer Hockey explored the festival in 1981, at a time of economic crisis and the increasing purchase of local homes as holiday cottages⁷⁴, Allendale's need for heritage as social glue was vital. The insistence on exclusively local participants⁷⁵ was therefore an increasing imperative, and Quayle and Hockey noted the symbolic significance of this bit of heritage:

The Allendale Bonfire ceremony has become a powerful expression of a defiance against decline. It symbolises the conscious revival of "community". By its warmth, it gives a physical promise of a new life over an old death. ... The fire has become an image of the power which lies at the heart of the community. Its assured rekindling at this critical juncture of the year serves as testament to the anxiety felt by the Allendonians. They want to keep their dale alive, to preserve and regenerate a vigorous, living community of men and women.'⁷⁶

⁷¹ V Newall, 'The Allendale Fire Festival in Relation to its Contemporary Social Setting', *Folklore*, Vol 85, Summer 1974, 95-103, p100.

⁷² B Pegg, *Rites and Riots: Folk Customs of Britain and Europe* (Blandford, Poole, 1981), pp136-137

⁷³ W Lancaster, 'Sociability and the City' in R Colls and W Lancaster (Eds), *Newcastle upon Tyne: A Modern History* (Phillimore, Chichester, 2001), p335.

⁷⁴ B Quayle and J Hockey, 'Keeping the Dale Fires Burning', *New Society*, 1st January 1981, 12-14, p14.

⁷⁵ V Newall, 'The Allendale Fire Festival in Relation to its Contemporary Social Setting', *Folklore*, Vol 85, Summer 1974, 95-103, p94; T Foxworthy, 'The Customs of the North East', *English Dance and Song*, XXXII/1, Spring 1970, p8.

This aspect of folkloric heritage was already being exploited quite separately from the folk revival, but it was noted by revivalists such as Tony Foxworthy who used it as an illustration of Northumbria's 'specialness'⁷⁷.

Landscape and music were critical allies in this constructed version of folk memory. Kathryn Tickell has pointed out the fact that the history and landscape of the North East is effectively mapped in music, so that towns, fields and events carry strong associations: *Chevy Chase*; *Shew's the Way to Wallington*; *Fenwick o' Bywell*; *The Lads of Alnwick*; *The Blaydon Races*; *Sunderland Lasses*; even Joe Wilson's *Wor Geordey's Lokil Hist'ry*.⁷⁸ Reiver names such as Milburn, Robson, Armstrong and Charlton carry through to present-day descendants. Even those raised in the towns were able to tap into the relative proximity of the countryside. At around the same time that Basil Bunting was reconnecting with his Northumbrian-ness, living among shepherds in the Simonsides, Tom Clough was at the height of his powers and writing tunes like *The Herd on the Hill*.⁷⁹ As Irwin has it, 'this is the nearest thing you get to an oral landscape of an area.', or to an equivalent of the Aboriginal 'songlines'.⁸⁰ The music becomes a travelogue, a deeply 'affective' soundtrack and has therefore been frequently exploited by those wishing to sell the region's past to consumers of local heritage. The Earl of Tankerville's 1970 commentary was particularly telling:-

The sound of the Northumbrian Pipes is compelling without being either aggressive or raucous. It is 'compelling' because it fits perfectly the land of its origin – the lonely parts of Northumberland – where it mingles in its own type of harmony with the cry of the curlew and the sounds of the little black-

⁷⁶ B Quayle and J Hockey, 'Keeping the Dale Fires Burning', *New Society*, 1st January 1981, 12-14, p14.

⁷⁷ T Foxworthy, 'The Customs of the North East', *English Dance and Song*, XXXII/1, Spring 1970, p8.

⁷⁸ K Tickell, *Kathryn Tickell's Northumbria*, (Channel 5 television, Producer: Simon Richardson, 14th March 2006). J Wilson, *Tyneside Songs and Drolleries* (Newcastle, 1890s), pp183-185.

⁷⁹ R Caddel and A Flowers, *Basil Bunting – a northern life*, (Newcastle, 1997), p58; T Clough, T, "The Herd on the Hill", in J Say and C Ormston, *The Clough Family of Newsham*, (Morpeth, 2000), p59.

⁸⁰ C Irwin, *In Search of Albion* (Andre Deutsch, London, 2005), p191. See B Chatwin, *The Songlines* (Vintage, London, 1998), p14, which describes Chatwin's attempts to summarize the way in which the Aborigines construct their sense of place: 'So the land ... must first exist as a concept in the mind? Then it must be sung? Only then can it be said to exist?'

face sheep roaming the hills and moorlands. I commend it to those who appreciate the impersonal beauty and unspoiled wildness of those places.⁸¹

The love of regional landscapes was, however, not restricted to the twentieth century, nor was it the sole preserve of the gentry - indeed, those who belonged to the inescapably 'leisured' class of the unemployed were key factors in the growth of ramblers' movements.⁸² Ewan MacColl was one of those who participated in the 1932 Mass Trespass, and typified the working-class politicized youth who both derived pleasure from local places and would develop into the core participants of the folk movement.⁸³ Folksong and Ballad's regular 'Club Hike' into Northumberland has already been noted in Chapter Two and Jack Armstrong's enthusiastic use of ascribed Northumbrian-ness in Chapter Four. Alistair Anderson has emphasized the importance of visiting the wellsprings of the music, whether they were located in the rural hinterland or the city centre: 'we loved pottering around Newcastle as well, you see, we'd come into Newcastle and run up and down Dog Leap Stairs and Castle Stairs and all them places'⁸⁴ There is an underlying sense of pilgrimage here, as strong as the Elvis fans travelling to Graceland, and it was evident that this could prove useful to the region.⁸⁵ The following pages explore the creation of a perceived heritage that developed out of the relationship between local vernacular music, civic boosterism and tourism, and their role as tools of regeneration.⁸⁶

Although the Blaydon Races Centenary was the most obvious example of the adaptation of old songs to new civic needs, there were many others. In 1963, it was reported that Joe Bennett (perhaps inspired by his involvement in Balmbray's) had

⁸¹ Rt Hon Earl of Tankerville, Foreword to Northumbrian Pipers' Society, *The Northumbrian Pipers' Tunebook Second edition*, (Newcastle, 1970).

⁸² For earlier examples of the romanticization of the regional landscape by those of lowly birth, see Anon, *The Life of Jimmie Allan, the Celebrated Northumberland Piper* (Guthrie, Blyth, 1818), p28, which describes old Will Allan's profound attachment to the Coquet valley; and J Lawson, *A Man's Life* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1932), pp158-159.

⁸³ B Harker, "'The Manchester Rambler': Ewan MacColl and the 1932 Mass Trespass', *History Workshop Journal*, 59, 2005, 219-228.

⁸⁴ A Anderson, interviewed by author, 5th March 2004, recording in my possession.

⁸⁵ For this process of music as pilgrimage see J Connell & C Gibson, *Sound Tracks: popular music, identity and place* (Routledge, London, 2003), pp236-250.

persuaded Blyth Council that they should book clog dancers, pipers, a barn dance team, and the Royal Earsdon Sword Dancers for regular appearances at Civic occasions. His argument included an interesting heritage concept with strong echoes of the Allendale case – that rapper dance was ‘a legacy from the days of the Vikings’.⁸⁷ Local folk traditions were also adopted anachronistically in the interests of commerce:-

Hylton Pomeroy, probably Johnson Ellwood’s most talented pupil still delights all those who visit Seaton Delaval Hall mediaeval banquets by his brilliant performances.⁸⁸

Begun at the suggestion of Bill Butler, Director of the Northumbria Tourist Board from 1966-1978, these medieval banquets (also at Lumley and Langley Castles) were designed to draw in outside visitors, although a 1973 commentator conceded that their patronage was ‘almost exclusively North Eastern ... tourists are, still pitifully thin on the ground.’⁸⁹ Nonetheless, government grants to build tourist attractions had become available as a result of, first, the 1963 ‘Hailsham Report’ into the North East and then the 1969 Tourism Act (Section 4 of which gave priority to Development Areas), and tourism’s potential for regenerating the region was emphasized in local press headlines, such as ‘Tourism could help jobless’.⁹⁰ Grant aid targeted aspects of culture that highlighted North Eastern particularity: folk or vernacular music projects were therefore of importance, with the Black Gate’s Bagpipe Museum and Sunderland Empire’s National Music Hall Museum both major recipients of funding in the early 1970s.⁹¹ This was unsurprising: Bill Butler, father of noted

⁸⁶ See M Stokes, *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Berg, Oxford, 1994), p16, which argues ‘music is a form of public display which the state and other social groups have an interest in controlling for obvious purposes of self-promotion.’

⁸⁷ ‘Folk Dance Revival’, *Journal*, 8th July 1963, p5. Though the Viking origins of Northern sword dance may indeed have been genuine, rapper’s distinctively sprung steel blades were clearly a more recent innovation.

⁸⁸ E A Kirkby, ‘Clog Dancing in Northumberland and Durham’, *English Dance and Song*, 36/3, 1974, 88-89, p89.

⁸⁹ ‘Seeing the light at last over Northumbrian tourism’, *Northern Echo*, 17th February 1973.

⁹⁰ The Hailsham Report, prepared in 1963 by Lord Hailsham who was then Minister for the North East, highlighted that the potential of tourism was ‘far from sufficiently developed’: *Northumbria Tourist Board Newsletter*, 5th May 1978, p1. Regarding the 1969 Development of Tourism Act (Section 4), see F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography* (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p143 and p172. ‘Tourism could help jobless’, *Evening Chronicle*, 30th October 1972, p10.

⁹¹ Regarding the Bagpipe Museum, see *Northumbria Tourist Board Newsletter*, 1, September 1973; for the Music Hall Museum, see *Northumbria Tourist Board Newsletter*, 2, January 1974.

Northumbrian piper Richard Butler, was a member of the British Music Hall Society; EFDSS; the Northumbrian Pipers' Society; the North East Folk Federation; and was a Vice President of the Northumbrian Traditional Group. Ensuring visitors were made aware of North Eastern specialness, he regularly escorted parties of foreign dignitaries and trades delegates to Balmбра's, which he declared "a national asset".⁹² Despite his attachment to the music hall, Butler, like other promoters of regional heritage, such as Roland Bibby and Lance Armstrong, preferred the historic appellation 'Northumbria' to the industrial connotations of 'the North East'.⁹³ And, though he was critical of the overuse of particular stock images, such as a famous photograph of Jack Armstrong at Wallington, he was firm in his belief that the region's musical legacies, particularly the Northumbrian smallpipes, were vital to 'help to improve the image of the area': he engaged pipers – always draped in the black and white Northumbrian plaid – to perform at functions attended by representatives from the British Travel Association.⁹⁴

An iconography developed to represent *Northumbria: the Holiday Kingdom* and it relied upon musical images like that shown in Figure 7. The link was made even more explicit with the Travel Association's sponsorship of Tynemouth Folk Festival from its first year in 1969 until 1972, with publicity bearing the same 'holiday kingdom' legend.⁹⁵

⁹² C Lightburn, *Balmбра's: The Hall that Outlived them All* (Bass Taverns/St Oswald's Hospice, Newcastle, 1998), p24.

⁹³ 'Northumbria's Mister Tourism to Retire', *Northumbria Tourist Board Newsletter*, 5th May 1978, p1.

⁹⁴ S Sterck, 'Pipes that can lure the tourists north', *Journal*, 21st October 1967. Regarding Butler's disavowal of the stock Jack Armstrong image, see 'Holiday Booklet Sparks North-East Protest', *Evening Chronicle*, 30th December 1971, p7.

⁹⁵ North Shields Library Local Studies Arts Ephemera, Poster for First Tynemouth Folk Festival, Saturday 13 September 1969; Poster for Fourth Tynemouth Folksong and Dance Festival, Saturday 9th September 1972.

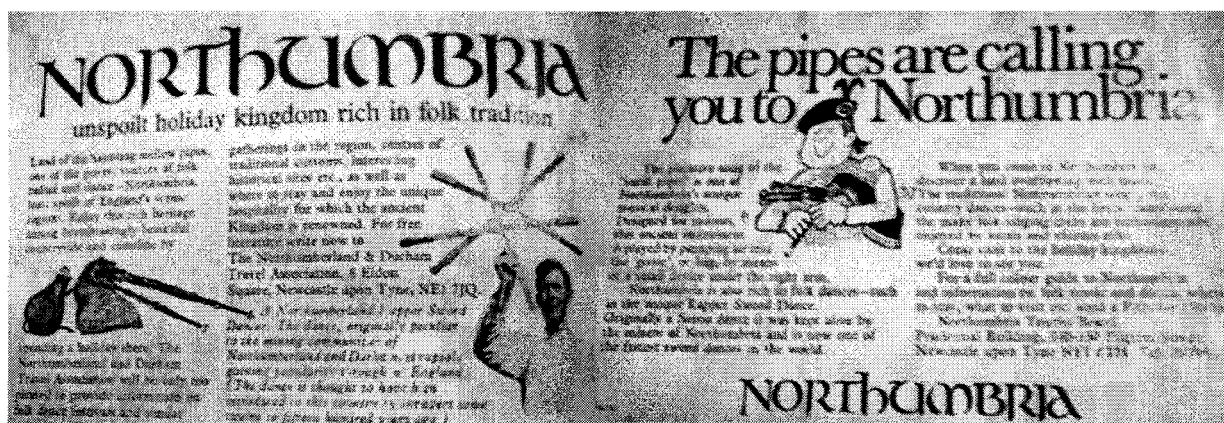


Figure 7: Advertisements for Northumberland & Durham Travel Association, 1970, and Northumbria Tourist Board, 1973. ⁹⁶

Pipes and rafter knots were exotic signifiers and were used to differentiate North Eastern heritage from that of the rest of England and the wider North. The tourist industry was still only experimenting with unusual indigenous attractions beyond long-acknowledged areas of natural beauty and pleasure beaches and, as discussed above, had a relatively small pool of potential visitors on which to draw. To be encouraged to travel those extra hundred miles, southerners seeking the Northern experience would need to find something to differentiate the far North of England from the Lake District, the Dales, the mills and mines of Yorkshire and Lancashire and, clearly, the distinctive Northumbrian musical heritage was a potent symbol of distinctiveness. Patricia Jennings was quick to understand this and played pipes (sometimes alongside Jack Armstrong) to entertain visitors at Wallington Hall's tearooms.⁹⁷ And international tours rendered dance teams such as Monkseaton Morrismen, the Killingworth Sword Dancers, and the Shiremoor Marras international ambassadors for North Eastern particularity.⁹⁸ Even in the less obviously exotic sung tradition, the linkage of vernacular music and visibility to outsiders could hardly be more explicit than in the fact that the Elliott family represented England at the USA bicentennial celebrations.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Northumberland and Durham Travel Association, advertisement, *English Dance and Song*, Spring 1970, p2; Northumbria Tourist Board, advertisement, *English Dance and Song*, 35/3, Autumn 1973, p2.

⁹⁷ *Evening Chronicle*, 11th August 1969, p11.

⁹⁸ *Monkseaton Morrismen and Folk Dance Club Silver Jubilee 1955-1980*, brochure, 1980, p1; N Shiel, Questionnaire Responses, July 2005.

Stokes has highlighted that music ‘does not ... simply provide a marker in a prestructured social space, but the means by which this space can be transformed ... advertising clichés denoting place do more than reflect a knowledge already ‘there’. ... musical images do not just reflect knowledge of ‘other places’ but preform them in significant ways.’¹⁰⁰ Thus, the touristic promotion of the North East created an anticipation of a region rich in tradition both to outsiders and, crucially to the region’s own inhabitants. Lewis has highlighted this process in the creation of touristic Maine, where the potentially negative image of ‘regional backwardness’ was placed instead ‘under a positive sign’: ‘Quaint folkways, down east humor, and the Maine accent ... are touchstones to historical roots that others feel they have lost’¹⁰¹ This analysis applies equally well to the imagery which perpetually located North East England in the past, either in a pre-industrial ‘wild north’ of reivers and Northumbrian pipers, or an eternal Depression of cloth-caps, *netties* and *stotty-cyeks*. The latter version – part of the picturesque industrial curiosity that Russell identified as ‘black England’, and more closely discussed in the following chapter - was purveyed by Scott Dobson and Bobby Thompson, and is typified by a Dick Irwin joke from his routines at Balmbra’s:-

Hard times – they know nothing about things like that nowadays ... I remember me granny crying her eyes out over the mangle as she took the bones out of her stays to make a pan of broth.¹⁰²

Alan Price and Tom Pickard aimed at collaborating on a musical that would be ‘a kind of history [sic] of the twentieth century, as seen through North Eastern eyes’. Despite both being products of the 1960s counter-culture, the lens through which they would view this regional history was firmly focused on the 1930s, as they called

⁹⁹ P Wood, ‘Obituary: Pat Elliot’ (sic), *Living Tradition*, 68, May/June 2006, p8.

¹⁰⁰ M Stokes, *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Berg, Oxford, 1994), pp4-5.

¹⁰¹ G H Lewis, ‘The Maine that Never Was: The Construction of Popular Myth in Regional Culture’, 16/2, 1993, 91-100, p93.

¹⁰² Dick Irwin, quoted in *Evening Chronicle*, 2nd July 1970, p8. For the discussion of ‘the black north’, see D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the national imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), p57.

for first hand recollections of the Jarrow March.¹⁰³ And the same narrative – already tested in Balmbra’s and paralleled in North East Scotland’s revival of nostalgically-staged bothy ballads - prevailed in 1970s media-friendly outlets for civic boosterism such as Mike Neville and George House’s *Geordierama* concerts.¹⁰⁴ These were scripted from Scott Dobson’s *Geordie byeuks* but also featured folk performers such as Eric Boswell (with songs such as *There’s Mair to Life than Women and Beor*), The Northumbrian Traditional Group and – resplendent in the iconography of the hewer - The Shiremoor Marras (Figure 8).¹⁰⁵



Figure 8: The Shiremoor Marras on stage : the iconography of the hewer; and music as civic booster – the Marras meet Wilson

The promotion of a potentially lucrative ‘otherness’ continued, although regeneration, even in later years, proved only a scattered blessing, with heritage areas benefiting while neighbouring communities were left to die: Beamish was a small oasis of public funding only a few miles away from Category ‘D’ villages like

¹⁰³ ‘In Quest of March Details’, *Journal*, 10th September 1975, p7. Regarding the mythology behind the Jarrow March, see M Perry, *Jarrow Crusade: Protest and Legend* (University of Sunderland Press, 2006).

¹⁰⁴ See I Russell, ‘Competing with Ballads (and Whisky?): The Construction, Celebration, and Commercialization of North-East Scottish Identity’, *Folk Music Journal*, 9/2, 2007, 170-191, p173, which provides a clear parallel in its description of staged nostalgia, typical humour and links to distillers (or in the North East of England’s case, Scottish and Newcastle breweries).

¹⁰⁵ ‘Wide-range composer’, *Journal*, 11th April 1975, p5.

Marley Hill and High Spen.¹⁰⁶ Russell has commented that ‘the gap between official rhetoric and economic reality can be significant. ... Even in the most successfully ‘regenerated’ northern cities often chronic problems of social exclusion and poverty, perhaps even exacerbated by the process, remain.’¹⁰⁷

In other respects, the search for heritage was less obviously linked to economic or political purposes. The long tradition of romantic antiquarianism that stretched back to at least the days of Bewick, Scott and Bell (and already noted in relation to landscape) persisted in the hands of some prime movers in the folk scene. In September 1966 schoolteacher Roland Bibby planned a modest concert of music and song intended to raise funds for Morpeth Antiquarian Society. This developed by 1968 into a festival which became known as the Morpeth Gathering.¹⁰⁸ As its roots in an antiquarian society would suggest, this Gathering was quick to develop the heritage aspects of regional folklore, with ‘traditional Northumbrian displays’, music, song, and dialect writing competitions.¹⁰⁹ Competition as an engine of folk revival and the retention of cultural heritage has been noted by Francmanis, who demonstrates that a prime motive behind the early twentieth century Kendal folk song competitions was to uncover and ‘save’ uncollected gems: competitors were disqualified if their song was found to have been previously printed.¹¹⁰ The North East had already used contests to hold on to cultural capital: in the Northumbrian Pipers’ Society; North of England Musical Tournament; and Alnwick Gathering.¹¹¹ Morpeth’s adoption of the format is of interest because it developed around the perceived zenith of the folk boom and yet retained this more structured approach from earlier revivals. Perhaps this suggests a subtext: that the pure Northumbrian tradition should have its own vehicle free from potential dilution by other folk

¹⁰⁶ In the 1960s Durham County Council earmarked certain villages ‘Category D’: the policy was that these villages would receive absolutely minimal council funding and it was – wrongly - assumed that they would therefore die naturally. Beamish’s financial viability was promoted on the basis of its ability to attract tourists: F Atkinson, *The Man Who Made Beamish: An Autobiography*’ (Northern Books, Gateshead, 1999), p102.

¹⁰⁷ D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the national imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), p66.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Gathering around – for big festival’, *Evening Chronicle*, 4th April 1997 [this retrospective was sparked by the Gathering’s 30th anniversary].

¹⁰⁹ D Banks, ‘A Festive Time to Shine’, *Journal*, 2nd April 1971, p6.

¹¹⁰ J Francmanis, ‘The ‘Folk-Song’ Competition: An Aspect of the Search for an English National Music’, *Rural History*, Vol 11:2, 2000, 181-205.

genres. This is, however, only one interpretation and it may overstate the heritage aspect: there remains a distinct possibility that this was another facet of the urge to compete that had been a part of the Northumbrian musical milieu since at least the days of Jamie Allan.¹¹²

Although outside the direct scope of this thesis, it is also notable that the Morpeth Gathering would become even more obviously linked with heritage in the 1980s with the introduction of battle re-enactments (a form that had begun on a national scale almost contemporaneously with the Gathering) and a Border Cavalcade complete with Northumbrian half-long pipers.¹¹³ Such developments bore close relation to the burgeoning early music movement, another aspect of heritage that interested the Bibby family.¹¹⁴ As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the 1980s were the period when the rapid increase in heritage projects became a major issue, as they were conceived as ersatz surrogates for 'real' industry and employment, yet Morpeth illustrates that such events could have much more complex roots that had developed before the full-scale recession of the 1970s. Still, all of this might have appeared, like the 1931 Historical Pageant discussed previously, to be just another plaything of an antiquarian elite, yet the festival's continuing popularity and adoption by the community is demonstrated by its position as an undoubted focal point of the town's calendar. Outreach may well have been helped by the decision to locate many of its Northumbrian music sessions in pubs, something which caused a rift between Bibby (who saw no harm in the blend of music and alcohol that had already fuelled the folk scene) and early collaborator Lance Robson, who viewed drinking as an unwelcome distraction from the music's message.¹¹⁵ Robson went on to found his own

¹¹¹ The North of England Musical Tournament's morris and sword dance contests were originally presided over by Cecil Sharp between the tournament's inception in 1919 and Sharp's death in 1924: *Programmes of the North of England Musical Tournament*, (Newcastle, 1919-1924).

¹¹² Anon, *The Life of James Allan, the Celebrated Northumberland Piper* (Guthrie, Blyth, 1818). A particularly good example is given in pp292-294, and features the tale of a piping duel arranged by regimental colonels between Allan and another piper, who turned out to be his brother, Rob.

¹¹³ For instance, the Sealed Knot re-enactment society began in 1968.

¹¹⁴ Kim Bibby-Wilson recalls her family having an interest in both local traditions and the early music proselytizing of David Munrow. K Bibby-Wilson, interviewed by author, 26th February 2004, recording in my possession. However, unlike the work produced alongside Munrow by artists from the south of England, such as Shirley Collins and the Young Tradition, significant early music/folk music collaborations only appeared in the North East considerably later, during the 1980s with groups such as Misericordia.

¹¹⁵ L Robson, interviewed by author, 8th December 2004, recording in my possession.

Northumbrian Musical Heritage Society, with its own bagpipe museum and purist approach to the dissemination of the music and its history.

Meanwhile, in 1974 Bibby expanded his own version of heritage into a magazine, *Northumbriana*. This typically juxtaposed tunes from the *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* and the Vickers Manuscript with articles on ballads, dialect, local architecture, farming and stick dressing and, tellingly, letters supporting ‘the “natural old shire” as opposed to ‘the truncated local government version’ that resulted from the creation of the new metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear.¹¹⁶ This was clearly preservationism as opposed to civic boosterism and, as the winners in the Gathering’s songwriting contests – such as *Aa Wish Aa Wuz Ten Agyen* - further confirmed, its gaze was fixed resolutely backward.¹¹⁷ Meanwhile, local council and WEA evening classes included – alongside very modern preoccupations like diet and decimalization – classes in folk guitar, country dancing and Northumbrian piping alongside ‘Romantic Northumberland’ and ‘The Historic North’, demonstrating similar rearguard actions against modernity.¹¹⁸

Even in the relatively uncomplicated world of *Northumbriana*, the desire for heritage only went so far: it did not necessarily extend into the folk clubs, who had audiences to maintain. Joe Hutton, noted piper though he was, had played woefully few folk clubs by the end of the 1970s, and any interested folk musicians would have to travel out to him because bookings of a solo piper little known beyond the region were considered a risk by most folk club committees outside of Folksong and Ballad.¹¹⁹ Similarly, singer Jimmy White made only a few noteworthy forays into the folk clubs, and some of these were underwritten by EFDSS.¹²⁰ The folk club revivalists appear to have conceded that, while they found the region’s more esoteric musical heritage fascinating, they would necessarily have to mediate this information, and at

¹¹⁶ E Turnbull, Letter to the Editor, *Northumbriana*, Issue 2, Spring 1975, p31.

¹¹⁷ N Thompson, *Aa Wish Aa Wuz Ten Agyen*, *Northumbriana*, Issue 14, Autumn 1978, pp17-18, which was placed first in that year’s Gathering Song Composition Class.

¹¹⁸ For example, Northumberland County Council, *Your Guide to Leisure: Bedlington*, 1975; Northumberland County Council, *Leisure Activities: Killingworth Area*, 1971-1972; Teesside Education Committee, *Education for Leisure*, 1970-1971.

¹¹⁹ ‘The Four-Way Battleground’, *Acoustic News and Folk Song & Dance News*, No 25, October 1979, p11.

¹²⁰ J Handle, interviewed by M Sutton, 25th February 2002, recording in my possession; *Journal*, 2nd April 1971, p6.

the very least to ensure that the lesser-known traditional performers shared a stage or alternated with more mainstream 'names' in the folk scene. 1960s articles by Johnny Handle and Laurie Charlton introducing the new folk club audiences to ballads and to instruments like the melodeon and the small pipes demonstrate a perceived need for information of this kind in order to build an audience able to negotiate these forms.¹²¹ As explained in Chapter Two, even the most self-consciously 'policy' North Eastern clubs had their origins in a wider, more eclectic movement and, in order to survive, they could not allow local heritage to completely subsume all other styles. Ray Fisher recalled the Geordie renaissance as part of a wider populist movement:-

They ... were singing all these Geordie things and playing these Geordie tunes, discussing Geordie politics and Geordie this and Geordie that. But there were songs that we all knew: 'This Land is Your Land' by Woody Guthrie and such like.¹²²

It would appear that this heritage was discovered through an active engagement with several pasts: the local; the regional; the counter-cultural; and the *longue durée* of 'folk' history.

The preceding pages have examined how heritage could be used as a tool of civic boosterism, as a tourist attraction, or as a preservationist aspect of local pride, but they have also emphasized the limits of the reach of these approaches. Heritage came closest to 'creating the region' when its mythologies were genuinely internalized, either because they were not imposed, but drawn from existing practice, or because they were rapidly adopted and accepted by the region's inhabitants. Some such occurrences have been noted above, but the following section will seek some distinct examples of this process of adoption and internalization.

¹²¹ J Handle, 'The Northumbrian Scene – The Melodeon', *Spin*, 2/9, c1964, pp 18-19; J Handle, 'The Northumbrian Scene: The Small Pipes'. *Spin*, 3/2, c1964/5, pp22-23; and L Charlton, 'The Magnificent Outlaw', *Spin*, 3/4, c1965/6, 11-13.

The imagery of the heroic worker has already been touched upon throughout this and previous chapters: it inspired *The Big Hewer*, and the Shiremoor Marras, both constructs created out of versions of reality. Such constructs were far more complex when couched in individuals who were living representatives of that reality.¹²³ The blurring between representatives of the continuous tradition, organic to their communities, and their role in the revival has already been discussed, particularly in relation to Jack Armstrong and Jack Elliott, in Chapter Four. Chapter Eight will highlight a similar permeability between the perceived 'living history' of traditional art and the 'constructed heritage' of revival: when Johnson Ellwood, who remained a miner, used charges of inauthenticity to attack Jackie Toaduff's professionalized 'showbiz' renditions of clog dance. Ellwood was, arguably, both display piece and museum curator: the heritage object was also knowingly the heritage keeper.

This was also evidently the case with the Elliott family, who could not fail to be aware of the value that had been invested in their heritage (nor to perceive this musical legacy slightly differently) after reading about themselves in *Sing* magazine:-

What a treasure chest is the Elliott's [sic] collective memory. All this oral tradition in one family lends weight to MacColl's claim that there is at least ten years collecting to be done in the Durham coalfield.¹²⁴

Jack Elliott was noted for being able to conjure the nineteenth century to life, to 'bring the busy scene of *Stanla Market* into the actual room'.¹²⁵ Posthumously memorialized with the aural equivalent of a monument - the Leader LP *Jack Elliott of Birtley* - his importance to regional collective memory was reinforced when his surviving family presented Lord Robens (then Chair of the NCB) with a copy of this record at the coal board's Ashington headquarters.¹²⁶ Had Elliott been – as often

¹²² R Fisher, interviewed by K Hunt, 'The Loneliness of the Long Distance Folk Singer', *Swing*, 51/14, 1989, 17-27, p17.

¹²³ Parallel examples include writers such as Sid Chaplin and Tom Hadaway; and painters such as Norman Cornish and Oliver Kilbourn.

¹²⁴ J Makepeace, 'Treats from Tyneside', *Sing*, 7/1, September 1962, p12.

¹²⁵ J Handle, 'Jack Elliott of Birtley', *Spin*, 4/3, 1966, p9.

¹²⁶ 'Record of Miner's Life', *Journal*, 17th July 1969, p6.

assumed – the ‘natural’, quite unconscious of his heritage status?¹²⁷ It would appear not: as the correspondence discussed in Chapter Four demonstrates, Elliott was fully aware that he was both tradition carrier and curator of whatever other interesting pieces that came his way, and he would absorb songs introduced to him by librarians and schoolteachers into his own repertory.

This process could also work in the opposite direction, with participants in heritage events internalizing the culture and returning it to a living tradition. As a boy, Alistair Anderson was taught Scottish country dance at Durant Hall, which led gradually to his immersion in – and dynamic development of – the continuous Northumbrian tradition. This would then be placed on various stages as another piece of heritage, which would eventually be adopted by new players who again developed it beyond any sense of being a static museum piece. Similarly, pipe makers who learned their craft via the work of the Society of Antiquaries might go on to become professional manufacturers. In 1971, as Jack Armstrong’s health waned, there was ‘only one pipemaker locally – William Hedworth’ and ‘a 12- to 18-month waiting list’ for sets of pipes. As the 1970s progressed, Colin Ross and David Burleigh began building pipes and moved increasingly towards full-time self-employment as artisan instrument makers.¹²⁸ Meantime, amateur enthusiasts also appeared to wish to develop these skills, with night-classes and private tutoring in pipe making.¹²⁹

Stefan Sobell’s career as a luthier began with construction in 1973 of what he claims was the first modern cittern.¹³⁰ Although he had been inspired by baroque music as a child, this project was not spurred by a paucity of historic instruments: indeed, until he stumbled across a description of citterns in a book of medieval instruments, he

¹²⁷ J Elliott, *Jack Elliott of Birtley* (Leader LP, LEA 4001, 1969).

¹²⁸ ‘What’s all the fuss down at the Fed?’, *Journal*, 16th April 1971; also ‘£500 grant for man who makes pipes’, *Whitley Bay Guardian*, 11th January 1980, p29. According to Phil Ranson’s notes on Northumbrian music (North Shields Local Studies Section, P Ranson lecture notes), Dave Burleigh became the first full-time professional manufacturer of small pipes in 1971.

¹²⁹ ‘Peggy’s Pipe Dream is Coming True’, *Evening Chronicle*, 4th July 1969, p13. Regular evening classes in pipe-making led by a Mr Reid were held in the early 1970s at St Joseph’s School, Killingworth on Thursday evenings: Northumberland County Council report, *Leisure Activities: Killingworth*, 1971-1972, p9.

¹³⁰ <http://torchy.ncl.ac.uk/F/GC8LN5B9LDPSPDVAVU3ANGVA782U7FQ9C8U6BGA5KTV1U27IN88-35761>. Prior to this, he had built several Appalachian dulcimers, but the cittern was his first significant step into professional instrument making.

had believed that he was inventing something entirely new.¹³¹ Nonetheless, this move towards small scale hand-built instrument manufacture was part of a return to heritage craftsmanship. And, in a pattern that appeared to parallel much of the marketing of cultural heritage north of the Border, in 1973 John MacPherson of Bardon Mill launched a business, Northumbrian Souvenirs, and began manufacturing traditional rapper swords for folk dancers as well as smaller decorative replicas to sell to tourists.¹³² All of these examples derived from disparate motivations, yet viewed together they represented a new context for the tradition because, prior to their reinvented heritage status, such products could not have supported anyone's main source of income.¹³³ That this development occurred towards the end of the period under study indicates that the revival was changing: heritage was no longer vested simply in the songs, tunes or dances enthusiasts chose to perform, but could represent an alternative lifestyle based on an affinity with past craftsmanship. Even more significantly, this created products that were marketable due to a growing disillusionment with modernity.

In conclusion, this last issue appears to be the driving force behind the use of vernacular music in heritage projects, no matter whether they were first conceived in the name of economics, local patriotism, tourism, or cultural capital. As post-war reconstruction and the modernist optimism of the 1960s receded, forms that had previously – even during the ‘folk boom’ - remained the preserve of dedicated enthusiasts were entering into everyday parlance, into collective conceptions of heritage among people who would no sooner visit a folk club than the Royal Opera House. Northumbrian pipes and sword dancers, colliery banners and brass bands became symbols of a glorified regional past that provided a safe harbour in the rough seas of 1970s recession. The following chapter will analyse how images of pride and of decline came to represent a region in flux and assess the impact of the resulting stereotypes.

¹³¹ S Sobell, questionnaire responses, 2nd November 2005.

¹³² *Journal*, 10th April 1973, p5.

¹³³ G H Lewis, ‘The Maine that Never Was: The Construction of Popular Myth in Regional Culture’, 16/2, 1993, 91-100, p98 notes a parallel process of adoption by Maine natives

Chapter Seven

Images of Pride; Images of Decline

Tyneside's where I come from, that's where I want to be.
There's plenty of other places but they don't appeal to me ...

... We've got broon ale, stotty cake,
Leeks and whippets, crabs from Cullercoats,
Forst-footin', pease puddin'

Eric Boswell¹

The only men working in the pits are the men breaking up the pits
Hoy away your pick, Geordie.
The only men working in the shipyards are the men dismantling the shipyards
Hoy away your rivets, Geordie.
The only men employed are the men who deployed you, Geordie,
Aren't you glad to leave this grey, depressed area for green southern
promises? ...

... At the last big meeting the banner will be a black ribbon mourning the
death of Geordieland.

Bob Davenport²

This chapter deals with culture, not as practice, but as text. Just as the previous chapter examined the construction of an accepted regional heritage, this one will focus on portrayals of this legacy in song and music. It argues that the apparent contradictions of local patriotism and pessimism are connecting threads which, whether or not they reflected actual social conditions, were a relatively widespread currency understood by musicians and their audiences. In viewing the *longue durée* of Northern identities, Wrightson draws an analogy with (borrowing from Hughes) two Australian responses to marginality: 'the cultural cringe' and 'its defensively

¹ E Boswell, 'Tyneside's Where I come From', in *Eric Boswell's Songs of the North East Book 1* (Newcastle, 1975), pp16-17.

² B Davenport, *Geordieland '68*, recorded on *Bob Davenport and the Marsden Rattlers* (Leader LP, LER 3008, 1971).

brash successor, the cultural strut'.³ Many of the examples cited below appear to display precisely this pathology.

This chapter will therefore assess some comparative examples from other regions in order to help ascertain whether this was a unique phenomenon. It will continue in comparative mode, by analysing North Eastern texts from both the nineteenth century and the second folk revival in order to consider whether these images of pride and decline were a continuation of cultural expressions in existence for more than a hundred years or a historically significant development specific to the region from 1950 onwards. First, though, it is important to be aware of the theoretical frameworks – and pitfalls – surrounding this type of analysis.

There are, of course, dangers inherent in making uncritical determinisms between society and text. Margaret Archer has warned against upwards conflation, of assuming that the superstructure is necessarily dictated by the base (the more cyclical pattern she suggests has already been discussed in Chapter Four).⁴ Much of this chapter deals with issues where the link between the cultural product and structural forces such as economic or political change appear obvious – where statements about social change and the loss of old values and once dominant industries seem to be absolutely clear cut – but whether structure informed superstructure or vice versa is less certain.⁵ In specifically musical terms, Martin rejects Adorno's strictly representational approach, where composers were presumed to directly reflect societal structures, instead favouring the reflexiveness inherent in Becker's 'art worlds': composers and performers are viewed as working within and challenging the conventions of their respective 'reference groups'.⁶ To these considerations a further complexity must be considered: the dislocation between the music's inception

³ K Wrightson, 'Northern Identities: The Longe Durée', *Northern Review*, Vol 2, Winter 1995, 25 – 34.

⁴ M Archer, *Culture and Agency – The place of culture in social theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp46-70.

⁵ This is not to suggest that culture caused industries to collapse, but that it perhaps shaped a self-perpetuating self-image built chiefly around decline, which in turn rendered the region an unattractive prospect to those who might be seeking a new location for their businesses: see T D Smith, *Dan Smith: An Autobiography* (Oriel, Newcastle, 1970), p88, which cited the damage created by satirical pieces like one on the common southern misconception that those within the North East kept their coals in the bath.

⁶ P J Martin, *Sounds and Society: Themes in the sociology of music* (Manchester University Press, 1995), pp97-111; pp169-197.

and its reception and interpretation. It is wise to remember the cautionary tale of a famous song, apparently about heavy industry. *Working in a Coal Mine*, by New Orleans songwriter Allen Toussaint, was written, not because of identification with colliers (he had no direct links with mining) but simply because the words – following well-known conventions of work songs - scanned with a tune he had already composed.⁷

Considering these difficulties, one might ask: why examine this imagery at all? As Martin has demonstrated, musical meaning is inevitably laden with the ‘common sense’ of the social group which produces and/or receives it:

The sociologist of music ... will not be concerned to establish the ‘true’ meaning of a piece, but will be interested in what people believe it to mean, for it is these meanings that will influence their responses to it.⁸

Thus, there is ‘play’ between the meaning intended by the author, the medium by which it is expressed and the way in which the audience perceives it, but each reference group has considerable shared language. This is what is at issue in this chapter. During the second folk revival, musical representations of the region were negotiated between performers, composers, mediators and audience, and these produced certain common threads of consensus, broadly represented by the ‘cultural cringe’ and the ‘cultural strut’ described above. The following paragraphs examine the background to this musical expression of regional particularity.

From at least the early nineteenth century, the region and its towns had featured as leading characters in the sung tradition. No other English region (with the exception of the comic/fictitious East Anglian songs of the Kipper Family) appears to have produced so many songs with specifically local subjects.⁹ Of the two- hundred-and-eighty-four songs collected in *The Northumbria Anthology*, at least one-hundred-and-

⁷ A Toussaint, spoken statement in Mark Cooper (Producer), *The Allen Toussaint Touch* (BBC4 television, broadcast 3rd November 2006).

⁸ P J Martin, *Sounds and Society: Themes in the Sociology of Music* (Manchester University Press, 1995), p30. See also R C Holub, ‘Rewriting an Ideological Consensus: Institutions, Nationalism, and the Function of Literature’, *MLN*, 106/3, April 1991, 699-711, which details Stanley Fish’s approach to similar literary issues.

⁹ I am grateful to Dr Mike Sutton for this insight regarding The Kipper Family, which only serves to emphasize the uniqueness of the region's patriotic songs.

forty are clearly specific to the local area (due to an obvious association with place-name, regional hero or occupational group).¹⁰ Of course, as highlighted in the previous chapter, it could be argued that this was due to the function of the recordings: aimed at the heritage market, they would inevitably select material that highlighted this aspect. Nevertheless, selectivity hardly explains why there is such a wealth of these songs to choose from. It is unclear quite why such a volume of self-congratulatory material was produced in this region: North Easterners' need to sing about themselves could suggest a deep-seated sense of inferiority, or equally an unshakeable local self-confidence in a peculiarly working class identity. Expressions of 'otherness' may also have compensated for the region's remoteness from the centres of mainstream popular culture: before the 1960s, as Bobby Thompson showed, it was notoriously difficult for North Eastern entertainers to cross the Tees unscathed.¹¹ And the North Eastern music halls retained a separate identity from the London circuit far longer than those in the rest of the country, perhaps leading the region's star songwriters to concentrate on more insular material which would please their limited audiences.¹² It would follow, then, that folk musicians of the late twentieth century adopted this approach as part of their tradition. What is clear is that many local songs find sources of pride in landscapes and characters at the centre of rapid change. However, there is a relative paucity of images that acknowledge total regional decline until the second folk revival: it would therefore appear that this was a historically significant strand of writing.¹³

It is also important to be aware that (as Frith has shown) straightforward content analysis of song lyrics is fraught with danger, especially if these words are taken as literal reflections of the concerns of society in general.¹⁴ The fact that folk music, even at its height, was produced by a minority interest group further confirms that

¹⁰ Various Artists, *The Northumbria Anthology* (20 CD boxed-set; MWMCDSP31/50, Newcastle, 2002).

¹¹ Bobby Thompson was a local comedian, whose character 'The Little Waster', enjoyed huge popularity throughout the region, especially due to his involvement in *Wot Cheor Geordie*. However, his early 1960s attempts at a national television 'sit-com' were an abject failure, at least partly because the dialect and humour did not penetrate the national consciousness.

¹² J Handle, 'Industrial Folk Music & Regional Music Hall in the North East: 2: Growth and Extent of the Music Hall', *English Dance and Song*, 27th May 1965, 138-141, p141.

¹³ As will be discussed below, many songs from the nineteenth century dealt with unwelcome change, but these did not have the same sense of the absolute decline of an entire way of working and living.

these songs should not be misconstrued as wholly representative. Nevertheless, the words written within the folk revival (or inspired by it) require consideration. This is because the generation producing these lyrics was raised on the idea of folk song as a reasonably unproblematic distillation of ‘history from below’, (in Lloyd’s words: ‘How ... common people lived and thought, how they went about their work and what return they got for it, and what happened to them in history, is all reflected in the folksongs.’)¹⁵ For such people, writing inspirational protest music was a continuance of this documentary tradition as well as a reaction against the ‘moon and June’ banalities of commercial pop. The words they wrote were intended to reflect their understanding of society. For this reason, this analysis will include several songs from outside of the folk scene *per se*, but which drew their roots from this consciously documentary and folkloric style of writing. Most importantly, the songs chosen have mostly permeated the regional and national consciousness beyond the confines of the folk clubs and have therefore performed a role in constructing a generally recognizable North Eastern identity.

First, it is vital to contextualize these expressions of regionalism, and the following section will discuss some comparative developments in other locations and other genres. These demonstrate that, throughout the period, culture was being used to retain identities under threat but that it was particularly prevalent in North Eastern music.

When Bob Dylan influentially proclaimed *The Times They Are A-Changin’* the world did not really need to be told it was in flux due to upheavals brought on by World War, Cold War and technological revolution.¹⁶ Britain was particularly affected by this sense of transformation. Despite a period of much trumpeted affluence and Macmillan’s 1957 assertion that the British had ‘never had it so good’, the carrion crows were already circling the remains of empire (which had played such a key role in the national imagination) and would soon also descend on the nation’s

¹⁴ S Frith, ‘Why Do Songs Have Words?’, in *Music for Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1988), 105-128, pp106-112.

¹⁵ A L Lloyd, *The Singing Englishman: An Introduction to Folksong* (Workers’ Music Association, London, 1944), p2.

¹⁶ Even if one accepts Sandbrook’s stress on continuity, there is evidence of enough contemporary hand-wringing about change to indicate considerable misgivings,

increasingly outmoded industrial base.¹⁷ Even if a large sector of the population did not anticipate such future problems (and with the memory of the 1930s still fresh, this is debatable), the changes in society brought about by wider educational access, youth spending-power and technology were only too obvious. A steady stream of 'State of the Nation' literature portrayed a nation led by a dying patrician class and in need of massive technological and political change.¹⁸ Although such books were often less predictions of troubles to come than simple critiques of ten years' paternalistic Conservative rule, they were part of a trend which hinted that post-war growth was unsustainable. Cultural commentators were also quick to read such portents, and Leavisite writers such as Hoggart feared globalized mass culture's effects on the identity of this brave new world's newly 'classless' citizens.¹⁹ Even Harry Hopkins, relatively optimistic about 'the durability of national, regional and even local character', conceded the uncertainty that accompanied rapid change driven by the amoral forces of science and markets.²⁰ In such a climate, songs (paradoxically, written by representatives of the new, upwardly mobile youth) bemoaning the loss of the past in the face of a plastic and uncertain future were sure to flourish.

While, as previous chapters have demonstrated, it was no innovation to compare the present unfavourably with a past 'golden age', the sheer volume of material produced about the decline of old certainties implies that this was a strand of great significance from the late 1950s through to the 1970s. When Ford and Henderson mapped the changing fortunes of American locations in popular song texts, they noted a post-1950 shift away from the sung sense of magic surrounding cities like New York (in, for example, *Lullaby of Broadway*) to an acknowledgement of the pollution, violence

¹⁷ H Macmillan, Speech, 20th July 1957, Bedford, Quoted in *The Times*, London, 22 July 1957. See E Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991* (Michael Joseph, London, 1994), pp257-286, which explains how a period of such unprecedented affluence and raised expectations sowed the seeds of future unemployment and decline.

¹⁸ See M Grant, 'Historians, the Penguin Specials and the 'State-of-the-Nation' Literature, 1958-64', *Contemporary British History*, 17/3, Autumn 2003, 29-54.

¹⁹ R Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Chatto & Windus, London, 1957); see also R Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp358-366.

²⁰ H Hopkins, *The New Look: A Social History of the Forties and Fifties in Britain* (Secker & Warburg, London, 1963), pp489-490 and p485.

and degradation they could contain (as in the gang culture of *West Side Story*).²¹ And these are examples which sprang from mass culture: the impetus for folk singers - working in traditional 'people's' forms - to mourn receding ways of working-class life was all the stronger. *Little Boxes*, Malvina Reynolds' 1963 protest against homogeneity used the built environment as a powerful metaphor (just like the new suburban housing, modern society forced all its citizens into little boxes that all looked just the same) and its message was carried worldwide by Pete Seeger's recording.²² In Britain, The Spinners found similar commercial success with *Dirty Old Town*.²³ This song, describing a town despoiled by capitalism, was written by Ewan MacColl as a Theatre Workshop scene-change filler, but The Spinners' version was transformed by context into nostalgia for Liverpool past.²⁴ At around the same time, Adam McNaughton's *The Glasgow That I Used to Know* - 'Where you knew all your neighbours from first floor to third and keeping your door locked was considered absurd' - was viewed as such a sentimental picture of tenement life as to receive a sung rebuttal from Jim McLean (*Farewell tae Glasgow*).²⁵ Contemporaneously, Phil Coulter's *The Town I Loved So Well*, a 1973 memorial to pre-Troubles Ulster - poverty, dole queues and all - was a success for The Dubliners.²⁶

The songs quoted above come from Liverpool, Ireland and Scotland, all fellow sufferers alongside the North East of marginality and of associations with bleakness.

²¹ L R Ford and F M Henderson, 'The Image of Place in American Popular Music: 1890-1970', in G O Carney, (Ed), *The Sounds of People and Places: A Geography of American Folk and Popular Music* (3rd edition, Rowman & Littlefield, Maryland, 1994), 291-302, pp300-301.

²² M Reynolds, *Little Boxes* (Schroder Music Co, USA, 1963), also recorded on P Seeger, *We Shall Overcome: Live at Carnegie Hall* (Columbia Records, 45312, USA, 1963).

²³ E MacColl, *Dirty Old Town*, released as a 45rpm single by The Spinners (Fontana, TF494, London, 1964). It should be noted that this song's first chart success was, however, with The Pogues, reaching No 62 in 1985: P Gambaccini, T Rice, J Rice, *Guinness British Hit Singles* (GRR, London, 1993), p226. Nevertheless, the Spinners' version would have penetrated popular consciousness very successfully through their many TV appearances.

²⁴ E MacColl, *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1990), p276.

²⁵ This dispute over the legacy of the tenements has been covered previously in A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival* (unpublished PhD thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, 1993), p43. A McNaughton, *The Glasgow that I Used to Know*, on A McNaughton, *The Words That I Used To Know* (CDTRAX 195D); J McLean, *Farewell Tae Glasgow*, lyric reproduced at <http://www.glesga.ukpals.com/MemoryLane%20Alternative2.htm>. McNaughton's nostalgic imagery was sufficiently resilient for Prince Charles to quote directly from it in his 1988 speech at a key moment in urban regeneration: the opening of the Glasgow Garden Festival (see <http://www.glesga.ukpals.com/GlescaSong.htm>).

²⁶ P Coulter, *The Town I Loved So Well*, recorded on The Dubliners, *Plain and Simple* (Polydor LP 2383 235, London, 1973).

Such a wealth of documented unease at the rapidity of change begs the question: was there anything distinctive in the North East's portrayal of its own transformation? Russell has argued that the North in general was so closely associated with the industrial revolution and its working class that 'many in the North believed that the nineteenth century essentially belonged to their region'.²⁷ This would surely create a more profound sense of late twentieth century malaise in the North exacerbated by the memory of Depression. In England, the core images of desolation and dole queue were northern - from Wigan Pier to Priestley's 'silent rusting shipyards'.²⁸ The Jarrow Crusade (a major symbol of the Depression because of its national visibility) was rooted specifically in the North East. The region between Tweed and Tees may not have been unique in its expressions of pain, but it could claim ownership of some very strong images, and Lancaster has indicated that (unlike Glasgow with its arts-and-crafts renaissance) the North East did not seek to discard these symbols; indeed, it was extremely vocal.²⁹

A sung region recognizable to modern North-Easterners had existed for more than a century: Colls has charted a significant change in ballads during the early 1800s. Songs of local lads fighting in the service of a wider (anti-French) patriotism developed after about 1820 into expressions of local chauvinism where the region's boxers, police, buildings, rowers, even eccentrics were seen as heroes who trounced London's supposed pre-eminence.³⁰ Colls' explanation for this shift is of great relevance to the bout of regional patriotism which occurred during the second revival. Coupled with the inevitable economic downturn which accompanied peace in 1815, a massive transformation of public mores attacked the old 'picaresque hedonism' of traditional popular culture'. For the balladeers, the region's old eccentrics became 'symbols of what was disappearing', in William Oliver's words, they were the 'props' that held up 'wor canny toon', with only Blind Willie left alive

²⁷ D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the national imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), p26.

²⁸ J B Priestley, *English Journey* (Heinemann, London, 1934; 1968 edition), p311.

²⁹ B Lancaster, 'Newcastle - Capital of What?', in R Colls, and B Lancaster, (Eds), *Geordies: Roots of Regionalism* (Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 53-70, p67.

³⁰ R Colls, *The Collier's Rant: Song and Culture in the Industrial Village* (Croom Helm, London, 1977), pp41-45. He cites the following songs as examples: William Oliver's *The Newcastle Millers* (1824); Bobby Nunn's *St Nicholas' Church*, Robert Emery's *The Wizard of the North*; or, *The Mystic Policemen*; John Morrison's *Canny Sheels* (1840); and Thomas Marshall's *Blind Willie v Billy Scot*" (1829).

to support the structure.³¹ This pride in a rapidly receding identity could be translated to the songs which appeared in the region from the late 1950s. Thus, the following pages will examine songs of both eras, in order to highlight both the continuities in North Eastern identity and the contrasts between two historically specific moments.

A parallel can be drawn between two songs written by incoming 'elective' Geordies (the first an Irish Liverpoolian from the nineteenth century, and the second a Scotsman from the twentieth): Ned Corvan's *Astrilly (or: The Pitman's Farewell)*, written during the 1850s, and Jock Purdon's *Farewell to 'Cotia*, written around 1965, when Harraton 'Nova Scotia' pit was closed.³² Both songs deal with the reluctant emigration of miners due to economic necessity. In Corvan's song, the destination was gold rush Australia:

Aw mind the time when collier lads cud work for goold at hyem, man,
Dash, aw mind the time when collier lads cud spend a pund each pay;
But noo the times they're queer, man, we've nowther sangs nor cheer, man
When we cannit raise wor beer, man, it's time te gan away.

and the blame for having to 'leave wor canny Tyneside shores' was laid upon 'the maisters' who 'keeps us strikin'.³³ The notion of a 'canny Toon' is there already, as is the association with the *Bob Cranky* caricature of a happy, drunken collier. Further, the tone appears to show Corvan as quite radical among his contemporaries.³⁴ In this case, though, the emigration is forced by a particular set of circumstances - intolerable conditions leading to strikes. The decimation of the region's mining industry in the region was instead the subject matter of twentieth century songwriters. As Lloyd suggested in 1967: 'Songs of farewell to obsolete pits form a new category in the stock of coalfield ballads'.³⁵ Corvan's song was primarily

³¹ Ibid, p46; W Oliver, *The Newcastle Props* (Newcastle, 1820s), quoted in Colls, Ibid, p47.

³² Date of closure given on <http://www.amber-online.com/gallery/exhibition22/notes22.html>.

³³ E Corvan, *Astrilly, (or: The Pitman's Farewell)*, collected in A L Lloyd, (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners: Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, Revised Edition, 1978), pp270-271.

³⁴ See D Harker, 'The Making of the Tyneside Concert Hall, *Popular Music*, 1, 1981, 25-56, p53, which favourably compares Corvan's hard-edged account of emigration against the 'soft reformism and fatalism' of other songwriters such as Robson, whose *Callerforny* was much more humorous.

³⁵ A L Lloyd, *Folk Song in England* (London, 1967, Panther Edition, London, 1969), p399.

an entertainment - performed to the hardly melancholic tune of *All Around My Hat*, and a great success in the music halls of the 1850s. Purdon's lament for the 'Cotia was set to the far less jaunty melody of *Come All Ye Tramps and Hawkers* and he created it for the immediate use of the men forced to leave the region:

Ah remember when we found out that 'Cotia was finished, aw wrote "Farewell to 'Cotia" and stuck it up on the notice board at the pit. It's probably there yet, lying under the rubble.³⁶

Purdon's commentary is printed alongside the text in his self-published songbook, the tone of which echoes the self-conscious dialect literature which was so fashionable during the 1960s and '70s.³⁷ It shows a familiar ambivalence surrounding pit closures. There is some comfort that no one would have to work (for poor wages) down that particular 'hell-hole' again, but sorrow at the loss of the pitmen's identity, self-respect and camaraderie ('Ye'll have to change your language lads, You'll have to change wah' cheer') as the luckier ones were transferred to the coalfields of Nottingham courtesy of Lord Robens' rationalization plans. There are continuities between this account and Corvan's, such as traditionally North Eastern associations: 'You'll have to change your beer'. Another great symbol - a little too modern for Corvan but nevertheless speaking of an identity passed through the generations - is shown in the line, 'You'll have to change your Banner boys'. Even the displacement of old tools ('leave your picks behind you') and practices by new machinery could be seen as a recurring feature throughout the industrial revolution - although by the 1960s the pace had surely quickened.

The main discontinuity between Corvan's and Purdon's eras, however, is to be found in the final stanza:

Ye brave bold men of 'Cotia
To you I say farewell
And maybe someone will someday
The 'Cotia story tell
But leave it all behind you

³⁶ J Purdon, *Songs of the Durham Coalfield* (Pit Lamp Press, Durham, 1977), p3.

³⁷ See Chapters Five and Six.

The death knell has been tolled
'Cotia was a colliery
Her men were brave and bold.³⁸

In these lines, there is a tacit understanding that there might soon be no-one to remember the region's mines, that one day they might recede into legend, an idea expanded in another of Purdon's songs, *The Echo of Pit Boots*, and in Ed Pickford's mid-1960's composition, *Farewell Johnny Miner*.³⁹ Ewan MacColl gave an external perspective on what he saw as an inevitability in the Radio Ballad, *The Big Hewer*, singing, 'I'm leaving the North, it's time I was on my way (go down), Leaving the worked out seams, they've had their day'.⁴⁰ In the nineteenth century, although there were songs with dire warnings for the future, such as J P Sutherland's *Newcastle is Gaun to the Wall*, a simple panacea is suggested (in this case, all economic problems would be solved by renouncing the demon drink).⁴¹ The impossibility of recovery was not hinted at in either Sutherland's or Corvan's songs, although there might be parallels with twentieth century despair in songs commemorating one particular trade: 'And it's O the poor keelmen! - Who pities the keelmen; Because there is so little work for them now'.⁴² Widespread pessimism for the old ways was, however, a far more prevalent feature of what might be called the state-of-the-region songs which appeared during the second revival.

One of the most widely disseminated of recent mining songs, Johnny Handle's *Farewell to the Monty*, was, likewise, a lament, this time for the 1959 closure of the East Walbottle Montague Colliery. Again, the ambivalence is present:

³⁸ Ibid, p2.

³⁹ J Purdon, *The Echo of Pit Boots* in J Purdon, *Songs of the Durham Coalfield* (Pit Lamp Press, Durham, 1977), p5; E Pickford, *Farewell Johnny Miner* (approximate date of composition confirmed by correspondence between the author and Ed Pickford, 30th September 2004), lyric available at: http://www.ed-pickford.co.uk/html/farewell_johnny_miner.html.

⁴⁰ E MacColl, C Parker, and P Seeger, *Three Hundred Years I Hewed at the Coal By Hand* in *The Big Hewer: A Radio Ballad* (BBC, 1951, Topic TSCD 804, 1999).

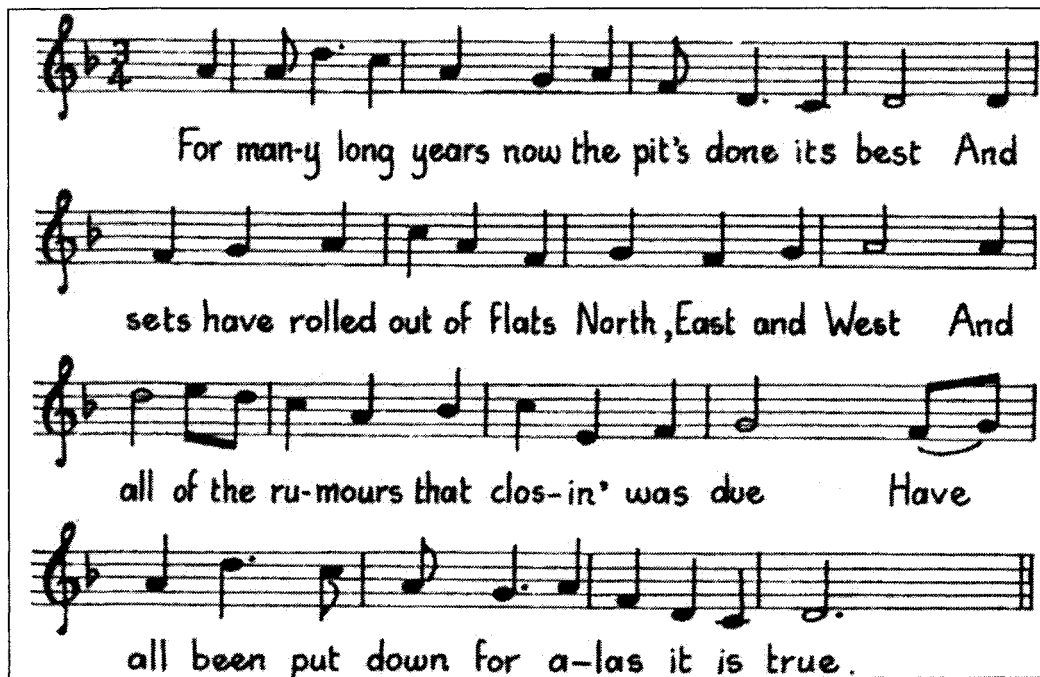
⁴¹ J P Sutherland, *Newcastle is Gaun to the Wall*, in *Songs of the Tyne; being a collection of local popular songs, No 6* (J Ross, Royal Arcade, Newcastle, c1846).

⁴² Anon, *The Keelman's Lamentation*, in *Newcastle songster; being a choice collection of songs, descriptive of the language and manners of the common people of Newcastle upon Tyne and the neighbourhood. Part V* (Marshall, Gateshead, c1824).

It's hot doon the Monty, she's a dorty black hole.

So farewell te ye Monty and aa knaa ye roads well
And yer work it's been good and yer work it's been hell.

There is palpable relief that the misery of work underground is ending, but the spectre of unemployment and loss of identity remains. Melodically mournful, (see Figure 9), the song emphasizes the sense of hopelessness against faceless modernization:



For man-y long years now the pit's done its best And
sets have rolled out of flats North, East and West And
all of the ru-mours that clos-in' was due Have
all been put down for a-las it is true.

Figure 9: Melody for *Farewell to the Monty*

But though profits were made, though the stock's pilin' high
The Coal Board decided the pit has to die
And as output gans doon we get transferred away
Te pits te the South for the rest of wer days.⁴³

Ed Pickford's composition, *A Miner's Life*, reinforces all these stereotypes and renders them (if possible) more sorrowful (see Figure 10).⁴⁴ The fact that this song won the North East Folk Federation's 1973 annual songwriting competition would

⁴³ J Handle, *Farewell to the Monty*, in *The Johnny Handle Songbook* (Spin, Blaydon, 1966), p2.

⁴⁴ A L Lloyd (ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners: Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, Revised Edition, 1978), pp308-309.

imply that this was a self-image prevalent throughout at least the local folk scene of the time.⁴⁵

A Miner's Life

Now ye are born, an - oth - er te feed.
 Small are wor wants, lad, but great is wor need
 For... work is scarce, yer Dad's on the dole;
 They want ne mair men for they've got too...much coal.

Chorus: Whe knaas wheye're cry - in' for? Whe knaas whe made us se poor?
 Whe knaas what ye're gan - na be? Whe knaas what's in store for thee?

Figure 10: Melody of *A Miner's Life*

When these songs are viewed together, an almost 'orientalist' vision of the North Eastern miner as victim - of both circumstance and bosses - emerges. And these songs have been viewed together in at least one very significant national source: they all appear (alongside strike ballads and other songs of struggle) in the same section of A L Lloyd's revised edition of *'Come All Ye Bold Miners'*.⁴⁶ Of the fifty-four songs in this section, entitled 'Coalfield Conditions and the Struggle for a Better Life', forty originated in the old counties of Northumberland and Durham.⁴⁷ For Lloyd - and the many revivalists who discovered their heritage through his publications - the North East appeared synonymous with proletarian struggle and a North East which had lost its proletarian identity would be a severely compromised place.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p365.

Once again, however, regional associations with the decline of traditional occupations might be strong, but they were not exclusive. Dave Russell has noted that

The few occasions on which the brass band has penetrated the national culture in the late twentieth century have revolved both in fact (during the 'Great Strike' of 1984-5 and the pit closures of the early 1990s) and in fiction (in the films *Brassed Off* (1996) and *The Full Monty* (1997)), around its capacity to stand as a symbol of a collective way of industrial life threatened by the destructive power of modern economic rationality.⁴⁸

In the case of the North East, this process was simply evident two decades earlier. And, just as the renaissance of interest in miners' song coincided with the plans for a new museum of local life at Beamish, the Cape Breton miners' choir, Men of the Deeps, formed in 1966 at the same time as the Glace Bay Miners' Museum and Miners' Folk Society.⁴⁹ The Canadian industry has since followed a similar trajectory into oblivion as that in the North East. It seems likely that the warning bells had also rung there in the 1960s, providing a parallel impetus to preserve industrial heritage, of which song was only a part.

It will become clear throughout this chapter that pit-head imagery was a very potent symbol of regional identity and of changing times. However, the symbols of decline in the North East of England went well beyond a single industry, as jobs receded and manufacturing was replaced by the service sector.⁵⁰ Chapter Five discussed the BBC 'television ballad' on Wearside shipbuilding, *Sunderland Oak*, which featured Isla Cameron singing Johnny Handle's *Is There Ought Secure?* 'as the camera roves over

⁴⁶ Ibid, pp270-271; 300-301; 304-305; and 308-309.

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp8-9.

⁴⁸ D Russell, 'Music and Northern Identity, 1890-c1965', in N Kirk (Ed), *Northern Identities: Historical Interpretations of 'The North' and 'Northernness'* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000), 23-46), p41.

⁴⁹ J C O'Donnell, , *And Now the Fields Are Green - A Collection of Coal Mining Songs in Canada* (UCCB Press, Sydney, Nova Scotia, 1992), p(vi).

⁵⁰ J Crinson, *Standard English, the National Curriculum, and linguistic disadvantage: a sociolinguistic account of the careful speech of Tyneside adolescents* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1997), p102 features a table adapted from David Byrne demonstrating an overall steady decline in Northern Region manufacturing jobs from 1966(461,000) through 1976 (438,000), to 1981 (344,000). Those employed in services increased from 1966 (687,000) to 1976 (751,000) ; but the total numbers employed showed an overall decline : 1966 (1,277,000) to 1976 (1,255,000).

the slums and vacant lots of the town'.⁵¹ The song was published in a 1962 edition of *Sing Out!* with commentary from Pete Seeger, emphasizing not only the international reputation of North Eastern folksingers, but also that this transatlantic fame was inexorably linked with the perception of a region constantly fighting the odds.⁵²

The pits and shipyards, a focus of regional pride and imagined community from the late eighteenth century, could no longer be counted on. Perhaps the best solution was to cut one's losses and escape the region altogether. The following section of this chapter deals with this aspect of 'the cultural cringe', in songs that disparage the region as a place to flee as well as some paradoxical elements of 'cultural strut' that drew on negative stereotypes as a source of pride.

Escape was the approach suggested by The Animals, gritty 'bluesmen' for whom the Tyne was a perfect substitute for the Mississippi Delta; who travelled south to the capital and relied primarily on material from the USA. Just as the Beatles transformed Americana into a Mersey sound, the Animals gave their songs a peculiarly North Eastern inflection - all the while reinforcing local stereotypes of poverty and decay. Thus, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place* (the output of New York Brill Building songwriters Barry Mann and Cynthia Weill, presumably latching on to a trend for social realism) seemed a perfectly appropriate howl of frustration from young northerner Eric Burdon.⁵³ That this was also the view of external observers was confirmed by Kenyan-born Roger Whittaker's glib declaration, 'I've got to leave old Durham town'. The reason for leaving is not given, and why he chose the name of Durham in particular could (like the Toussaint example cited above) be attributed

⁵¹ J Handle, 'Is There Ought Secure?', *Sing Out!*, 12/3, Summer 1962, pp21-22; P Seeger, *Six New Songs from Britain*, *Sing Out!*, 12/3, Summer 1962, pp21-22, p21. Some words from this song are quoted in Chapter Two of this thesis.

⁵² See M Worrall, 'The Great Man', *Sing*, 7/5, June 1963, p56, which details (to the tune of *Cushie Butterfield*), Lord Hailsham's visit to Tyneside to seek solutions to the unemployment situation:- 'everyone marvelled at a man with such powers, Who could cure all our problems in under twelve hours'.

⁵³ The Animals, *We Got to Get Out of This Place* (Columbia DB 7639, London, 1965). The 1980 release of another version of this song by South Shields punk group, Angelic Upstarts, would only add to the sense of the North East as a place to escape: Angelic Upstarts, *We Got to Get Out of This Place* (Warner Bros K17576, London, 1980).

to the lyric's scansion. But of all two-syllable towns to be leaving, he selected one from the North East.⁵⁴

Meantime, the Animals had lodged an even more blatant 'Geordification' into the international consciousness. *Gonna Send You Back to Walker*, a hit single in the USA, was originally a Chicago blues entitled *Gonna Send You Back to Georgia*.⁵⁵ The cautionary tale of a provincial 'hick' seduced by the bright lights of the big city seemed entirely appropriate, and added another layer to the myth of Newcastle as remote and barely civilized 'other'.

This was not helped by the region's more celebratory songs. Eric Boswell, who wrote his *New Folk Songs* for Newcastle Playhouse and television shows such as *What Fettle*, carved a lucrative niche in Geordie caricature songs such as *I've Got a Little Whippet*; *There's more to life than women and beer ... but I haven't found out what it is so far*; and *Tyneside's Where I Come From*, the chorus of which provides the roll call of stereotypes quoted at the beginning of this chapter.⁵⁶ Alex Glasgow's satire on political opportunism, *The Little Cloth Cap* – discussed more closely in Chapter Eight – was simultaneously an attempt to subvert the celebratory *Bob Cranky/Andy Capp* stereotypes and (whenever the irony was missed) an accidental reinforcement of the same.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, John Reavey, reviewing Johnny Handle's EP *Stottin' Doon the Waal*, complained that 'Although his songs show a fair amount of talent, they are evocative of the tasteless old jokes about 'daft pitmen'.'⁵⁸ One of Handle's spoken contributions to the nationally broadcast Radio Ballad, *The Big Hewer* states that: 'another thing in a mining community which you must respect is their capacity for beer', and the singing of Jack Elliot tells of the 'celebrated working man' who digs more coal 'in the bar room' than at the seam.⁵⁹ It might be

⁵⁴ R Whittaker, *Durham Town (The Leavin')* (Columbia, DB 8613, London, 1969).

⁵⁵ The Animals, *Gonna Send You Back to Walker* (Columbia, London, 1964); original song: Matthews/Hammond Jnr, *Gonna Send You Back to Georgia* (Renleigh Music Inc, USA, date not supplied).

⁵⁶ E Boswell, E, *I've Got a Little Whippet*; and *There's more to life than women and beer*, in Eric Boswell's *Songs of the North East Book 1* (Newcastle, 1975), pp8-9; pp3-4; and pp16-17.

⁵⁷ A Glasgow, *The Little Cloth Cap*, in A Plater, *Ibid*, p89.

⁵⁸ John Reavey, "Songs from the North", *Folk Music*, Volume 1, No 8, (c1964), 12-13, p12

⁵⁹ E MacColl, C Parker and P Seeger, *The Big Hewer: A Radio Ballad* (BBC broadcast 1961; Topic TSCD 804, London, 1999). The song is published under the title *In the Bar Room*, in M Dawney, *Doon the Wagon Way: Mining Songs from the North of England* (Galliard/Stainer and Bell, London, 1973), pp12-13.

coincidence that MacColl chose exclusively North Eastern voices for this section, or perhaps the only interviewees to discuss the subject were from the region, but the weight of historical association between Geordies and alcohol suggests otherwise.

Lindisfarne's 1971 top ten album, *Fog on the Tyne* provided further reinforcement within the national popular consciousness for the more predictable stereotypes. The opening track and hit single, *Meet Me on the Corner* was innocuous enough: however, the album was promoted by a sticker campaign which marketed the single alongside Newcastle Brown Ale (a ploy reminiscent of Owen Brannigan's commercials for Newcastle Breweries in the 1960s).⁶⁰ And to emphasize the associations with 'boozy' Geordies, Alan Hull's lyric for the title track proclaimed:

We can swing together, we can have a wee-wee
We can have a wet on the wall

To outsiders, these natives must have appeared proud of their grossest Saturday night behaviour. The same song made word-play out of a depressed and unsophisticated home town:

Sitting in a sleazy snack bar sucking sickly sausage rolls,
Slipping down slowly, slipping down sideways,
Think I'll sign off the dole.⁶¹

This was deliberately absurd, but for external and local listeners the linkage of Tyneside with drunks, sleaze and unemployment was as clear as in *Bob Cranky's* day. Like the other examples quoted above, the imagined community expressed was in the past, in the industrial working class. Many of *Bob Cranky's* chroniclers hailed from the literary middle-class: the exploits of *Cranky* caricatures - written in self-conscious dialect - are expected to 'be funny because they are clowns'.⁶² (Of course, the fact that these songs, primarily entertainments, were accepted - even celebrated - by an audience made up of *Cranky's* fellows is another distinct parallel between the

⁶⁰ D I Hill, *Fog on the Tyne - The Official History of Lindisfarne* (Northdown, Hants, 1998), pp53-54.

⁶¹ Lindisfarne, *The Fog on the Tyne* (Charisma LP CAS 1050, London, 1971).

⁶² see R Colls, *The Collier's Rant: Song and Culture in the Industrial Village* (Croom Helm, London, 1977), p25 and p29.

early nineteenth and the late twentieth centuries.⁶³) As explained in Chapter Four, the songwriters active in the second revival may have originated in the industrial working class, but most were rapidly climbing out of these occupations and expectations. Not only were the industrial landmarks receding, so too was the songwriters' proximity to them. In grammar schools, art colleges and universities, these songwriters had gained an education in ideas - technical, political and bohemian - that simultaneously gave them economic freedom from their origins while drawing them back for material. Though Hoggart undoubtedly overstated the repressed awkwardness of this 'classless intelligentsia', yet some North Eastern folk output certainly bore the mark of his "scholarship boys": 'With one part of himself he does not want to go back to a homeliness which was often narrow: with another part he longs for the membership he has lost'.⁶⁴

More alarmingly, alongside each individual's separation from their original community, there was a corresponding loss of the poetry of working-class speech. Sam Richards recounts his attempts to produce a radio programme reflecting the new demographic:

In the mid-1970s white-collar workers whose speech MacColl had found deadly dull, just peaked to 51% of the workforce. If we were going to speak the language of the people we'd have to assimilate that fact. I chatted the BBC into the idea of a radio programme based on office workers and started the fieldwork ... MacColl was right. White-collar speech was dull – no metaphor, no colourful phrases, just a whole lot of impersonal pronouns, initials and jargon. I abandoned the project. Clearly we wouldn't be able to speak for all the people. We'd have to restrict our efforts to a workforce that was rapidly disappearing off the industrial scene.⁶⁵

Even allowing for the possibility that Richards had chosen the wrong places to interview his subjects (the white-collar workplace might not allow for the rowdiness of the after-work bar), this was hardly encouraging, and reflected low expectations. To find lyricism, it was necessary for the folk songwriter either to step back into the region's recent past or to attack the present. The sense of dislocation was not helped by the urban regeneration projects that were so radically reshaping the landscape, and

⁶³ Ibid, pp51-56.

⁶⁴ R Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*" (Chatto & Windus, 1957), pp300-301.

the following pages will map some key texts against these changes to the regional environment.

Louis Killen remembers:

When I came back from Oxford after two years down there I just fell in love with Tyneside all over again ... I remember every time I walked across the Tyne Bridge and saw the buildings there, I thought, "it's home", really began to appreciate the dirt - and then they cleaned it up! I loved the black, the whole centre was just black.⁶⁶

This statement verbalizes two significant facets of the process described above and in Chapters Four and Six. First, it was not until Killen had returned from university that he felt such a strong attachment to his home town. Secondly, there is more than a hint of resentment at the planners' attempts to 'clean up' the city. By the 1970s, an action group, *SOC'EM*, had been formed to oppose what was seen as 'the senseless destruction of Newcastle City Centre' and fundraising concerts featuring notable musicians from folk backgrounds (such as the High Level Ranters, Alan Hull and Ray Jackson) were a foundation of this movement.⁶⁷

Once again, there is nothing particularly new in mourning the passing of familiar landmarks. There were songs which celebrated the nineteenth century's engineering advances, like Nunn's *The Fiery Clock Fyece*; J P Robson's *Changes on Banks o' Tyne* ('The Awd Tyne Brig will seun be pull'd down, Hurray, hurray!, We'll fetch big ships fra Blaydon toon, hurray, hurray!'); and tunes like James Hill's *High Level Hornpipe*, but other contemporary accounts were less positive.⁶⁸ J P Robson, who cheered the changes to the Newcastle bridges, was obviously less happy about a general trend towards sophistication and modernization:

⁶⁵ S Richards, *Sonic Harvest – Towards Musical Democracy* (Amber Lane Press, Oxford, 1992), p92.

⁶⁶ L Killen, interviewed by author, Bridge Hotel, Newcastle, 9th March 2004, recording in my possession. This image appealed also to 1920s travel writer H V Morton, who described Newcastle as 'a Black Prince of a city', *The Call of England* (London, 1928), p99.

⁶⁷ 'SOC'EM Rally at City Hall', *Muther Grumble*, Issue 12, May 1973.

⁶⁸ R Nunn, *The Fiery Clock Fyece*, collected in S Reay, (Ed/Arr), *Album of Tyneside Songs Vol IV* (Windows, Newcastle, 1920), pp16-17; J P Robson, *Changes on Banks o' Tyne*, in *Local songs, sung by William Thompson, with great success, at the Oxford Music Hall, Newcastle* (Brockett, Gateshead, 1866); J Hill, *The High Level Hornpipe*, in John Baty manuscript tune book (c1841-1860), Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum, MU187/John Baty 8.

What a cockneyfied toon wor Newcassel hez grown;
Wey Aw scarce can believe me awn senses,
Wor canny awd customs for ever ha'e flown,
And there's nowt left ahint for te mense us.⁶⁹

It should be remembered that, as Robson wrote for music hall performers, there is every chance that the contrasting sentiments between his two songs quoted here could have reflected fluctuations in audience expectations: perhaps a song bemoaning change would play well in the 1840s and less well after the Great Exhibition.⁷⁰ However, changes to the town's districts were fertile ground for sung protest, and one of the most famous of these is Ned Corvan's *The Toon Improvement Bill*.⁷¹ Corvan performed this in costume as a child, and told the story of how Grainger's 'Grand Plan' for the town involved the destruction of the pleasure grounds of Spital and the Forth:

Ne place to bool wor paste eggs now,
Te lowp the frog, or run:
They're always buildin' summick new
They'll spoil Newcassel seun.

The Toon Improvement's caused greet fuss
But Aa heard me father say
The improvement's mair for them not us
It's clever games they play;
Thor's bonny work amang theirsels
But no one cries alarm;

⁶⁹ J P Robson, *Newcastle Improvements*, in *Songs of the bards of the Tyne; or, a choice selection of original songs, chiefly in the Newcastle dialect. With a glossary of 800 words* (P France & Co, Side, Newcastle, 1849).

⁷⁰ See for comparison the rendition of the nineteenth century song, *Manchester's Improving Daily* on Harry Boardman and John Foreman, *From Liszt to Music Hall* (Open University LP, OU45, 1978).

⁷¹ E Corvan, *The Toon Improvement Bill* (published by W Stewart, The Side, Newcastle, c1850-65), details: <http://www.asaplive.com/archive/detail.asp?id=E0100401>. The individual protest songs and broadsheets are too numerous to mention here but local song collections have many references to closure of particular markets or Grainger's improvements, eg: R Emery, *The Fish-wives' complaint, on their removal from the Sandhill to the new fish market, on the 2nd January, 1826*, in *Newcastle songster; being a choice collection of songs, descriptive of the language and manners of the common people of Newcastle upon Tyne and the neighbourhood. Part VI* (Marshall, Gateshead, c1826); and J P Robson, *The Toon of other days, a parody on 'The light of other days'*, in *Songs of the bards of the Tyne; or, a choice selection of original songs, chiefly in the Newcastle dialect. With a glossary of 800 words* (P. France & Co., The Side ; Newcastle, 1849).

There's lots can say, thou's fallen prey
To the cash book's fatal charm.

Like *Astrilly*, this song was primarily an entertainment, with Corvan cravenly courting popularity ('cheer poor "Bobby Snivelnose", By givin' him your applause'). And, while the accusations of the town improvers' venality have (especially in Newcastle) a distinctly modern ring, there is a specificity to Corvan's complaint - about just two recreation areas. Protesting development in the abstract was more a feature of the era which gave the world *Little Boxes*.

Lindisfarne's *All Fall Down*, which charted in 1972, was definitely of the latter persuasion. While the resonances with Corvan's song are clear, Alan Hull had clearly written a song for his own time. Grainger was supplanted by Dan Smith (though neither man is overtly named in either song); hints at possible corruption among nineteenth century developers had become concrete with Smith's conviction for corruption in 1971. The declared motives behind regeneration were necessarily questioned:

Councillors, magistrates, men of renown
Who wants to live in a dirty old town?
Yes, go on, tear it down.

Who needs the trees or the flowers to grow
We can have a motorway
With motorway dough.⁷²

There are additional cultural factors involved in this process. Alan Hull, as a folk club regular, would have imbibed at least some of Cecil Sharp's and Vaughan Williams' rural idealism. And as a child of the 1960s, he would certainly have absorbed 'flower power's' suspicion of the modernist, capitalist machine:-

Politicians, planners, go look what you've done
Your madness has made a machine of everyone

⁷² Lindisfarne, *All Fall Down* (Charisma, CB191, London, 1972), composer Alan Hull, (BMG Music, London, 1972).

But one day the machine might turn on

And tear you down, mess you round
Bury you deep under the ground
And we'll dance on your graves till the flowers return
And the trees tell us secrets it took ages to learn
We'll tear you down.⁷³

The punch-line is significant: Corvan's song had commented on change, while Hull's hinted at revolution. *All Fall Down* could be seen as tapping into the zeitgeist of the New Left anti-war and Civil Rights movements, of student protests that crested in Paris 1968, and of the fear of imminent nuclear holocaust, typified by internationally successful songs like Barry McGuire's *The Eve of Destruction*.⁷⁴ Events specific to Tyneside, retold in a song reminiscent of local tradition and sung in a local dialect, were serving wider contemporary aims. Musically, the tune of *All Fall Down* may have a traditional feel, but it also owes much of its rhythmic drive to *The Times, They Are a Changin'*, and the song's message sits as comfortably with Dylan as with Corvan, and with the London and San Francisco intelligentsia as with ordinary Tynesiders.

Hindsight might imply that local people wanted to cling on to their past because they sensed that T Dan Smith's northern Brasilia was a chimera. But hindsight can be misleading, and there is every possibility that nostalgia for the 'bad old days' was something that could be indulged quite safely from the viewpoint of shiny modernist optimism. Alex Glasgow's *Geordie Broon* caught the mood of the many who actually lived in the condemned dwellings (Alan Hull had moved to prosperous Darras Hall) and were in no mood to romanticize them. Geordie's house, scheduled for demolition before World War II, had survived past 1945:

"Why," says Geordie, "what went wrong, didn't Jerry drop a bomb
On this dirty little pigsty of a house?
Why, the waals are paper thin and the rain comes pouring in
And that netty in the yard's beyond abuse."

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ B McGuire, *Eve of Destruction* (RCA 1469, USA, 1965).

As in the songs by Corvan and Lindisfarne, grand social purpose is shown to be deflected by the lure of profit, but this is not tempered by any nostalgia for buildings past:

Aye, wor Geordie didn't shirk, he just buckled doon to work
Building office blocks, department stores so fine
There was petrol stations too, grand hotels, more than a few
But for hooses, nee one seemed to have much time.⁷⁵

In similar vein, *Hawkhope Hill*, Terry Conway's comic tale of the uprooting of an entire community to make way for the Kielder Dam in 1976, provides a catalogue of managerial arrogance and incompetence, but any nostalgia for the old village is subliminal here.⁷⁶ It is less a song of decline than a sly swipe at modern values.

Whether protesting the destruction of the old or ineptitude in building the new, these songs might be seen, not only in terms of contemporary disaffection with urban planning, more as an anticipation of the disillusion that was to come. They clearly reflected existing opinions but they were the output of successful professional artists and their tone was polemic, perhaps speaking for the people rather than from them. This is not to imply that the perceptions of 'the people' would necessarily differ from those of the artists - after all, the physical evidence of closed collieries and shipyards, of 'steel and concrete rising up, and plenty coming down', was there for all to see.⁷⁷ Raphael Samuel noted this (in the wider North) as a shift in popular cultural consumption: while

⁷⁵ A Glasgow, *Geordie Broon* (sound recording, Mawson and Wareham, Newcastle, 1976).

⁷⁶ T Conway, *Hawkhope Hill*, recorded on *The Northumbria Anthology: Water of Tyne - Songs of the North Tyne* (MWMCDSP36, Newcastle, 2002).

⁷⁷ E Boswell, *Tyneside's Where I Come From* in *Eric Boswell's Songs of the North East Book 1* (Newcastle, 1975), 16-17, p17.

the North in the 1960s ... was definitely Mod, and on the side of radical change ... the 1960s discovery of the North heralded the appearance of a new aesthetic: what might be called the urban pastoral.⁷⁸

The previous chapter has highlighted how the popularity of nostalgic projects such as Scott Dobson's *Geordie Byeuks* and the new museum of regional life at Beamish would suggest that North Easterners were receptive to the idea of saving the relics of an old way of life in decline.⁷⁹ Significantly, though, any bitterness among the general public at the process of modernization may have been tempered by a belief that at last the decisions (however unjust they appeared) were being taken by 'their own', as Beynon, Hudson and Sadler explain in relation to the mines:

communities were devastated by pit closures and miners still comment on the irrationality of the process which often saw collieries being closed just as major modernization investments had been completed. The fact that the closure programme generally went uncontested was partly due to a reluctance to embarrass a Labour government and, also, to the promises made of alternative jobs to replace those lost in the mines.⁸⁰

Wistfulness at what was passing was tempered by the belief that change had been deemed necessary by the people's own representatives. In such a climate, perhaps artists educated both in the 1960s counter-culture and in the long history of protest songs felt it was necessary to provide a sceptical voice.

Musicians versed in the history of regional song would also be quite aware of the fact that stories of decline need not be limited to the industrial and architectural environment. While Ralph McTell commented, in *Streets of London*, on the disintegration of society in the capital, there appears to have been no corresponding song in the North East where, perhaps, the old communal values were more intact.⁸¹

⁷⁸ R Samuel, (Ed A Light, with S Alexander, and G Stedman Jones), *Island Stories: Unravelling Britain (Theatres of Memory Vol II)* (Verson, London, 1998), p165.

⁷⁹ S Dobson, *Larn Yersel' Geordie* (F Graham, Newcastle, 1970). This had been preceded by F Shaw, *Lern Yerself Scouse* (Scouse Press, Liverpool, 1966) and 'Teach Yourself Scouse' which made an early appearance in folk magazine *Spin*, 2/9, c1964, 10-11.

⁸⁰ H Beynon, R Hudson, and D Sadler, *A Tale of Two Industries: The Contraction of Coal and Steel in the North East of England* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1991), p3.

⁸¹ R McTell, *Streets of London* (Reprise K14380, London, 1974).

Instead, revival songwriters exploited a form of cultural capital which had been in existence as long as the industrial revolution: peculiarly masochistic accounts of a northern work-ethic so powerful that it regularly broke its strongest. Songs of personal decline, of the natural ravages of the ageing process or the excessive demands of industrial work, are naturally a feature of folk traditions, but the North East - especially in its association with back-breaking colliery work - could lay claim to some of the most widely disseminated of these. The following pages will examine this imagery and, again, compare older texts with those created during the second revival.

Several such songs emanate from before the twentieth century, including one favoured by Owen Brannigan, *Sair Fyel'd Hinny*, which tells of natural deterioration ('When aw was young and lusty, Aw cud lowp a dyke; But now aw'm awd an' stiff, Aw can hardly step a syke').⁸² A sentimentalized character created by Gateshead comedian Rowland Harrison, *Geordie Black* typified the miner forced by age and infirmity to retire from the face and pick over the coals alongside the young lads on the surface, while the old miner in *The Banks of the Dee* is even less lucky, and 'can't get employment, my hair it's turned grey'. The latter image received nationwide distribution and permeated the consciousness of the wider folk revival because of Louis Killen's moving rendition on the seminal Topic LP, *The Iron Muse*.⁸³ Technology meant that a song created within the coalfield and performed by a local artist could help to create an external definition of the region's bleak identity. And running alongside such external perceptions were internalized ones, due to the popularity of these songs in the local folk clubs, with Killen a mainstay of the Bridge's Folksong and Ballad Club, and Birtley's Elliott family being major sources of this type of song.

⁸² O Brannigan, *Sair Fyel'd Hinny on Owen Brannigan Sings Scottish and Newcastle* (MWM CDSP22, Newcastle, 1998); Trad, *Sair Fyel'd Hinny*, in J C Bruce and J Stokoe, (Eds), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy: A Collection of the Ballads, Melodies and Small-Pipe Tunes of Northumbri*, (Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle, 1882), p92.

⁸³ R Harrison, *Geordie Black* in A L Lloyd (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners - Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 2nd edition, 1978), pp139-140. Trad, *The Banks of the Dee*, in A L Lloyd, (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners - Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 2nd edition, 1978), p143. On pp348-349, Lloyd explains the unusual location given in the title of a North Eastern song as being a miners' pun based on an eighteenth century Edinburgh ballad of completely different subject matter: the banks of the Dee could here be taken as meaning the banks of "D" pit. The recording referred to is as follows:- L

A L Lloyd collected two major examples of such songs from the twentieth century, one written by a revival singer, the other picked up by the Elliotts (and so passed through all the folk clubs which sprang from Birtley's inspiration) from the singing of Pelton Fell's champion clog-dancer, Johnson Ellwood.⁸⁴ This latter, entitled *The Old Clog-Dancer's Song* (perhaps a deliberate update of Corvan's *Sword Dancer's Lament*), tells of the double blow of no longer being able to compete as a dancer, and:

For fifty years Aa've worked in the pits
 And mony's the change Aa've seen.
 When Aa wes young and a man wes done
 They set him on the screens.
 But noo today, when yer hair turns grey,
 Like a squaddie with his aad peg leg,
 They'll tell ye ye're ne use ony mair,
 Get oot on the road and beg.⁸⁵

Perhaps the most important song in this category is Ed Pickford's account of the slow horrors of pneumoconiosis, *Ee Aye, Aa Cud Hew*. Pickford, a doyen of the Sunderland folk scene, also composed *A Miner's Life* (discussed above), as well as, bizarrely, *The Oldest Swinger in Town*, which represented a rather different account of personal decline.⁸⁶ Though written in the 1960s, *Ee Aye, Aa Cud Hew* has a tune (see Figure 11) which could easily be mistaken for ancient (with no trace of guitar-driven, singer-songwriter clichés) and its timeless quality has earned it a significant profile in the local repertoire and in the imagery of regional heritage.⁸⁷

Killen, *The Banks of the Dee*, recorded on Various Artists, *The Iron Muse: A Panorama of Industrial Music* (Topic 12T86, London, 1963).

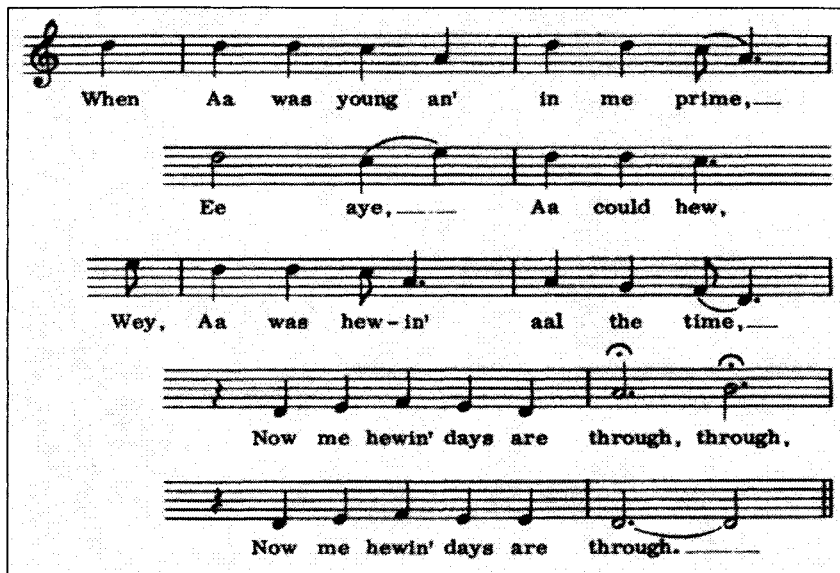
⁸⁴ A L Lloyd, (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners - Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 2nd edition, 1978), p 349.

⁸⁵ Trad, *The Old Clog-Dancer's Song*, collected in A L Lloyd, (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners - Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 2nd edition, 1978), pp144-145; E Corvan, *The Sword Dancer's Lament*, in *Corvan's Song Book No 4* (Stewart, Side, Newcastle, c1857-1866).

⁸⁶ http://www.ed-pickford.co.uk/html/the_oldest_swinger_in_town_200.html.

⁸⁷ E Pickford, *Ee Aye, Aa Cud Hew*, collected in A L Lloyd, (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners - Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 2nd edition, 1978), pp146-147, approximate date of composition confirmed in correspondence between the author and Ed Pickford, 30th September 2004.

Figure 11: Melody for *Ee Aye, Aa Cud Hew*



A 1987 pamphlet published by Beamish Museum juxtaposed Pickford's (uncredited) words with a photograph of a face worker holding his pick.⁸⁸ There is an irony (which would not be lost to those in the heritage industry looking for the poetry and tragedy in everyday life) in placing the image of this fit young man next to these words:

When Aa was young an' in me prime, Ee aye, Aa could hew,
Wey, Aa was hewin aal the time.

Now me hewin days are through, through
Now me hewin days are through

At the face the dust did flee, ...
... But now that dust is killin me. ...

... It's doon that pit ne mair Aa'll see ...

⁸⁸ Beamish Museum, *Information Sheet 5: North Country Verse* (Beamish, 1987).

... But Aa'll carry it round inside o' me.⁸⁹

Much the same imagery, in Johnny Handle's *Dust*, was carried at least as far as Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, where the song entered the repertoire of the Men of the Deeps choir.⁹⁰

It would be unwise to claim that such songs were the unique province of the North Eastern revival. Mike Harding's song, *An Old Miner*, again collected in *Come All Ye Bold Miners*, provided a Mancunian account of redundancy.⁹¹ 'The dust' appeared to have a particular resonance at this time, perhaps as increased use of automatic coal cutting equipment led to greater risk of severe exposure. Brighton-born and Yorkshire-based Allan Taylor's *Roll on the Day* gave pneumoconiosis a more general, less regionally specific, perspective, (albeit one recorded in Wallsend's Impulse Studios, published and distributed by Newcastle-based Rubber Records, and with major Tyneside folk 'names' such as Billy Mitchell and Stefan Sobell in the backing band).⁹² In *The Big Hewer*, a montage of miners' voices showed the disease's universality throughout all coalfields:

'Coal is a thing that's cost a life to get' ...

... 'The curse of underground is the dust. Dust is the giant killer ... he takes his time and steadily walks into your human system ...'

'He's got a concrete slab of coal around his bloody inside'⁹³.

The relationship between miners from Britain and America and the rest of the world was underlined by Peggy Seeger's blues-influenced backing for these words.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Pickford, E, "Ee Aye, Aa Cud Hew", in Lloyd, A L (ed), *Ibid*, pp146-147

⁹⁰ J Handle, *Dust*, (Spin, Blaydon, 1966), in *The Johnny Handle Songbook* (Spin, Blaydon, 1975), p16; J C O'Donnell, (Ed), *And Now the Fields are Green: A Collection of Coal Mining Songs in Canada* (University College of Cape Breton Press, 1992).

⁹¹ M Harding, *An Old Miner*, collected in A L Lloyd, (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners - Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 2nd edition, 1978), p142.

⁹² A Taylor, *Roll on the Day* (Rubber LP, RUB 040, Newcastle, 1980).

⁹³ 'Coal is a thing that's cost a life to get', in E MacColl, C Parker, and P Seeger, *The Big Hewer: A Radio Ballad* (BBC broadcast 1961; Topic TSCD 804, London, 1999).

Nevertheless, there is something in the North East's imagined, and increasingly imaginary, landscape - all totemic winding gear, cranes and chapels (though perhaps South Wales could claim some fellowship in this), which renders it the expected backdrop for such tales of despair.⁹⁵ Even the celebratory songs which reached the wider revival, such as Carthy and Swarbrick's famous version of *Byker Hill*, linked the place-name with the mining landscape of the previous century.⁹⁶ In representations of the North East, this was a useful shorthand which sketched in the basics of local character: hard-working, hard-drinking, direct, utterly vulnerable to economic fluctuations and politicized by this (in a vague, reactive way), yet still cheerful in the face of terrible odds. The following section will examine how this package of images was put to use at a time when industrial decline could not be denied and will continue with an analysis of the motivations and outcomes of North Eastern performers and composers 'playing to type'.

Alan Plater and Alex Glasgow's musical play, *Close the Coalhouse Door*, fed on this shorthand and played with the attendant assumptions, all the while reinforcing them by repetition, especially when the play transferred south and eventually to London in 1968.⁹⁷ The close connection between pride in regional culture (however caricatured) and a sense of decline is clear in the play's trajectory from a family celebration to a pit accident. On this occasion, the protagonists survive, but the long history of colliery disasters broods over the whole play, as is the fact that the old villages are changing beyond recognition:

THOMAS: Gan out into the world, John, lad ...

MARY: ... Anyways, the village is finished ... dead ...

....

JACKIE: I reckon young John wants to get hisself a job in engineering,
something like that ...

.... 'Cause I reckon coalmining's very near finished ...

GEORDIE: And about bloody time, an' all.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Here, there is a hint of influence from trans-Atlantic works on mining folklore, such as George Korson's *Coal Dust on the Fiddle*, (Folklore Associates Inc, Pennsylvania, 1943).

⁹⁵ see B Williamson, 'Living the Past Differently', in R Colls and B Lancaster, (Eds), *Geordies: Roots of Regionalism* (Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 148-167, pp164-165.

⁹⁶ M Carthy and D Swarbrick, *Byker Hill* (Polygram LP, London, 1967, released as Topic TSCD 342, 1991).

⁹⁷ A Plater, A Glasgow, and S Chaplin, *Close the Coalhouse Door* (Methuen, London, 1969), p(viii).

⁹⁸ A Plater, *Ibid*, p75.

Glasgow's title song, written independently of the show, unreservedly emphasized this sentiment:

Close the coalhouse door, lad,
There's blood inside,
There's bones inside,
There's bairns inside,
So stay outside.⁹⁹

As with *Geordie Broon*, discussed above, Glasgow (who, as a good socialist, surely craved a better way of life than what had gone before) refused to bow to unwarranted nostalgia. Nevertheless, Robert Colls viewed a 1972 production with a newly critical eye:

it did not celebrate a history so much as a mythology; ... it presented to the audience an image which was self-congratulatory; that their enjoyment, and my enjoyment, and my motive to understand history all basked in the same self-indulgence.¹⁰⁰

This is presumably a problem faced by anyone attempting to represent cultures at the margins - raising the region's profile would necessarily involve some suspension of critical detachment, just as it had in earlier songs like *Newcassel Worthies*.¹⁰¹ Although this song was clearly designed to bolster a fragile regional confidence, in true North Eastern form it romanticized the harsh realities of proletarian heroes like fishwives and Blind Willie (who had died in the workhouse). But, like the earlier songs in praise of Tyneside, *Coalhouse Door's* portrayal was applauded rather than rejected by local people (or at least, the region's regular theatre-goers). The Whitley

⁹⁹ A Glasgow, *Close the Coalhouse Door*, in A Plater, *Ibid*, p77; see p(viii) regarding the song's genesis outside of the show.

¹⁰⁰ R Colls, *The Collier's Rant: Song and Culture in the Industrial Village* (Croom Helm, London, 1977), p11.

¹⁰¹ W Armstrong, (attrib), *The Newcassel Worthies*, in chapbook *Songs of the Tyne; being a collection of popular local songs. No 4* (J Ross, Royal Arcade, Newcastle upon Tyne, c1846).

Bay Guardian noted that ‘When Close the Coalhouse Door ended its three-week run at the Newcastle Playhouse last Saturday, all box office records had been well and truly shattered’. Furthermore, the paper reported that this phenomenon would soon reach south of the Tees:

Impresarios from London and the big regional theatre groups have been sitting on the stairs of the Playhouse ... calculating the ‘carat’ value of coal!

... and the beauty of it all is, that the seam has just been tapped.

Every pit village has its story, character and most important in this context, humour ... Tyneside is one vast mine of dramatic potential.¹⁰²

Certainly, just as images which celebrated the region’s humorous resilience within a painful history seemed to play very well locally, they were also sure to be the ones most readily acceptable to a metropolitan audience for whom the comforts of the capital were taken as a given. There was a distinct danger in this, of slipping into the kind of caricature that served London’s hegemony as arbiter of taste and sophistication, and ultimately justified its disproportionate power.

Just as Charles Withers has deconstructed the use of the ‘noble savage’ Highlander trope in providing the British with an army of empire builders, so have African-American critics deplored the ‘Uncle Tom’-isms in their own popular culture which informed a learned sense of inferiority.¹⁰³ Alice Walker described her revulsion at *Gone With the Wind*’s portrayal of the maid, Prissy, yet in the climate of that era, the dilemma for performers was that, in order for black people to have any cinematic voice they had to accept the parts offered, no matter how demeaning.¹⁰⁴ This could provide similar justification for those in England who had to accept stereotypical representations in order to reach a national audience – the ‘bluff, no-nonsense’ Northerner in British films of the ‘30s and ‘40s being one of the more obvious examples.

¹⁰² ‘Coalhouse Door has ‘opened’ up a new future’, *Whitley Bay Guardian*, Friday May 3rd 1968.

¹⁰³ C Withers, ‘The Historical Creation of the Scottish Highlands’, in I Donnachie, and C Whatley, (Eds), *The Manufacture of Scottish History* (Polygon, Edinburgh, 1992), 143-156.

¹⁰⁴ A Walker, ‘A Letter of the Times, or Should This Sado-Masochism Be Saved?’, in *You Can’t Keep A Good Woman Down* (Women’s Press, London, 1982), p118: ‘Prissy, whose strained, slavish voice, as Miz Scarlett pushed her so masterfully up the stairs, I could never get out of my head’.

More surprising were the occasions when artists created roles for themselves which willingly carried the same stereotypes. Once again, the most strident criticisms of such behaviour would come from those within the African-American community, such as Stanley Crouch:

For at least a hundred years, there have always been whites willing to pay Negroes top dollar if they dedicated their careers to proving the inferiority of black to white.¹⁰⁵

The perceived racial stereotyping of black American musicians during the jazz and swing eras (where Louis Armstrong appeared to dilute his obvious genius by ‘mugging’ for the cameras) was one impetus behind the conscious intellectualizing of the music into be-bop. North East England had its own be-bop radicals in the shape of the EmCee5, who proclaimed their allegiance to Newcastle in early ‘60s titles such as *Stephenson’s Rocket* (the title referred to drummer Ronnie Stephenson, but the North Eastern resonance was also clear).¹⁰⁶ This provided a more cosmopolitan picture of the ‘canny toon’: however, the band did decamp to London fairly quickly and became part of the wider jazz scene, where regional specificity had little place. In a similar way, within the North Eastern folk scene, it is possible that the work of singer-songwriters deriving from wider musical trends provided an introspective alternative to the Geordie anthems, though the major local figures in contemporary popular songwriting, such as Alan Hull and Alex Glasgow, appear to have dealt in introspection and regionality in at least equal measure.

The experience of North Easterners could hardly compare with the degradation suffered by millions of enslaved African-Americans who, even after abolition, struggled through a century's worth of *Uncle Tom* and black-face minstrel shows before they were allowed an adequate voice. Nevertheless there are echoes in the conscious selection of regional material which played sufficiently ‘to type’ - and portrayed the kind of North East which outsiders (either geographical or by virtue of class) would buy.

¹⁰⁵ S Crouch, ‘Jazz Alone: Four-Letter Words: Rap & Fusion’, *Jazz Times*, 32/2, March 2002.

The use (or limitation) of dialect is telling here: Alex Glasgow's songs, like Alan Hull's and Alan Price's, use sufficient North Eastern inflections to leave the listener in no doubt that their subject is regional. However, like the disaster and strike ballads of the nineteenth century, their message is directed to the widest possible audience, and the choice of language rarely spills over into the exclusivity of strong dialect. The songs created for the folk clubs by Johnny Handle, Terry Conway and Ed Pickford - created for a local audience, or those in the wider folk scene quite comfortable with working through diverse vocabularies - carry a higher proportion of dialect words. The modern songs are nowhere near as heavily accented as those by, say, Corvan, (or, for that matter, the overstated and comic *Geordierama* presentations by Mike Neville and George House), but the fact that they use dialect at all when many were disseminated by the mass media implies conscious moves to retain a distinctive identity. The more the conformity of modern Britain encroached upon Welsh, Scots and Irish identities, the more powerful became the movements in support of their languages, and this is presumably a part of the same trend.¹⁰⁷

It is surprising that, even when songs contributed to the idea of a "backward" North East by playing on dialect or stereotypes, insiders bought these portrayals too. That this was a long-term habit is indisputable, and it was not only the *Bob Cranky* songs which had lampooned the locals in the nineteenth century. Ned Corvan's *The Fishermen Hung The Monkey O* helped to fix a picture of Hartlepudlians as insular and ignorant which has proven resilient to the present day.¹⁰⁸ The song was first performed, not in Newcastle, where internal rivalries between regional towns might explain the subject matter, but in Hartlepool's Dock Hotel Music Hall.¹⁰⁹ More recently, Hartlepool Town's ironic adoption of a man in a monkey-suit as its football mascot – not to mention said mascot's election as Mayor - is, like Alex Glasgow's

¹⁰⁶ I Carr, 'Novocastrian Jazz, 1950s and early 1960s', *Northern Review*, Vol 4, Winter 1996, 10-18, p17.

¹⁰⁷ See R Katz, 'Mannerism and Cultural Change: An Ethnomusicological Example', *Current Anthropology*, Vol 11, Issue 4/5, Oct-Dec 1970, 465-475. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight. See also Chapters Four, Five and Six for other rearguard actions to save cultural capital.

¹⁰⁸ E Corvan, *The Fishermen Hung the Monkey O in Allan's Illustrated Edition of Tyneside Songs and Readings* (T&G Allan, Newcastle, 1891).

¹⁰⁹ see <http://portcities.hartlepool.gov.uk/server.php?show=ConNarrative.69&chapterId=128>.

Little Cloth Cap, apt to backfire.¹¹⁰ A regional ability to laugh at our unsophisticated selves is clearly important here.

The successes of Lindisfarne and The Animals in (occasionally) projecting this image have already been outlined above. Ex-Animal Alan Price took the self-conscious regionalism a stage further with a notable recording. The choice of Tommy Armstrong's *Trimdon Grange Explosion* as a 1969 single release could be considered a bizarre shot at the popularity poll of the charts.¹¹¹ This was apparently not to honour one of the region's great songwriters as Armstrong is uncredited on the label (which opted for the more royalty-friendly 'Trad/Arr'), and this therefore implies that Price's return to regional music provided another rather masochistic portrait of the region.

This may, however, be an unduly negative analysis of why local people would choose to portray themselves through such images. A rapper's use of the word 'nigger' is intended to reverse the effect of a pejorative expression, reclaiming it as a badge of identity that excludes the outsider (albeit an approach fraught with the danger of legitimizing its use by racists). So, too, can a North Easterner's celebratory use of caricature and the imagery of struggle become a proclamation of difference and pride: again adapting the 'cultural cringe' to the 'cultural strut'. Once again, the suggestion is that those in the North East are a race apart, facing tragedy-filled lives with hedonism as a source of resilience.¹¹² This would provide at least a partial explanation for the use of apparently negative imagery in civic boosterism.¹¹³

In this connection, anticipating several regeneration projects in the area which fed on the heritage of the Depression, Price conjured a far more celebratory image with his 1974 release, *The Jarrow Song*. This top-ten hit used a jaunty music-hall melody

¹¹⁰ BBC News, Friday 3rd May 2002, "*Monkey Mascot Elected Mayor*":
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1965569.stm.

¹¹¹ A Price, *The Trimdon Grange Explosion* (Deram DM263, London, 1969).

¹¹² see Lancaster, B, "*Sociability and the City*", in Colls, R, and Lancaster, B, "*Newcastle upon Tyne - A Modern History*", (Phillimore, Chichester, 2001), 319-340

¹¹³ See also Chapter Six.

(juxtaposed with a typically 1970s rock interlude) and words which celebrated a very Geordie crusade that was not a hunger march, but a march for jobs¹¹⁴:

My name is Geordie McIntyre, An' the Bairns don't even have a fire
So the wife says "Geordie, go to London Town!"
And if they don't give us half a chance, Don't even give us a second
glance

Then Geordie, with my blessings, burn them down

Come on follow the Geordie boys, They'll fill your heart with joy ...
..... They're singing now, yes now is the hour

... Well I can hear them an' I can feel them
An' it's just as if they were here today
I can see them, I can feel them
An' I'm thinking nothing's changed much today.¹¹⁵

Most of the usual stereotypes are present: industrial decline and its resulting misery, yet a poverty that is carried with dignity and a seemingly unwarranted cheerfulness. Price's comment that nothing much has changed demonstrates the new decade's cynicism after the optimism of the 1960s - the bosses might look different and talk in accents other than received pronunciation, but they remained the bosses. This same parallel was picked up by Alan Hull in *Marshall Riley's Army* ('Can anybody tell me what has changed?').¹¹⁶ As regards the tradition of songs celebrating regional pride and documenting decline, Price's song has one feature that appears uncharacteristic. This is the almost revolutionary message of 'burn them down' and 'now is the hour', a clear departure from the resentful acceptance evident in the majority of songs considered above (although in keeping with a much older - *Cranky*-era - Tyneside tradition of riots on the Quayside). In this case, the tone may be due to Price's interaction with the London intelligentsia. He had worked with Lindsay Anderson on his anti-establishment film *If*, and this might have influenced the song's tone.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ see M Perry, *Jarrow Crusade: Protest and Legend* (University of Sunderland Press, 2006).

¹¹⁵ A Price, *The Jarrow Song* (Warner Bros single. K16372, London, 1974).

¹¹⁶ Lindisfarne, *Marshall Riley's Army on Back and Fourth* (Phonogram/Mercury LP, 9106 609, London, 1978).

¹¹⁷ L Anderson, (Dir), *If*, Paramount/Memorial, UK, 1968.

And, as discussed in relation to Alan Hull, Price had been a member of the 1960s counter-culture, seen in the company of Bob Dylan in *Don't Look Back* just as Dylan was about to split the folk-scene down the middle when he 'went electric'¹¹⁸ In these more pop-oriented songs, there is a complex blend of regional identity and contemporary international zeitgeist which, though almost impossible to disentangle, points to something regionally specific at this period in time.

As mentioned previously, 'plugging in' to electric instruments became a major issue in folk music internationally: it was another aspect of modernity which would touch and shape the North Eastern folk scene. Ironically, the general shift in instrumentation towards guitars, some of them electric, provided an image of decline which caused a reactive revival in traditional local instruments and dance forms, and this final section will assess some key aspects of this process.

Just as the urban industrial landscape appeared doomed to recede into memory, so too did the old ways of rural life. As noted in a previous chapter, the 1970s saw the emergence of the first full-time professional smallpipes manufacturers in the instrument's history. If rusty winding gear and shipyards provided one North Eastern image recognizable to outsiders, the alternative was that of touristic Northumbria, the 'rural pockets' sought out by tourist guides among the man-made blackness.¹¹⁹ As Leutch's mid-Victorian song has it:

Oh! The Cliffs of Old Tynemouth, they're wild and they're sweet,
And dear are the waters that roll at their feet,
And the old ruined Abbey, it ne'er shall depart,
'Tis the star of my fancy, the home of my heart.¹²⁰

To celebrate these sites - of early Christianity, Border Reivers, rugged coastline and remote hill farms - an ideal soundtrack was provided by indigenous musical instruments and the tradition of local 'hops' where they danced in peculiar - energetic and forceful - local styles like the *Rant*. The threat of such a community's

¹¹⁸ D A Pennebaker, (Dir), *Don't Look Back*, USA, 1966.

¹¹⁹ D Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester University Press, 2004), p53.

imminent demise was the best impetus to its preservation and this was clearly significant to the local folk scene. As this involves practice rather than text, further discussion has been limited to other chapters, particularly Chapters Four and Six. Suffice it to say here that Jack Armstrong's tendency to re-name traditional tunes, discussed in Chapter Four, illustrates a hankering after the old Northumbrian hills of the tourist imagination that carried all the associated baggage of 'otherness'.¹²¹ That this is a kind of mediation is not in doubt, however, as Chapter Four demonstrated, Armstrong remained very much a part of the Northumberland communities which he represented: thus, acceptance by those communities is implied.

In summary, a strand running through both the instrumental and sung traditions is the sense that pride in the region is inextricably linked with decline. This is the imagined identity of a region populated by survivors. Although it followed a long tradition of similar work, this particular kind and quantity of lyrical output was distinctive to the North East of the 1960s and '70s, and is therefore a rich source indicating the ideas prevalent (at least among artists and their audiences) at the time. As the previous chapter highlighted, the touristic marketability of such an image was a double-edged sword: regeneration projects based on attracting visitors could reinforce an already well established self-image and might not bring the promised economic benefits.¹²² More significantly to the North Eastern folk scene, the risk of slipping into caricature - bolstered by the output of publishing, tourist and media sources - would dramatically impact on concepts of tradition, genuine or spurious, and the following chapter will assess this along with the reasons why it became so important to establish authenticity.

¹²⁰ D Leutch, *The Cliffs of Old Tynemouth*, in *Shields Garland No 2* (T F Brockie, South Shields, c 1850-1860).

¹²¹ see B Feintuch, sleeve notes to *Northumberland Rant: Traditional Music from the Edge of England* (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings SFWCD 40473, Washington, USA, 1999), p18. But see also Chapter Four regarding Colin Ross's recollection that Jack Armstrong claimed he renamed these tunes at the suggestion of Richard Kelly (Colin Ross interviewed by author, 7th March 2005, recording in my possession)

¹²² Russell, *Ibid*, pp64-73.

Chapter Eight

'The Little Cloth Cap' Prescribing the Authentic

Dear Folknik

What times these are! At last ethnic authenticity is "in" and the scrimmage for the image is on.

The sounds of recorded folk music in varying degrees of reality are to be found now in many places if you like the real authentic sound of genuine folk music and if you want to keep the folk music buying scene clean and untarnished by the evils of profit, then Folkways Ethnic 4000 series is for you.

Advertisement from Folk Scene magazine, 1965¹

Less than ten years after traditional jazz aficionados had discovered skiffle, and skifflers had in their turn sought out more indigenous roots, it was clear that some conceptions of authenticity had hardened into absolutes. This chapter will avoid debating the relative virtues of each definition of this slippery concept; rather it will examine why authenticity was held in such high regard at this time in history, and whether it mattered more or less in the North East than elsewhere. First, it will examine the theoretical framework that helps explain the pursuit of authenticity. This will lead to a comparative analysis of the ways in which this was expressed in the wider second folk revival and, more specifically, the revival in the North East. The debate over authenticity was an international phenomenon and so this Chapter will focus closely on some far-reaching controversies, such as those involving 'the policy' and folk-rock. Throughout this discussion, I will assess the North Eastern contribution to or refraction of these debates, using the observations of Bob

¹ Transatlantic Records Ltd, Advertisement in *Folk Scene*, No 11, September 1965, p35. The same issue of this magazine featured co-editor David Moran's damning review (This record is pathetic) of Bob Dylan's first foray into plugged-in music, *Bringing It All Back Home*.

Davenport, whose perspectives derived from both Newcastle and London. Additionally, I will pay particular attention to three versions of authenticity that neatly encapsulated the competing narratives: Newcastle's Folksong and Ballad club; the Elliott Family's Birtley folk club; and the traditions of rural Northumberland.

Before assessing some general principles, it is important to note an important proviso. While folk scholarship routinely deals with the search for authenticity, it is difficult to avoid being drawn away from examining the forces that drive the search and into the debate about what is and is not authentic. For example, Harker suggests that the Sharpian revivalists' search for authenticity was flawed in that it ignored industrial song: therefore, by this account, industrial song equated with authentic workers' culture, while rural folksong was rendered as so mediated that it had lost all authenticity. Similarly, Boyes' interpretation implies that the steamrolling of dissent by EFDSS produced inauthentic, objectified versions of folk music, while small-scale survivals were authentic but had little chance of survival: therefore revivalists had to learn to live with inauthenticity as a fact of life. Such value judgements appear inextricable from the process of understanding constructs of authenticity, and while I aim to keep this chapter objectively focused on what spurs the need for the authentic, it is likely that my own subjectivity will lead to similar assessments of what is and is not genuine. With this caution in mind, the following paragraphs will outline some of the major concepts relating to authenticity.

The concern evident in the advertisement quoted at the start of the chapter was clearly prompted by the relative commercial success – and suspected commercialization - of folk music in the mid-1960s. Yet the roots of the debate stretch back at least to the point during the Romantic era when ballads and folksongs became collectable and deemed worthy of classification, and especially since the discrediting of McPherson's *Ossian*, folklorists had been alert to hints of fraud.² It is questionable whether those who participated in folk music within its original context

² See H Trevor Roper, 'The Highland Tradition of Scotland' in E Hobsbawm and T Ranger, (Eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 15-42, pp17-18, for a straightforward debunking. For a more nuanced reading, see M Chapman, *The Gaelic Vision in Scottish Culture* (Croom Helm, London, 1978), pp48-52, which contends that an invented tradition (such as "Macpherson's Ossian") can become the outsiders' definition of an ethnic identity (in this case, "the romantic Celt", as opposed to the "rational Anglo-Saxon") upon which future

(before the label of ‘authenticity’ was applied) would recognize such distinctions. Prior to this point, new innovations and instruments appear to have been enthusiastically adopted without self-justification. Concertinas and melodeons were the products of mechanization, the Northumbrian pipes had seen numerous technical developments from the addition of bellows to the stopping-up of the chanter, and the rapper sword dance required sprung steel in order to have come into existence. Of course, in the process of transmission down the generations, there may have been an unspoken assumption that ‘this is how this music has always been done’, yet the concept of authenticity itself appears external. Lionel Trilling highlights the polemic nature of authenticity: it is sought for a purpose.³ Thus it is in constant negotiation and changes over time, so authenticity is never absolute and always reflects the present context.

The first folk revival’s search for authenticity was rooted in perceived national characteristics that were highly topical during the slow slide towards the Great War⁴. However, in the wake of fascist manipulation of national identities and folklore, the second folk revival had to seek its authenticity elsewhere. My contention is that it redirected itself both upwards towards international issue politics (and the fear of a capitalist-implanted ‘false consciousness’) and downwards towards regionalism – the most obvious source of a music that was, after all, rooted in locality. The latter is particularly significant in the North East of England. There is a sense of the liminal in descriptions of discovering living manifestations of country dance or industrial song; of standing on the threshold of an older, more virile, less crassly commercial and self-conscious society.⁵ While engaged in folk activities, participants were neither fully in the modern nor the old world, with the folk event providing the gateway to a more authentic way of living. Furthermore, such folklore was (rightly

assessments of a more authentic culture (genuine Gaelic poetry) are based, even within the community from which the culture sprang.

³ Of his far-reaching ideas, those most relevant to this thesis are where Trilling suggests that the purpose of polemical searches for authenticity may be Arnoldian, the rejection of the ‘having’ over the ‘being’; or, like Ruskin or Lawrence, rejecting the machine in favour of the human; even patriotic, for example, when considering the supposed ‘sincerity’ of the English. L Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Harvard University Press, Boston, 1972), pp106-133.

⁴ See V Gammon, ‘Folk Song Collecting in Sussex and Surrey, 1843-1914’, *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 10, Autumn 1980, 61-89.

⁵ I have quoted from some of these ‘road to Damascus’ moments throughout this thesis, for example, in Chapter Two: MacColl’s epiphany when he heard Lomax performing chants and hollers from

or wrongly) perceived as having greater 'authenticity' than the contrived heritage events discussed in Chapter Six.

Viewing the revival this way takes us at least some distance away from the search (often cited by historians of folk revival) for a sense of political authenticity. While this undoubtedly had great bearing on a movement born in the shadow of the Depression, the Cold War and fear of nuclear destruction, the participants most tied to the North East are likely to cite a sense of belonging and community as equally, if not more significant.⁶ This is the need to belong to a way of life perceived to be passing (though folk music's death knell has been sounded regularly and inaccurately for at least the past two centuries) and it involves almost as much personal investment as those who seek the authentic via self-sufficiency on the land or buying an olive grove in Spain. Participants in the folk revival could be viewed as visitors - at the extreme, emigrants - to an imagined past or an exotic present, and their search for authenticity can be usefully analysed with similar tools to those applied to tourism studies. In this area, the ideas of Erik Cohen are particularly applicable to the folk revival and these require some explanation.

Cohen has borrowed Victor Turner's concept of 'the centre out there' in order to explain the experience pursued by tourists in search of meaning.⁷ This is a product of alienation: the spiritual centre of the modern home culture is found wanting, and the tourist feels like an exile within their own environment. They then travel in order to seek an alternative centre in the authentic lives of others. Following Turner's approach clearly pays dividends when applied to the folk clubs, where *communitas* was generated by the shared liminality of the participants, temporarily re-creating profoundly affective music from the past. Ian McKay points towards

the American South; and Alistair Anderson's recollections of the 'wild' barn dances discovered as a result of hikes into Northumberland.

⁶ This was a recurrent theme among several of my interviewees, notably: A Anderson, *Interviewed by author*, 5th March 2004, recording in my possession; B Graham, *Interviewed by author*, 20th May 2003, recording in my possession.

⁷ E Cohen, *Traditions in the Qualitative Sociology of Tourism*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 15, 1988, 29-46.

A liberal antimodernism: an intensely individualistic thirst for an existence released from the iron cage of modernity into a world re-enchanted by history, nature, and the mysterious.⁸

And this is echoed by Colin Campbell's understanding of the Romantic ethic, as bohemians couched their nonconformity in a rejection of the modern world and sought refuge in a 'natural landscape of remote places'.⁹ That this was applicable to musical behaviour is evident from the Weberian analysis of western music, which views functional tonality as encoding the Protestant ethic, the spirit of capitalism, and rationalization.¹⁰ Folk and African-American traditions provide an alternative to the rationalized music that had dominated at least since the European Enlightenment and certainly since full-scale industrialization: folk music, with its looser tonalities, less formal structures, was therefore an echo of pre-industrial forms. As we shall see, this was attractive not only to the Romantics but also to the increasing number of people who experienced a sense of alienation from modern society after World War II. For instance, Karl Dallas's Marxist understanding was that the folk revival was a route back to more organic collective behaviour: 'restructuring society along lines which break up the impersonal state and return it to a collection of true communities'.¹¹ Authenticity was a key factor for this generation: their new heroes, of the Holden Caulfield blueprint, were disdainful of anything 'phoney', and, like Kerouac, they sought new gods in the transcendental experience of the 'mad bop world'.¹² This was, perhaps a different definition of authenticity from that in the folk clubs, but it was surely the same search. Kerouac's cross-country pursuit of 'the

⁸ I McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia* (McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 1994), p(xv).

⁹ C Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1987), p196. This understanding of Campbell is taken from a work with obvious parallels to this thesis, regarding North Eastern 'primitive' visual art: N Vall, 'Bohemians and 'Pitmen Painters' in North East England, 1930-1970', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 5/1, 2004, 1-21, p1.

¹⁰ M Weber, *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music* (Routledge, London, 1958; first published 1921), quoted in P J Martin, *Sounds and Society: Themes in the sociology of music* (Manchester University Press, 1995), especially pp218-225.

¹¹ K Dallas, 'The Roots of Tradition', in D Laing, R Deneslow, K Dallas, and R Shelton, *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock* (Methuen, London, 1975), 83-136, p94.

¹² J Kerouac, *On The Road* (1957; Penguin Edition, London, 1972), pp225-228. J D Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (Little Brown, New York, 1951). For the importance of these two American books to the provincial English youth that peopled the jazz, skiffle and folk clubs, see G Pearson, *Sex, Brown Ale and Rhythm & Blues: The life that gave birth to the Animals* (snagaP, Darlington, 1998), p60. Indeed, Bob Davenport used the Holden Caulfield terminology when he called for Miss Jenny Lee MP to 'divert some money away from Art Musick into the least phoney thing we

moment' has strong resonances with the English revival's cross-centuries foraging for the voice of the people: both proclaimed, 'I am different from today's affluent, apathetic mainstream'.¹³ And to acknowledge a regional identity, particularly one so geographically remote from the centre, was to ascribe a character even more distant from that mainstream.

This is not to argue that all those who seek another kind of centre, an authenticity external to their own culture are profoundly alienated: there is also the possibility that they can adhere to multiple spiritual centres and can move between these as appropriate.¹⁴ This flexible approach can be equally applied to the second folk revival. The clearly alienated beatniks who sought a completely different way of life can be contrasted with the committed career-person who held their centre in the modern world of upward mobility but who dedicated all their spare time to performing and promoting folk music with its alternative centre in a traditional past of less rationalization and more rigid social structure. A clear example of such dualist behaviour already touched on in Chapter Four can be found in Colin Ross's day-time role as a lecturer in modern sculpture (hardly an alienated cog in the machine) and his evening return to the traditional culture of folk music.

Because of such variations, Cohen has highlighted that the concept of '*the tourist*' as a single type is naïve.¹⁵ Similarly, it must be accepted that the interest and experience of folk music enthusiasts also falls into several levels of involvement, from the purely recreational to the existential quest 'of the modern pilgrim in quest of meaning at somebody else's centre' (as opposed to the old pilgrim who sought meaning at the centre of their own culture).¹⁶ Thus, the folk movement's concern with authenticity can be broken into similar typologies as those applied by Cohen to

possess in Britain – our traditional song, dance and music.' B Davenport, 'Bob Davenport on Topic's New Voices', *Folk Music*, 1/10, c1965, 3-4, p4.

¹³ See also J Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*, (USA, 1958, reprint, Penguin Modern Classics, London, 2000), which was a popular book among 1960s folk enthusiasts and which suggested a 'rucksack revolution', rejecting modern values by singing and communing with the great outdoors.

¹⁴ E Cohen, 'A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences', *Sociology*, 13, 1979, 179-201, p193; also E Cohen, 'Traditions in the Qualitative Sociology of Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 15, 1988, 29-46.

¹⁵ E Cohen, 'A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences', *Sociology*, 13, 1979, 179-201, p 180.

tourism, where he categorizes not the type of tourist, but the level of experience which they pursue. This breakdown is even more nuanced by Cohen's acknowledgment that these types are not rigidly divided, and a single individual might experience several different modes within the same trip. The categories – listed in some detail, as they should inform the subsequent discussion - are as follows:-

1. **Recreational.** This is simply respite that allows a rejuvenated return to a centre that the tourist accepts. The tourist is therefore contented with a contrived version of authenticity of which they are a knowing and willing observer.
2. **Diversiory.** Here, the tourist finds temporary respite in the strange and exotic, and enters, for a short time, a completely centreless world.
3. **Experiential.** The tourist feels alienated from their own centre and seeks to recapture meaning via the experience – mainly aesthetic – of the authentic life of others. Because it involves a search for meaning, this is the level where it becomes important to learn whether or not the experience is authentic. Such tourists are therefore easy victims of what McCannell has called 'staged authenticity', where they are convinced they have got to the 'back' regions when in reality they have been presented by knowing locals with a false 'back'.¹⁷ Their experience represents a 'centre out there', but the tourist remains aware of its otherness – and does not convert to that way of life.
4. **Experimental.** The tourist no longer adheres to their own centre, but are actively seeking an alternative in many different directions (not just travel, but, for example, mysticism). This tourist 'samples and compares the different alternatives, hoping eventually to discover one which will suit his particular needs and desires... the 'experimental' tourist is in 'search of himself'... he seeks to discover that form of life which elicits a resonance in

¹⁶ Ibid, p183. This should be qualified by an understanding that there were examples of the rejection of a materialist contemporary society – and seeking beyond the 'home culture' - among the 'older' variety of pilgrims, such as George Fox and John Bunyan.

¹⁷ D McCannell, 'Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 79/3, November 1973, 589-603, ppp597-598; also E Cohen, 'Traditions in the Qualitative Sociology of Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 15, 1988, 29-46.

himself ... often not really aware of what he seeks, of his 'real' needs and desires'.¹⁸ It is arguable that this is the key category that applies to the mass audience of the 'folk boom' of the 1960s and '70s, who experimented with folk music before seeking authenticity elsewhere in, say, reggae or punk. In all likelihood, a sizeable number of the mass movements which encapsulate such a historical moment are experimenting, and it is the temporary attraction of a particular movement that makes it historically interesting.

5. **Existential.** In this final category, the tourist undergoes a fundamental change analogous to religious conversion. The experimental mode characterizes the seeker; the existential mode represents a traveller 'fully committed to an 'elective' spiritual centre, ie one external to the mainstream of his native society and culture.'¹⁹ These people are exiles in their own world – the only meaningful authenticity is within their chosen centre. This centre, while extraneous to present life, 'may also be a traditional centre to which he, his forebears or his 'people' had been attached in the past, but become alienated from. In this case, the desire for a visit to such a centre derives from a desire to find one's spiritual roots.'²⁰

This final category, especially this last subdivision of that category, appears to most closely fit the long-term participants in the North Eastern folk revival: honouring the way of life of their parents and grandparents. It must be emphasized, however, that – just like the Americans who 'go back' to Ireland – the North East's university-educated youth may have returned to their musical 'roots', but might equally avoid other parts of their home culture, such as racing pigeons or digging allotments. Cohen understands that this is the case even in existential searches, and points out that the "centre" is an ideal, and as such has aspects that clash with reality.²¹

To summarize the extremes of Cohen's typology in terms of folk music, one might find the occasional visitor to a Maypole dance at the local village fete in the recreational/diversionary category, while the person whose life is fundamentally

¹⁸ Ibid, p189.

¹⁹ Ibid, p190.

²⁰ Ibid, p191. Existential experiences were of clear significance to young intellectuals in the era under study, with thinkers such as Sartre and Camus in the ascendancy.

²¹ Ibid, p196.

changed, who might choose to live among the Cheviot shepherds and manufacture smallpipes, would fall into the existential type.

Because of the cumulative, adaptive nature of tradition, however, existential experiences did not necessarily entail a complete withdrawal from the modern world: the ideal centre could be accommodated within contemporary society. MacKinnon observed of revival singer Peter Bellamy's style, that

the singing of traditional material was not entered into as an escapist return to the past or in the form of historical reproduction. It was quite different from the Sealed Knot in re-enacting battles ... or in the way a group of classical musicians may 'authentically' play a medieval piece. ...

... People such as Bellamy were consciously attempting to develop the music in such a way that it becomes appropriate to use the verb 'evolve' transitively.²²

With the focus on the process of tradition rather than the objectification of its product, it was therefore possible to locate the 'centre out there' firmly in the contemporary context of the 1960s revival.

While folk enthusiasts pursued the ideal centre, they consequently were intensely suspicious of those who exploited the 'staged authenticity' referred to above. The title of this chapter derives from Alex Glasgow's satire on the most cynical and least subtle of political ploys:-

You must use the local language when you're talking to the men,
Say a miner is a 'pitman' and they'll ask you back again.
And remember when you're in the pub to spit upon the floor,
And if you chew tobacco, well, the compliments will pour.

But there's one thing makes the locals really fall into your lap,
Get your picture in the papers with your little cloth cap.²³

²² N MacKinnon, , *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1994), p30.

²³ A Glasgow, 'The Little Cloth Cap', from A Plater, A Glasgow and S Chaplin, *Close the Coalhouse Door* (Methuen Playscript, London, 1969), p63.

While it was easy to lampoon the craven populism of Southern politicians aping Northern authenticity, there was a more worrying behaviour on the part of some local performers, who could be accused of staging for external eyes precisely the ‘Uncle Tom’ version of Geordie ‘daftness’ that Harker decried.²⁴ Despite the fact that the North Eastern folk clubs drew on music hall repertory and despite the fact that there was permeability between these clubs and the more theatrical versions of Geordie culture in Balmbra’s and the *Geordierama* shows, there were aspects of performance style which were used to distinguish between the two genres: the folk clubs aimed at the authentic, while other versions of the culture were apparently ‘veneered’. For instance, Phil Ranson was repulsed by The Barry Sisters’ renditions of local songs:-

sugary harmony with faintly contrived Geordie accents ... accompanied by ... a club trio of piano, drums and bass. These are strong, basic songs, meant to be sung with the sparsest of basic harmony, a little basic accompaniment and plenty of oomph!²⁵

The fact that this review was entitled ‘Listen to the Ranters’ amply demonstrates that a hierarchy of authenticity had been constructed around local music. Destaging and performance style are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, however, here it is important to note the reflexivity that created the archetypal stage Geordie (and, by default, the archetypal folk club Geordie). This had parallels with what Vall notes as the pitmen painters’ bowing to expectations:-

The idea of cumulative development, or ‘emergent authenticity’, suggests that the attention of middle-class academics could have produced a visual response, in which certain features or particular subjects were emphasized, in the knowledge that these would be read as authentic.²⁶

This might be a bleak analysis of constructed authenticity; however, Vall demonstrates that several painters, such as Oliver Kilbourn refused to conform to

²⁴ D Harker, ‘The Making of the Tyneside Concert Hall’, *Popular Music*, 1, 1981, 25-56, p41 and p45.

²⁵ P Ranson, ‘Listen to the Ranters’ (review of The Barry Sisters, ‘When the Boat Comes In’), , *Acoustic News and Folk Song & Dance News*, No 25, October 1979, p16.

²⁶ N Vall, ‘Bohemians and ‘Pitmen Painters’ in North East England, 1930-1970’, *Visual Culture in Britain*, 5/1, 2004, 1-21, p4.

stereotypes and continued to develop their style. This reclamation of identity is paralleled by Ian Russell's understanding of the apparently staged bothy ballad competitions of North East Scotland, full of recreated farmhouse kitchens, singers costumed as 'bothy loons' and the use of vernacular humour, signifying

a shared understanding of who we think we have been and where we think we have come from.

However, it would be a mistake to take an outsider perspective and simply write off the competition as wholly reflexive and lacking in creativity, and therefore static and culturally atrophied or ossified. The insider is aware that since the competition started in 1983 new singers have emerged with fresh interpretations and different repertoires.²⁷

Thus as with Peter Bellamy, the authenticity of folk music would therefore appear to dwell less in the artefact than in the evolutionary process of tradition. This was nothing new: even Sharp's 1907 *Conclusions* had delineated a process of continuity, variation and selection (although Sharp seemed unwilling to leave the selection and defining of folk music in the hands of the people).²⁸ This framework further underpinned the definition adopted in 1954 by the International Folk Music Council, as well as A L Lloyd in 1967.²⁹ Folk music was therefore viewed as a living, continuously developing tradition and one that had survived throughout centuries of variation and selection, which makes it all the more surprising that authenticity became such a battleground during the 1950s and '60s. As the discussion above would imply, the reasons for this preoccupation would appear to lie, not in the music's history, but in the contemporary society in which it was being performed. The following paragraphs deal with probably the most overt attempt to prescribe and control the nature, context, and transmission of folk music during the second revival:

²⁷ I Russell, 'Competing with Ballads (and Whisky?): The Construction, Celebration, and Commercialization of North-East Scottish Identity', *Folk Music Journal*, 9/2, 2007, 170-191, p186. The 'bothy loon' was the stereotypical farm labourer of this part of Scotland.

²⁸ C J Sharp, *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions* (Simpkin/Novello, Taunton/London, 1907). I have given no page numbers, as the cited framework underpins the entire book. For Sharp's selectivity, see for example D Harker, *Fakesong: The manufacture of British 'folksong' 1700 to the present day* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1985), pp172-197; but see also a counter-argument: C J Bearman, 'Cecil Sharp in Somerset: Some Reflections on the Work of David Harker', *Folklore*, 113, (2002), 11-34.

²⁹ Motion from International Folk Music Council conference, Sao Paulo, 1954, quoted in M Karpeles, *An Introduction to English Folk Song* (Oxford University Press, 1973), p3; A L Lloyd, *Folk Song in England* (London, 1967, Panther edition, London, 1969), p18.

MacColl and Seeger's 'policy', and will assess its impact (already touched upon in Chapters Four and Five) on the North Eastern folk scene. As this section examines two key versions of authenticity, it will begin with some lengthy quotations from the leading and most opinionated adversaries.

The origins of the 'policy' – as a response to ersatz Americana and encroaching commercialism - have been outlined in Chapter One, however, it is instructive to read MacColl's own rationale behind opening the Singers' Club:-

It is necessary to rescue a large number of young people, all of whom have the right instincts, from those influences that have appeared on the folk scene during the past two or three years – influences that are doing their best to debase the meaning of folk song. ... The only notes that some people care about are the banknotes

... It is the danger that the folk song revival can get so far away from its traditional basis that in the end it is impossible to distinguish it from pop music and cabaret.

... True bawdiness is reduced to mere suggestiveness. The songs, sapped of their vigour, become 'quaint'.

... We are determined to give top traditional singers a platform where they will be protected from the ravages of the commercial machine.³⁰

In these few short statements, several of Cohen's types come into sharp focus: there is profound alienation and the search for a more authentic centre than the present capitalist version; also there is an acknowledgement that some participants are involved merely for diversionary reasons, or need to be rescued from 'staged authenticity'.

Writing retrospectively, Peggy Seeger emphasized that she and MacColl had applied 'the policy' equally to themselves as others and, besides, was prescriptive only within the context of their own club:-

³⁰ E MacColl, 'Why I am Opening a New Club', *Sing*, 5/4, August 1961, p65. The Singers' Club opened on 25th June 1961.

It didn't matter what you sang in the shower, at parties, while you were ironing or making love. But on stage in The Ballads and Blues Folk Club, you were a representative of a culture - you were interpreting a song that had been created within certain social and artistic parameters. ... If it became hewn in stone – well, that's the way things go.³¹

Yet, as Chapters One, Two and Four demonstrate, because of MacColl's and Seeger's influential position, those parameters of authenticity and appropriateness were sure to become 'hewn in stone' and to reach far beyond the confines of one London club.

Far reaching though it was, the Singers' Club's definition of the 'authentic' differed sharply from others'. Geordie exile, Bob Davenport was one of MacColl's most vocal critics, and was inspired by the examples of unselfconscious – and non-prescriptive - living tradition he had encountered both as a child in the North East and as a young man in the Irish pubs of London. He called into question the very nature of the 'protection' that MacColl and other collectors were providing to traditional singers, arguing that their presentation of these performers was just as exploitative as the 'commercial machine' which they so abhorred:-

once you've got them down as a 'source singer', a 'field singer', a 'song carrier', then they're no longer human, so you are then able to exploit them ... so you direct and you control and the classic example was the first time I ever got involved in it: ... I ended up on the stage at the Royal Festival Hall in a concert, this EFDSS thing, and George Maynard from Sussex, ... and he was dressed up in a suit and everything ... and he started to sing this song. And this is in the Festival Hall, packed. And Douglas Kennedy got hold of him after the third verse and said 'Thanks very much, Pops' (he was known as Pops Maynard), and he took him off and brought Jeannie Robertson on ... and said 'Jeannie has a much fuller, Scottish version of this song' ... and she sang it and Pop Maynard was just left there ... and I thought to meself, 'I've never seen such bad behaviour in me life'.³²

Similarly, Alan Lomax

³¹ P Seeger, 'Opinion', *Living Tradition*, Issue 39, August/September, 2000, reproduced at <http://www.folkmusic.net/htmlfiles/edtxt39.htm>.

³² B Davenport, interviewed by author, 16th March 2005, recording in my possession.

used to use .. people as lantern slides, ... really humiliating: typical colonial arrogant people and Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger did the same with the Stewarts and the Elliott family.³³

Significantly, MacColl stated that it was Davenport's criticisms (in an ironic tone that MacColl overlooked) of the 'policy' that proved the catalyst for the even more controversial Critics' Group:

In 1964, an established Tyneside singer resident in London said, in the course of an interview, that Lloyd and MacColl should share the benefits of their enormous experience with all those newcomers on the scene who were anxious to improve themselves.³⁴

Although Lloyd refused to participate, the Critics' Group was established on similar principles to an actors' workshop, where the group would listen to each others' performances, and provide constructive criticism of vocal production or traditional style. They would attempt to unravel the styles of source singers, and also apply Stanislavski's acting 'Method' to the reading of the song: mentally placing oneself in the position of the song's protagonist. Seeger has since argued:-

The intentions were honourableThe purpose of the Critics Group was to make it possible for the singers who had not been brought up in the 'folk' tradition to sing the songs in a way that would not abrogate the original intention of the makers. It was an attempt to keep the folksongs *folksongs*, not turn them into classical pieces or pop songs or anything-goes songs. ...

... I've done my share of 'changing' the folksongs. Had to. I wasn't brought up on the front porch of a cabin in the Appalachians and I don't care to pretend that I was. ... I don't pretend to be a folksinger or that the folksongs (as I sing them) are 'ur' versions. I am a singer of folksongs and I hope that my lullabies are lullabies and the words of my ballads are intelligible. Ewan MacColl was one step nearer to being a folksinger than I, having been brought up in a Scots community in Salford.³⁵

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ewan MacColl, *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1990), p305.

³⁵ P Seeger, 'Opinion', *Living Tradition*, Issue 39, August/September, 2000, reproduced at <http://www.folkmusic.net/htmlfiles/edtxt39.htm>.

Once again, the assumption that authenticity lay in an uncontaminated original, an 'ur' text, had been replaced by an acknowledgement of process, style and context. Yet, according to Bob Davenport, in the context of the Critics' Group, even process and context had been trumped by performance style. As suggested in Chapter Four, Davenport claims that Jack Elliott

nearly gave up [performing] altogether, through Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger and Charles Parker ... He wrote to me and said 'the Fox [Davenport's Islington club] saved us' He came down to the Fox and he played the mouth organ, the banjo, the jew's harp which MacColl and them lot wouldn't let him play in their club because they only wanted the texts We got Jack at the Fox and we phoned Peggy Seeger and asked would they have Jack. She said 'Is he on his own?'. ...Yes, he was on his own. 'Oh, no, we couldn't have Jack, he just hasn't improved in technique since we first heard him'. And yet they had it in their will that if they were killed on the road, the Elliots had to bring their children up.³⁶

This final sentence is telling: it tallies quite closely with parallel fond-but-unequal bonds between collector and collected, such as the Lomaxes and Leadbelly or Sharp and Kimber. Filene articulates the difficulties inherent in such relationships: between the revivalists and the 'noble savages' who embodied their much sought after primitivism:-

At the same time ... that the Lomaxes ennobled Lead Belly as an authentic folk forefather, they thoroughly exoticized him. Their publicity campaign depicted him as a savage, untamed animal and focused endlessly on his convict past. [in contradiction of other reports of him as a gentle and dignified man] Long after Lead Belly had been freed, Lomax had him perform in his old convict clothes.....

In his public persona, then, Lead Belly seems to have been cast as both archetypal ancestor and demon ... These conflicting personas illustrate a dynamic that has characterized the cult of authenticity ever since. Revival audiences yearn to identify with folk figures, but that identification is premised on difference. ... Generally ... the most popular folk figures – those with whom folk audiences most identify – are those who have passed a series of tests of their 'Otherness'.³⁷

³⁶ B Davenport, interviewed by author, 16th March 2005, recording in my possession.

³⁷ B Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory & American Roots Music* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2000), p59 and p63. The contradictory reports of the gentle, dignified Lead Belly include Pete Seeger and Moses Asch, quoted in *Ibid*, pp61-62. See also, Barker, H and Taylor, Y, *Faking It: The Quest for Authenticity in Popular Music* (Faber and Faber, London, 2007), pp8-10, and p22 regarding Kurt Cobain's fascination with the 'authenticity' of Lead Belly.

The process of mediation – and the blurring at the edges between tradition and revival - has already been explored in Chapter Four, however, here, it is significant that various markers of authenticity were being placed and they were often related to the perceived relative position of mediated to mediator. In MacColl's case, his role as mediator was the heavy responsibility of an arbiter of traditional style, and the 'source' singers were precisely that: source material. In Davenport's opinion, the ordinary people – not passive vessels, carriers of a tradition, but real human beings with tastes and preferences – were the final arbiters of what was truly 'folkloric'. What was most significant of all, though, was that these two revivalists were at the opposing poles of a continuum of ideas that effectively drove the folk revival, as new clubs were established to reflect different emphases. As Karl Dallas – bored with the debate and calling for a truce - suggested, 'Both profess, sincerely, to be passionately concerned with the tradition. Both, in their different ways, are performers of tremendous stature. ... the real point about MacColl and Davenport is that they are not contradictory, they are complementary'.³⁸

Dallas' comment suggests that what was at work was not simply two competing definitions, but also one unified need for the authentic that occurred at this moment in history. Previous quests for authenticity were rooted in some clear social grounds: as discussed above, the Romantics sought a naturalistic alternative to increasing rationalization, while the first revival was born amidst the foundations of anthropological study and national identities in flux. Authenticity was significant to the second revival for a variety of reasons, and the following paragraphs will attempt to trace these general motivations and map them against their particular manifestations in the North East.

Filene has articulated the development of the 'cult of authenticity' within the American left as an extension of 1930s 'Popular Front' policies: a gradual rejection of workers' choral anthems and the work of avant-garde composers in favour of music rooted in 'the folk'.³⁹ Further, as discussed in Chapter Five, the urge to

³⁸ K Dallas, 'Time for a Truce, *Folk Music, Ballads and Songs*, New Series, No 2, c1968/9, p2.

³⁹ B Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory & American Roots Music* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2000), pp70-71.

collect 'authentic' music was more easily met with the wider availability of recordings, although this in itself does not explain the fundamental desire to own an obscure Harry Cox or Robert Johnson record as opposed to the latest Johnny Ray hit. As Colin Campbell has warned, it is vital to avoid explaining ruptures in consumption patterns merely in terms of 'enabling-style observations'.⁴⁰ It is not sufficient to suggest that those involved in the revival decided to consume and produce folk music simply because it was newly available on records and radio. This does not constitute a motive. We have to look beyond what was a broadening of opportunity to establish why the 'authentic' brand of music held such appeal at this time.

Here it is useful (to borrow once more from Campbell) to establish the relationship between character and the action of consuming 'expressive goods'.⁴¹ Behaviour and patterns of consumption or taste can confirm— not just to outsiders but (and most significantly) introspectively - that one's character conforms to a particular ideal. This is vital in understanding not just who was involved in the search for authenticity but also why they chose to participate. What ideal characteristics did they wish to embody? The left-wing, 'of-the-people', sympathies that Filene discussed were also clearly at work in Britain during the 1950s and '60s, and the fundamental disagreement between MacColl and Davenport was over how best to represent precisely this: 'the people'. This politicized version of authenticity was given extra weight because some North Eastern 'tradition carriers', such as Jack Elliott and Jock Purdon (and paralleling Woody Guthrie in the USA) were also vociferous supporters of leftist causes. Others, such as Jack Armstrong (a particularly able exploiter of his 'authentic' label), Billy Pigg or Will Atkinson, were, however, less clearly aligned and this would suggest that the revivalists' underlying narrative of authenticity was rather more complex than a straightforward representation of ideology.

⁴⁰ C Campbell, 'Understanding traditional and modern patterns of consumption in eighteenth-century England: a character-action approach', in J Brewer and R Porter (Eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (Routledge, London, 1993), 40-57, p43.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p54.

Besides, Folksong and Ballad in particular made outright denials of any overt political bias.⁴² This was in itself a proclamation of authenticity that irked some commentators. In an article entitled *Politics, S*x & the Folk Revival*, Jack Speedwell satirized the ‘sincere and even scholarly’ objectivity and political impartiality that was declared on Folksong and Ballad’s membership cards:-

It was the word ‘sincere’ that I found so moving; there are so many insincere people in the world of the folk-revival, so many insincere clubs and insincere singers ... [and] ... There! At last someone has had the courage to come out and say it ... and proudly declare their renunciation of the mundane and the trivial. No more politics, no more songs against bombs and racial intolerance, no more of those beastly and malicious attacks

... Ah, belle nostalgie de la boue! O, minstrels of the pure heart! O, bonnie Newcastle on the Tyne! O, b*ll*cks.⁴³

Yet this article was spurred, less by an objection to the club’s political prescriptions and more by the fact that their hesitance to include bawdy songs offended Speedwell’s own definition of authenticity:-

.... Here one can look one’s neighbour in the eye as one listens to gentle ballads of mothers strangling their babes, sisters drowning each other, brothers who are handy with knives, lovers who solve their sincere emotional problems with axes or poisons. And one feels uplifted, cleansed of all one’s impure thoughts and shameful impulses.⁴⁴

It is significant here to note that, in the quotation above, MacColl raised similar complaints of preciousness and the replacement of bawdiness with innuendo, and this may therefore indicate another driving force behind the cult of authenticity: the

⁴² Folksong & Ballad Club, *Membership Card* (Newcastle, c1963). See Appendix. It is of interest that the denial of political partisanship is an echo of a rule adopted by Newcastle’s Literary and Philosophical Society, begun in 1793, after Thomas Spence had been ejected from its forerunner for his overt political standpoint: ‘That religion, British politics, and all politics of the day, shall be deemed prohibited subjects of discussion’. see F Graham, *Northumberland and Durham: A Social and Political Miscellany*, (F Graham, Newcastle, 1979), pp91-92

⁴³ J Speedwell, ‘Politics, S*x & the Folk Revival’, *Folk Music*, 1/5, c1964, 13-14, p14. Jack Speedwell’s name is in all likelihood a pseudonym for a writer who – successfully - wished to remain anonymous: Jim Carroll and Pat MacKenzie, (‘Where Have All the Folk Songs Gone?’, *Living Tradition*, 36, <http://www.folkmusic.net/htmlfiles/edtxt36.htm>) refer to him only as ‘the mysterious Jack Speedwell’.

need to discard the trappings of polished commercial culture in favour of natural, spirited culture. A construct of continuity (discussed in Chapter Four) from simpler times emerges, and, as Peterson highlighted with regard to American country music, it is a key signifier of authenticity.⁴⁵ Patronymic chains of authenticity are cited as proof that the music has been learned in as unaffected a manner as possible. In the case of the North East, this is evident from the pipers (such as Alistair Anderson and Colin Ross) who trace their development to visiting Billy Pigg, who in turn learned from Tom Clough, who was himself at least the third generation in a family of pipers. Sword dance teams (and, as we shall see below, clog dancing) were also rich in generational links, and keen to emphasize them.⁴⁶ Also, just as Peterson highlights Appalachia as a vividly imagined region, so too Northumbria provides an idealized construct of an isolated and wild place. It is telling that, even when dealing with a folksinging family like the Elliots, MacColl and Seeger sought further layers of ancestry: ‘The Elliott name is an important one in the north-east and it would have been gratifying to link the Birtley Elliots with the clan ... whose exploits figure so prominently in the border ballads’.⁴⁷ They could, however, content themselves with an alternative source of authenticity: mysterious origins in poverty, with Jack and Reece Elliott’s paternal grandfather an abandoned infant found in a ditch with a piece of paper tied to him bearing the name of Elliott.⁴⁸ Within the revival, Alistair Anderson’s concertina tutor provides more examples of this patronymic justification, with *The Topsy Sailor* credited as learned from revival guitarist Nic Jones but given authority by the fact that Jones ‘had it from a button box player in one of London’s ‘Irish’ pubs’, and *Sir Sidney Smith’s March* detailed as a duet of longstanding because it was played that way by both Tom Clough with his father; and by Joe Hutton with John Armstrong of Carrick.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Ibid, p14.

⁴⁵ R A Peterson, *Creating Country Music – Fabricating Authenticity* (University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp214-220.

⁴⁶ See for example B Cassie, ‘The Royal Earsdon Sword Dancers’, *English Dance and Song*, 35/3, Autumn 1973, 92-93, which details the generations of descendants from the team that danced for the King in 1907.

⁴⁷ E MacColl and P Seeger, Sleeve notes to *The Elliots [sic] of Birtley* (Folkways LP, FG 3565, 1962), p2.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ A Anderson, *Concertina Workshop: Tutor for the English Concertina* (Topic, London, 1974). See also the common awareness that Geordie Ridley was possibly Bob Davenport’s great uncle: J Reavey, ‘Songs from the North’, *Folk Music*, 1/8, 1964, 12-13, p12.

Both dialect and biographical details further rooted the artist firmly within the appropriate context: of a family, regional or occupational provenance: such details were self-evidently useful to 'source' musicians, but were also used to locate revivalists within the context of the music. Among the many LP sleeve notes that describe an artist as rooted in the land from which their music derives, Bob Davenport is described as hailing 'from Gateshead, Co Durham, where in his early years he absorbed a wide variety of songs and the singing style of his grandfather'.⁵⁰ Biographical details of Johnny Handle described his father as 'a school-teacher of Scottish descent', but counterbalanced this with the fact that his mother was from 'a Durham mining family' and that he 'started work as a pitlad'.⁵¹ Even national figures such as Isla Cameron ('Scottish-born and Newcastle bred') found their contributions prefaced by a sense of place.⁵²

There were many, though, for whom authenticity lay in something other than politics, and that might not include indigenous heritage. For them, the key factor that marked folk recordings and performances as 'expressive goods' was their perceived unaffectedness. In reality, the naturalistic folk performance was itself a construct tightly bound by generally accepted performance conventions, as Peterson has it, 'unaffectedness was itself an affectation'.⁵³ A folk performance was presumed to be relaxed, with an emphasis on a profound awareness of tradition, as Laurie Charlton expressed it:

We hold that it should be sung with complete sincerity and intuitively phrased within its native style; and that one cannot be said to 'have' a song until a singer can entirely lose his identity within the interpretation of it. It is probably more true to say at this stage that the song has the singer.⁵⁴

And the folk performer was to be approachable - joining the audience at the bar while the floor-singers and residents were performing. The following section will

⁵⁰ Sleeve notes, B Davenport, the Rakes, and the Boldon Banjoes, *Pal of My Cradle Days* (Trailer LP, LER 2088, 1973). For other examples of this phenomenon, see the biographical details of Billy Conroy, Les Pearson, Ed Pickford and Don Stokoe on the sleeve notes to Various Artists, *Canny Newcassel* (Topic LP, 12TS 219, 1972).

⁵¹ Editorial, 'Johnny Handle', *Spin*, 3/3, c1965, p2.

⁵² T Davis, 'Record Review', *Spin*, 1/6, April 1962, p14.

⁵³ R A Peterson, *Creating Country Music – Fabricating Authenticity* (University of Chicago Press, 1997) p211.

⁵⁴ L Charlton, 'Notes on Accompaniment', *Sing*, 2/2, c1963, 10-11, p10.

more closely examine this phenomenon, which MacKinnon termed ‘destaging’, but it is necessary to bear in mind the issue raised by Campbell and discussed previously: that the signifiers of a ‘destaged’ performance may not have been adopted simply to satisfy an external image of authenticity, but were likely also to be ways for all participants to validate themselves.

MacKinnon characterized destaging as minimizing or hiding the division between performer and audience in ‘an elaborate construction of informality’⁵⁵. Not that the folk event represents a “free-for-all” in any sense: the rules of appropriate behaviour are understood by almost all participants. Understatement and denial of conscious performance techniques are of great importance. Allan Taylor has characterized the folk enthusiast’s sartorial statement as a studied casualness, somewhere between Aran sweaters and an ‘indeterminate soft street-credibility’⁵⁶. Therefore, those within the folk scene were not performing costume re-enactments but they were rejecting the indicators of modern success, from the suit to the sophisticated stage show, in order to demonstrate their authenticity, their rejection of the ‘fake’. That this was a form of mediation is clear from the fact that most of those who chose to perform and dress more formally were ‘source’ rather than revival musicians.⁵⁷ As will be discussed below, MacColl’s presentation was rich in stagecraft, yet he was disparaging of the ‘wrong sort’ of theatricality:-

Singers and players in the folk revival have, for the most part, resisted the impulse to costume their performances, to dress up in the guise of farm labourers, eighteenth-century highwaymen or nineteenth-century sailors.

⁵⁵ N MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene: Musical Performance and Social Identity* (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1993), p81 and p86.

⁵⁶ A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival*, PhD Thesis, Queen’s University of Belfast, May 1993, pp132-133. However, Jez Lowe’s trademark striped T-shirts were as a result of Peter Bellamy’s advice that he should have ‘an image’, see C Phipps, J Tobler, and S Smith, *Northstars* (Zymurgy, Newcastle, 2005), p109.

⁵⁷ A Taylor, *ibid*, p134, recounts the frequently quoted moment when Fred Jordan arrived to perform at a festival in his best suit, to be advised by the organizers that he would do better dressed in his farm clothes. By contrast, he describes, on p131, Dick Gaughan, hurriedly changing out of his computer-programmer’s business suit and into jeans and t-shirt before a folk club performance; and R Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p369, refers to Pete Seeger’s constructed ‘lumberjack’ appearance. B Copper, *A Song for Every Season* (Paladin, St Alban’s 1975, first published 1971), p189, describes the Copper Family performing for the BBC’s ‘Country Magazine’ in their ‘Sunday suits’, which were patronizingly mistaken by a journalist for their ‘work-a-day clothes’. See also the quotation from A L Lloyd regarding the Elliott’s folk club earlier in this chapter. Interestingly, Lloyd was one of the few revivalists who rarely performed in anything but a suit.

There have been a few outbreaks of odd headgear: a Northeast singer once arrived at a London club wearing a pit helmet.⁵⁸

Performance mannerisms are signifiers that have proved even more controversial than costume. Taylor adopted Geertz's technique of thick description to analyse the physical stance of songwriters such as himself, 'cradling the guitar in a sitting position' as 'a small manifestation of a larger and more prevalent attitude.'⁵⁹ This attitude appears to be that those within the folk club are party to an intimate and introspective world, free of artifice. In the folk scene as a whole, aside from the introspection and individuality of the songwriter, a host of mannerisms developed, adhering to what Frith terms 'the norms of collective performance'.⁶⁰ Most obvious in this regard is the importance of audience participation, with the audience invited to join in the chorus, but more powerful in fixing authenticity are the negatives: those things that a folk performance should not include. For instance, there are numerous good, technical reasons why a singer whose hands are not otherwise engaged with an instrument should hand-hold a microphone. It is something to do with the hands; dynamics and plosives are more easily controlled; it allows for quick adjustment if feedback creeps into the PA system. Yet folk performers – who have frequently spent huge amounts of money on instruments and sound systems – appear to do all in their power to deny the presence of amplification. A 'natural' stance, with no trace of cabaret polish or rock clichés, no hand gestures or 'selling' of the song, is seen as preferable, no matter how much artifice has gone into creating that apparent effortlessness.⁶¹ This would be akin to a nineteenth century concertina player pretending that they were not playing their instrument because it was the product of scientific developments, but – as emphasized throughout Mark Radcliffe's novel, *Northern Sky* - it is a part of the enculturation of performers within the folk revival.⁶² Sandra Kerr speaks of the sheer theatrical power of Ewan MacColl's performance,

⁵⁸ E MacColl, *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1990), p304. The identity of the singer is unconfirmed, but may well have been Jack Elliott.

⁵⁹ A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival*, PhD Thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, May 1993, p(ix).

⁶⁰ S Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, leisure, and the politics of rock'n'roll* (Constable, London, 1983), p29.

⁶¹ For further discussion, see A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival*, PhD Thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, May 1993, p124.

⁶² Mark Radcliffe, *Northern Sky* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2005)

astride a chair, hand to ear.⁶³ MacColl's studiously developed vocal projection was put to full use, paradoxically, in denial of anything which spoke of the artificiality of the pop/commercial music world. Nevertheless, those who have decried MacColl's affectedness need to question whether their own stance was any less a construct.

The chasm was obvious here between the singaround clubs and the more 'staged' informality of venues such as Folksong and Ballad, which, as Bryan Henderson recalls, could be daunting to the novice performer ('The Liberal hall was massive, it was like a church, you know, very high roof, and they had these big high backed chairs') and his wife, Doreen views the opening of the Birtley club as a deliberate contrast: 'It was a conscious decision to have a singaround.'⁶⁴ In retrospect, Johnny Handle believes that, much as Folksong and Ballad was vital to the revival:

I'd always put it alongside the Birtley club in importance. We had our own platform of singers and we expected a certain level of quality. Louis Killen pushed that from Day One. We were influenced by Ewan MacColl on approaches to performing. Sometimes we were a bit fascist and arrogant, but we were so excited with the material that we were finding that we wanted the best. Birtley was different, they took risks, like going round the room giving EVERYBODY a go, good or bad. It was less daunting than standing up at The Bridge. We were performance, they were singaround and participation. You needed both, but I believe that more clubs developed as offshoots of Birtley than of us.⁶⁵

Yet informality in itself had always been a contested virtue. Denis Smithson included in his 'New Mythology', the idea that 'Polish and Presentation Spoil Folksong', which explained that a recent visit to a folk club [in London] with some new audience members 'ready to be converted' were 'openly insulted' by the 'rudeness' of singers whose idea of informality included 'inadequate instrumental technique, half-remembered words, discussions as to 'what shall we sing next', ...[and] private jokes'.⁶⁶ And as Chapter Two demonstrated, the 1972 debate over excellence that was sparked by Tom Gilfellow and which caused so much

⁶³ S Kerr, *Old Songs for New Times*, lecture at Newcastle University, 24th February 2004, recorded for Radio Farne, <http://www.asaplive.com/FARNE/RadioFARNE.cfm?ccs=150&cs=822>.

⁶⁴ D and B Henderson, interviewed by author, 13th December 2004, recording in my possession.

⁶⁵ J Handle, interviewed by S McGrail, 'And hey for bonny Newcastle!' Part 2, *Living Tradition*, 61, March/April 2005, 20-22, p21.

controversy within the North Eastern Folk Federation appears to have been the moment when these opposing narratives of authenticity were clearly articulated.

Certainly, there was evidence within the North East to support Smithson's and Gilfellon's perspective. The belief that it was authentic to allow all-comers no matter their ability and inauthentic to acknowledge the more virtuoso performers could be challenged by Folksong & Ballad club members' experiences of traditional music in rural Northumberland:-

these were accomplished musicians. When they learned the fiddle, ... they probably learned the notes as well, and they could probably write their music better than they could write English.⁶⁷

The great Irish singer and storyteller Paddy Tunney described a 1968 visit - along with Killen, Handle and some ceildh dancers - to Billy Pigg's house, which amply illustrates the way in which a master performer would hold sway even by the fireside:-

He sat on a chair in the middle of the floor, fixed his audience with a puckish grin and began to play. It was obvious from the very start that Elliot [Jack Elliot, Northumberland shepherd and fiddler] was playing second fiddle. Pigg was the performer par excellence. His first touch of the chanter transformed the room into a Merlin's Cave, and the spell of music he wove held us enthralled.⁶⁸

This does not, however, belittle the case of the Birtley club and those that followed its template. It was one matter to accept that excellence was an authentic component in traditional music, quite another to impose standards from outside of the traditional arena. As discussed above, Jack Elliott's technique had been called into question by

⁶⁶ D Smithson, 'The New Mythology', *Spin*, 2/6, c1963/4, p2. His other myths were: (1) 'All Folksongs are Good Songs'; (2) 'Folksongs are Sincere'; (3) 'Everyone Must Sing'; and (4) 'All Folksongs are Political'.

⁶⁷ L Killen, interviewed by author, 9th March 2003, recording in my possession.

⁶⁸ P Tunney, *Where Songs Do Thunder* (Appletree Press, Belfast, 1991), p136.

members of the Singers' Club, and yet he was acknowledged within his own area as a great entertainer.

Brocken's understanding of 'de-staging' is subtly different from consideration of performance alone. He uses it to critically describe the way in which connoisseurship dictates and stultifies the individuality of folk musicians: the performer becomes almost a passive channel: 'the song is carried' (and, therefore, the all-important "tradition"); 'the performance is 'de-staged'. Further, 'the radical 1950s concept was of unfixing performer-audience relationships .. the serious listeners ... were regarded as equal to the performer in every way'.⁶⁹ For Brocken (writing from a popular music perspective), the denial of the artist's individual freedom and the imposition of external scholarly strictures is fundamentally inauthentic. Taylor reinforces this perception: 'folk performers... were expected to operate anonymously, impersonally as a sort of musical instrument played by their audiences'.⁷⁰ Yet – again recalling Campbell's understanding of consumption - for many artists within the revival these strictures were not external: they were self-imposed. And some of the most destaged North Eastern clubs, such as Birtley, were consciously working to avoid a dictatorship of audience connoisseurship and preciousness.

Perhaps, as Peterson suggests with regard to country music, it is more cogent to view destaging less as a defining factor in the folk revival and more as part of a cyclical dialectic between 'hard core and soft shell', in which each responds to the dominance of the other to produce ever shifting definitions of authenticity, sometimes favouring the core, sometimes the shell.⁷¹ This concept usefully implies a single organism in which both facets (the rough, 'authentic' music and its polished, commercialized counterpart) are necessary to the living tradition, and can even be evident within the same musician. In the North East, this oscillation between the two extremes is clear in the careers of 'source' artists such as Jack Armstrong or Will Atkinson, who were 'of' the tradition, but (as Chapters Four and Five highlighted) were willing to

⁶⁹ M Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944-2002* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), pp116-117.

⁷⁰ A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival*, PhD Thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, May 1993), p12.

⁷¹ R A Peterson, *Creating Country Music – Fabricating Authenticity* (University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp137-156; pp229-231.

accentuate or downplay the signifiers of authenticity in their performances depending on the requirements of their audiences, of the media, and even – in Armstrong’s case – potentially, of Hollywood. Many of the first generation of revivalists first came into contact with ‘authentic’ forms through the commercial boom of jazz and skiffle. And Alistair Anderson, one of the most passionate promoters of country dance music and the Northumbrian tradition, found his first inspiration to become properly involved with the folk scene through hearing Bob Dylan at Newcastle City Hall, and has since collaborated with classical and jazz musicians.⁷²

Peterson goes on to argue that perceptions of ‘hard core’ and ‘soft shell’ can also follow a generational cycle that echoes the patterns noted by Katz in relation to musical expressions of identity among immigrant populations. A performer or style castigated as a ‘sell-out’ by the generation immediately after its popularity finds ‘hall of fame’ recognition just one generation later.⁷³ Thus, neither the performance mannerisms noted by MacKinnon nor the connoisseurship noted by Brocken are necessarily static, and they are likely to shift over time. As Lewis puts it, ‘it’s the same nostalgia, in different clothes’.⁷⁴ Such a symbiosis might have been the reality but the dialectic itself was (and still is) often fought out virulently, and for this reason it is historically interesting, as Russell highlights:-

[Musical categories] have a habit of disintegrating when examined closely. They are ultimately constructions placed upon cultural products by engaged historical actors and are more valuable as indicators of shifts and fractures within social relations at given times than as a usable taxonomy.⁷⁵

⁷² A Anderson, interviewed by author, 5th March 2004, recording in my possession.

⁷³ R A Peterson, *Creating Country Music – Fabricating Authenticity* (University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp137-156; pp229-231. R Katz, ‘Mannerism and Cultural Change: An Ethnomusicological Example’, *Current Anthropology*, Vol 11, Issue 4/5, Oct-Dec 1970, 465-475. See also F Fukuyama, ‘Identity and Migration’, *Prospect*, 131, February 2007, <http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/printarticle.php?id=8239>, which deals with the post-9/11 challenges of religious and ethnic group identities in liberal individualist states. Although at times a polemic in favour of American cultural and economic liberalism, this article highlights the same patterns among immigrants (of first-generation attempted integration and second-generation alienation and rejection of the host culture) as Katz. Similar dialectics between core and boundaries have been noted by P V Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Western World* (Indiana University Press, 1988), p62.

⁷⁴ R Lewis, *The Magic Spring* (Atlantic, London, 2005), p237. Lewis recounts his experience of seeing an explicit modern sculpture of a folk goddess which appeared to overcompensate for the Victorians’ censorship of folk traditions.

⁷⁵ Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1810-1914* (Manchester University Press, 1987, 2nd ed 1997), p2

The following pages will explore some particular shifts and fractures within society that were manifested and fuelled by the interplay between ‘hard core’ and ‘soft shell’, between competing narratives of cultural authenticity, and will take as its starting point the furore that surrounded Bob Dylan’s rapprochement with pop.

When Dylan became ‘Judas’ with an electric guitar, the controversy was international and he faced as many cat-calls in the USA as he did across the Atlantic. However, Greil Marcus, true American liberal individualist that he is, views all the British protests as a Communist plot:-

In the UK the Communist Party had long operated a network of Stalinist folk clubs, where what songs could be sung, who could sing what, and in what manner, was strictly controlled. The idea was to preserve the image of the folk, where, as in that theatre-in-the-round in the field in New Jersey where Joan Baez brought out Bob Dylan, the gathered community, re-enacting what the historian Georgina Boyes calls “the imagined village”, shared the same land, speech, and values. Pop music symbolized the destruction of that community by capitalist mass society, where all land was divided, speech was class, where there were no values and the Beatles were a commodity fetish.

Along with fans of Bob Dylan who were now disappointed, or confused, or angry over his new music, people were recruited out of the folk clubs to come to his shows and break them up; in other words, people paid to leave.⁷⁶

Indeed, as noted throughout this thesis, unrepentant CPGB member Ewan MacColl’s influence certainly cast a long shadow over many clubs, not least Tyneside’s Folksong & Ballad. However, of the people from the North East folk scene who I contacted, not one admits to having walked out of Dylan’s Newcastle Odeon concert (on 21st May 1966, four days after the infamous Manchester Free Trade Hall show). This is not to claim that the region was unusually enlightened. Perhaps some respondents were self-editing in retrospect, and conveniently overlooking their own disapproval. There were those at the Newcastle concert who were disappointed by his clothes (‘A suit? A SUIT?????!!!! Nobody cool wears suits.’), and a significant number – recalled as between 10 and 20 per cent of the audience - who left in protest

⁷⁶ Greil Marcus, *Like a Rolling Stone : Bob Dylan at the Crossroads*, (Faber, London, 2005), pp179-180

when the Hawks took the stage in the second half.⁷⁷ It is clear that hindsight has shown the shock to be temporary: the definition of ‘authentic’ had effectively been re-drawn. But for a while, for at least some members of the revival, authenticity lay where Dylan was not.

There are reasons, though, why Marcus’s communist-conspiracy theory does not ring true. It is not as if such battles for the soul of an ‘authentic’ music were exclusive to the 1960s or to the far left or to the folk scene. A clear indicator that such controversies had raged for decades was to be found in the battles for the soul of Morris dancing between Cecil Sharp and Mary Neal.⁷⁸ And the same kind of debate raged among the traditional jazz enthusiasts of the 1950s: Humphrey Lyttleton’s saxophonist was told to ‘Go home, dirty bopper’, while John Dankworth had met with similar jeers when he sullied the true path of ‘trad’ with modern jazz at the Beaulieu jazz festival.⁷⁹ The genre of the music was less important to these mostly young, mostly educated connoisseurs than its untaintedness. For Dylan or the beboppers to be touched by commercialism or intellectual Modernism was an unbearable dilution of an authenticity - (of poverty, manual work and little chance of escape) that the traditionalists might have found less palatable had they been born into it.⁸⁰ Simon Frith argues that a virtual ‘black-face minstrel’ mask was taken on by British blues and jazz musicians from the 1930s through the 1950s, and that their construct of authenticity, the music taken seriously by those in the Rhythm Clubs, was an essentially suburban occupation. Musical modernism was believed to favour individualism over the collective, mystification over accessibility, and worst of all,

⁷⁷ J Parler, response to query, ‘Have you seen Bob Dylan?’, regarding the Newcastle Odeon concert of 21st May 1966. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/bobdylan/haveyouseen/> (BBC 2005); and J Lloyd, response to query, ‘Have you seen Bob Dylan?’, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/bobdylan/haveyouseen/> (BBC 2005). Neither of these sources walked out of the Odeon on the night but remembered others doing so.

⁷⁸ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), pp82-85, and pp154-158; R Judge, ‘Mary Neal and the Esperance Morris’, *Folk Music Journal*, 5/5, 1989, 545-591.

⁷⁹ See D McKie, ‘Blowing Humph’s Trumpet’, *The Guardian*, 23rd May 2001, which recounts – in clear parallel with Dylan’s ‘Judas’ moment in Manchester - how Lyttleton’s recruitment of Bruce Turner led to the saxophonist’s being greeted by Birmingham students with placards emblazoned with the message ‘Go Home, Dirty Bopper’. Regarding Dankworth, see D Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* (Little Brown, London, 2005), p142.

⁸⁰ See S Richards, S, *Sonic Harvest: Towards Musical Democracy* (Amber Lane, Oxford, 1992), p22.

intellectual respectability over earthiness.⁸¹ The irony is that perhaps only those with a sufficiently individual outlook and esoteric education would make these distinctions. Frith contends that the average working class audience wanted to enjoy themselves and did not much care whether the dance band was true ‘hot’ jazz or Henry Hall.⁸² The professional musicians were out looking for whatever ‘gigs’ would keep the proverbial ‘wolf from the door’. As discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six, it was those who could afford serious record collections who sought to invest these sounds with meaning.⁸³ The imagined landscapes of authenticity were, therefore,

Young men’s worlds, we have to understand what it means to grow up male and middle-class; to understand the urge to ‘authenticity’ we have to understand the strange fear of being ‘inauthentic’. In this world ... black American music – stands for a simple idea: that everything ‘real’ is happening elsewhere.⁸⁴

The same argument applies even if the ‘elsewhere’ in question is not Mississippi but rural Somerset or a coal seam in Durham. Although Ewan MacColl’s own compositions were deemed more successful than most at melding ideology and the vernacular, it is difficult today to read his introductory paragraphs to *The Shuttle and the Cage* without an overwhelming sense of irony:-

If you have spent your life striving desperately to make ends meet; if you have worked yourself to a standstill and still been unable to feed the kids properly, then you will know why these songs were made. If you have crouched day after day in a twelve-inch seam of coal with four inches of water in it, and hacked with a small pick until every muscle in your body shrieked in protest – then you will know why these songs were made.⁸⁵

⁸¹ See P Larkin, ‘Just A Little While’, in P Larkin, *Required Writing* (Faber, London, 1983), 299-301, p300. Larkin holds the collective full-band sound of George Lewis as the epitome of authentic jazz.

⁸² S Frith, ‘Playing with Real Feeling - Jazz and Suburbia’, in *Music for pleasure : essays in the sociology of pop* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988), 45-63.

⁸³ See M Hamilton, ‘The Voice of the Blues’, *History Workshop Journal*, 54/ 1, 2002, 123-143.

⁸⁴ S Frith, ‘Playing with Real Feeling - Jazz and Suburbia’, in *Music for pleasure : essays in the sociology of pop* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988), 45-63, p61.

⁸⁵ E MacColl, (Ed), Preface to *The Shuttle and the Cage, Industrial Folk Ballads* (Workers’ Music Association, London, 1954).

One would have to ask whether hard toil at the coalface of *agit-prop* theatre would be sufficient to create such an understanding. However, the point raised in Chapter Four should be remembered: MacColl, like many of the North-Eastern revivalists, had seen his parents struggle under just such circumstances, and this experience, these memories, would become a part of his sense of self. Indeed, as the examples cited above with regard to provenance and to patronymic chains of influence, a key indicator of authenticity was to be found in highlighting such working class credentials.

The liminality of the folk club meant that, for a few hours each week, miners like Jack Elliott were lifted out of the political discourse of the 1930s and '40s and into the 1960s subculture. Meanwhile, those who had gone through grammar school and art college and teacher training (especially the latter, with its emphasis on pedagogy and the passing down of knowledge) were able to become their parents or grandparents or some other from the working class whom they admired. At the very least, they could feel like favoured adopted children of the 'source' performers they most admired. This was more than mere roleplay.

The prevalence of such genuine memories was one of several reasons why the prerequisites of authenticity were slightly more blurred in the North East than elsewhere: the lesser the remove from the working class, the less the folk enthusiast had to work to prove they were 'of the people'. Further, the lengthy intersection of oral and print cultures had prevented the growing belief in the 'unlettered and untainted peasant' so beloved of folksong-collectors in the south, all the while allowing traffic between 'the folk' and 'the veritable dunghills' of printed ballads.⁸⁶ And, once again, the relative geographical isolation of the region meant that the history of its vernacular music showed more vertical transmission (between social classes and between art, folk and popular styles) than lateral (the kind of 'student-to-student' communication that creates a genre-based 'scene'). Simply, because of the relatively enclosed pool of available performers and audience it made sense for kitchen pipers to also play in the theatre or for the gentry; for popular artistes to borrow folk tunes; for players of traditional dances to also master quicksteps and

⁸⁶ F J Child, letter to S B Hustvedt, 25th August 1872 in S B Hustvedt, *Ballad Books and Ballad Men* (Harvard University Press, 1930), p254.

rock'n'roll; and for *Balmbra's* to feature the 'Can-Can' as well as The Shiremoor Marras.

Sam Richards' assessment of the work of Sean o Riada (born John Reidy, just as MacColl and Dylan respectively were born Miller and Zimmerman) emphasizes the importance of the duality between (pace Lévi-Strauss) 'the raw' (traditional music arranged by a man who forced himself and his family to speak Irish) and 'the cooked' (highly structured serial composition from the Anglophone academic musician)⁸⁷. Like Colin Campbell, Richards traces this struggle - to forge a modern-world identity from ancient and local roots - back to the Romantic era, when artistic individuality became valued over craftsmanship, and the whole purpose of art was questioned:

Dare I say that in those eras when nobody was too concerned with labels, everybody just made music. And the music they made was whatever was appropriate to the circumstances. But as circumstances were likewise more sharply drawn, perhaps we could say restricted, there was no need for an identity crisis over idiom, purpose, or relationship to listeners.⁸⁸

In other words, those who live in the original authentic context have no need to seek the authentic. Jack Elliott had no need to adopt a pseudonym, and he had no qualms about performing pit lyrics to the tune of *Moonlight Bay*:

Aa was gannin' inbye on the engine plane
Aa cud hear the putter shouting, 'Aa'm off the 'way,
Howay, give us a lift, my arse is sore
If Aa had this tub putt Aa wud putt nee more.⁸⁹

Thus, the 'raw' and the 'cooked', the 'hard core' and the 'soft shell' had a long co-existence in the North East. By the time of the second folk revival, when social and

⁸⁷ S Richards, *Sonic Harvest: Towards Musical Democracy* (Amber Lane, Oxford, 1992), p13; the same parallel of Miller/MacColl and Zimmerman/Dylan has been raised by *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival*, PhD Thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, May 1993), p118, and R Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp370-371: the latter is discussed in this chapter.

⁸⁸ S Richards, *Sonic Harvest: Towards Musical Democracy* (Amber Lane, Oxford, 1992), p16

geographical mobility was far greater, and the international debate over authenticity had touched the region, there was at least sufficient past experience to provide a healthy scepticism towards absolutes.

Nevertheless, there is another tendency to assume that when traditional societies lose the cohesion of their culture and values, they begin to look back at a reified version of their past as a corrective, and in the process they therefore render their culture 'untraditional' and 'inauthentic'. This once again overlooks the fact that, in the first place, these cultures were never hermetically sealed: they did interact with other cultures and borrow from them as necessary:

There is, therefore, no particular moment at which any culture somehow becomes inauthentic, in its incorporation of external elements, since society was and is always in flux.⁹⁰

Connell and Gibson's understanding seems especially appropriate to the acknowledged 'melting pot' of North Eastern society, and yet this was a region that appeared particularly keen to use authenticity to separate a notional unified 'us' from a notional unified 'them'. Stokes suggests that authenticity 'is a discursive trope of great persuasive power, therefore this particular factor is what is important in this particular music: this is what marks us out as different'.⁹¹ The previous chapter has already highlighted some clear examples of local patriotism, but here the construction of 'otherness' depends on an 'authentic' approach as an expression of the unmediated core of identity. Bob Davenport views one facet of this expression – a heightened emphasis on dialect - as a deliberate 'noble savagery' on the part of the revivalists and contrasts it with the tradition. Davenport recalls his grandfather (who claimed to have heard Tommy Armstrong firsthand) singing *Nanny's a Mazer*, with a considerably more measured rendition than the one which has been common since

⁸⁹ The Elliott Family, *The Elliots* [sic] of Birtley, (Smithsonian Folkways LP, FG 3565, 1962). The tune *Moonlight Bay* was published by Broadway composer Percy Wenrich in New York, 1912.

⁹⁰ J Connell and C Gibson, *Sound Tracks: popular music, identity and place* (Routledge, London, 2003), p27; see also G O Carney, (Ed), *The Sounds of People and Places: A Geography of American Folk and Popular Music* (3rd edition, Rowman & Littlefield, Maryland, 1994).

⁹¹ M Stokes, *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Berg, Oxford, 1994), p9.

the 1960s. The verse, which carried the narrative, was sung more slowly than the chorus, thus helping to tell the story:-

All this business of trying to be a daft Geordie, and coming down to London and people saying ‘ I cannot understand it’, it’s like ‘Well, that’s what I’m here for, I don’t want you to understand a word I’m saying – I’m a Geordie’ and yet when Jack Elliott sang, everybody knew every word he said ... you got the feeling that if you didn’t know the odd word, you got the gist’.⁹²

Chapter One highlighted a nationwide adoption of ‘traditional’ mannerisms and the ‘a-dialectic dialect’ appropriated from source recordings in order to retain an essential Englishness, but this was evidently also at work within the North East.⁹³

This again returns the debate to Peterson’s ‘hard core’ and ‘soft shell’ and especially to Katz’s immigrants. As a clear distance opens between the past and contemporary society, the more fervent are the attempts to recapture that past, or at least – as Chapter Six (as well as Handler and Linnekin) suggests – the version of the past that most closely fits present-day needs.⁹⁴ The following section examines not only how contemporary needs were expressed but also how distaste for modern or commercialized forms were used as justification in a struggle for the ownership of an ‘authentic’ tradition.

The dispute over authenticity in clog dancing between Jackie Toaduff and Johnson Ellwood demonstrates that the issues of authenticity are not simply the preserve of middle class mediators, but can also stem from within the traditional community. The controversy has been analysed by Fisher in terms borrowed from Baumann’s Saussure-influenced discussions of collected art versus performed art. Johnson Ellwood’s dancing represents *langue* (the language system which frames the established conventions of expression), while Jackie Toaduff’s is viewed as *parole* (the individual utterance, or developing mode of performance)⁹⁵ Both were miners,

⁹² B Davenport, interviewed by author, 16th March 2005, recording in my possession.

⁹³ A Taylor, *Song, Songwriting and the Songwriter in the English Folk Revival* (unpublished PhD thesis, Queen’s University of Belfast, May 1993), p19.

⁹⁴ R Handler and J Linnekin, ‘Tradition, Genuine or Spurious’, *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol 97 No 385, 1984, 273-290, p276.

⁹⁵ A M Fisher, *Clog Dance, Revival, Performance and Authenticity: An Ethnographic Study*, unpublished MA dissertation, University of Surrey, 2000, particularly p49. R Bauman (Ed),

both dancers were champions, and both were presented by EFDSS as repositories of tradition. Ellwood, however, could be stated as originating from a position of communicative competence (where the community could understand the language in which the performance was couched) as he had been handed the steps traditionally, inter-generationally. By contrast, Toaduff was a tap dancer turned clog dancer, and therefore had an ethos more tied to showbusiness and stagecraft (even performing as a professional entertainer on the QEII).⁹⁶ Yet, as Fisher puts it, ‘audiences who saw Toaduff’s performances were having no difficulty in appreciating his communicative competence for ... he always had to do an encore’.⁹⁷ Still, as we shall see below, the polished performance provided grounds for suspicion.

This recalls Royce Turner’s description of 1990s entertainment at a Yorkshire working men’s club in a former mining village. The minutiae of a game of bingo are closely depicted, but, although ‘turns’ in the concert room are still three-nightly fixtures each week, they are quickly dismissed by a brief reference to their rather ambitious billing.⁹⁸ There is an implied assumption here: bingo, through forces of participation and assimilation has become an ‘authentic’ working-class pursuit. The concert-room ‘turn’ continues to purvey fake dreams as a lowly branch of ‘showbiz’. This prevailing dismissal of artifice, this emphasis on participation, and, as Chapter One highlighted, this disregard for commercial success is at the core of many ‘authentic’ roots music movements, and holds great purchase among those with folkloric sympathies.

Similar processes had been at work in the world of rapper dancing twenty years earlier: the Lemington sword team had danced during the Depression under the billing of ‘The Northumberland Acrobatic Sword Dancers’ and they had included a large number of entertaining somersaults in their routines. This provoked criticism from Helen Kennedy, the EFDSS judge at the 1929 North of England Musical

Folklore Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainments (Oxford University Press, 1992), pp32-33.

⁹⁶ This was not actually a new phenomenon: Simon Frith has pointed out that black-face minstrels in nineteenth century Britain cross-fertilized American forms with intensely British ones, such as clog dancing. S Frith, ‘Playing with Real Feeling - Jazz and Suburbia’, in *Music for pleasure : essays in the sociology of pop* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988), 45-63, p48.

⁹⁷ A M Fisher, *Clog Dance, Revival, Performance and Authenticity: An Ethnographic Study*, unpublished MA dissertation, University of Surrey, 2000, p45.

⁹⁸ R Turner, *Coal Was Our Life*, (Sheffield Hallam University Press, 2000), pp188-192.

Tournament while the following year, they were disqualified by another judge, Kenworthy Schofield. That external judges informed the men of Lemington what was and was not appropriate would appear to be obvious middle-class interference, except that the other teams were also critical.⁹⁹

What is fascinating about this and about Ellwood's and Toaduff's battle over authenticity is that it was not limited to scholars or revivalists defending particular ideological frameworks: it was a dispute between rivals within a living tradition over ownership and excellence. It demonstrated that the discourses of 'authenticity' had been internalized by the traditional community and could be used to justify or vilify. Toaduff won the Northumberland and Durham Championships several times, which left Ellwood disgusted with the judging criteria that permitted Toaduff's crowd-pleasing innovations, such as quicker tempi, arm movements and, simply, smiling. In 1953, then, Ellwood set up his own rival Northern Counties Clog Championships, with criteria that called for an unsmiling performance, relatively slow in execution, and without arm gestures.¹⁰⁰ Thus, prescriptions on performance and concerns about 'staged authenticity' were not strictly the preserve of revivalists such as MacColl's Critics' Group. What was significant about Toaduff and Ellwood was that – despite the fact that there was something entrepreneurial in their direct competition for audiences - both were believed to be keepers of an authentic tradition. Between the theatrical presentation with an acceptance of contemporary performance standards, and, alternatively, the museum piece, the interpretation of which was staged and which represented continuity depended on the audience's point of view.

Kaley Mason provides a parallel in her analysis of Irish traditional forms, which emphasizes that assessments of authenticity have to be drawn from more than musical content, but also need to draw in social, political and affective-semiotic processes. Traditional musical content may be presented in a piece of touristic 'staged authenticity', which ultimately alters its impact on the listener, or it can be presented in a less contrived context, which will ultimately make the listener feel

⁹⁹ G Wallace, 'A North East Tour', <http://www.the-nut.net/articles/netour.php>.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, pp42-43.

they are party to a much more genuine experience.¹⁰¹ But once again, the perception and expectation of the audience appears to shape whether the experience of the music turns out to be diversionary, experimental or existential: each person can interpret the same musical sign differently. And this matters as much within the 'traditional' community as to any visitor, as Anderson explains:-

In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.¹⁰²

Bob Davenport is notable for having fought for the inclusion of wider working class musical forms within the imagined village of the folk scene. The album he recorded with the Boldon Banjos, *Pal of My Cradle Days*, was described by Eric Winter as 'the album Bob has always wanted to make ... not a big ballad in sight or earshot. A remarkably pleasant mixture of music hall, vaudeville, urban pub'.¹⁰³ Davenport appeared to echo Pete Seeger's 'deeper allegiance to the folk process ... to the way in which ordinary people create new songs and alter old ones to fit their personalities and their individual and community needs'.¹⁰⁴

Yet Davenport's work with the Boldon Banjos and the Marsden Rattlers did not always meet with approval. As Dave Sutherland recalls, audiences were mystified and offended by Davenport's promotion of such rough, vaudevillian presentation:-

While you have to respect a person's individuality and admire them for bucking the system it did sadden me that a voice that could chill you to the bone with pieces like *The Lakes of Coolfin*, *Barbara Allen* and *The Border Widow's Lament* was now more regularly to be heard singing *Memphis Tennessee* or *Moving Day*.

¹⁰¹ K Mason, 'Engaging Quests for Quintessential Traditional Music: An Irish Excursion', *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music*, Vol 28, 2001, 15-23, pp20-21. This borrows from Turino's semiotic theory for music, which contrasts *rhemes* (signs suggestive of a possibility) with *dicents* (real representations of objects), and suggests that perceptions of musical authenticity are usually the aftermath of dicent signs, although any piece of music can have multiple associations.

¹⁰² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Revised edition, Verso, London, 1991), p6.

¹⁰³ E Winter, 'The album Bob wanted to make', *Sing*, 65, July/August 1974, p11.

¹⁰⁴ B Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory & American Roots Music* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2000), p194.

Bob ... brought them [The Boldon Banjos] to Birtley where he was guest; in all honesty I could not believe what I was hearing. The Banjos, as I recall, were three or four old guys on banjo and a drummer, producing a rhythm which went little more than plunk, plunk, thud. They provided the accompaniment to such gems as *Moving Day*, *Over Goes Your Load*, *I Wish I Was Single Again*, while sections of the audience visibly cringed, or Bob would sit in apparent ecstasy while they strummed various parlour songs and some of the audience nervously sang along – possibly in order to maintain the tune. ... Bob joined us and launched into a diatribe about how this was far better than all your bloody Anglo concertinas.¹⁰⁵

This suggests that, while folk club audiences had subscribed to the belief that they were promoting the music of the people, they remained subject to a ‘high-low’ cultural dichotomy that recalls the nineteenth century value judgements (brass band performances were viewed as coarse and lacking in refinement) of musical moralist Reverend Haweis¹⁰⁶. It further implies that Davenport was working through his own ideological issues that could be equally debatable.

Yet one thing was clear: the belief that authenticity lay in the unadulterated culture of an isolated peasantry could not be sustained.¹⁰⁷ MacColl’s ‘policy’ had set out ‘authentic’ repertoire as that sung by ‘real’ traditional singers when such music touches profoundly on what they know and believe. As Boyes has noted, ‘What was a consonant repertoire for an American coffee house performer, who as a member of a technologically complex society had a world of musical cultures on record and in print to draw on?’¹⁰⁸ This is without considering whether ‘the folk’ had always performed consonant repertoires themselves, and this section will expand on the previous discussion of ‘hard core’ and ‘soft shell’ through some specific examples of blurring at the edges of the folk canon, the first, ironically, from MacColl himself.

¹⁰⁵ D Sutherland, correspondence with author, 12th April 2005.

¹⁰⁶ See D Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914* (Manchester University Press, 2nd ed, 1997), p8.

¹⁰⁷ This was not limited to Cecil Sharp’s notions of the English peasantry, see B Filene, *Romancing the Folk: Public Memory & American Roots Music* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2000), pp50-51: ‘John Lomax believed that prisons had inadvertently done folklorists a service by isolating groups of informants from modern society. On their 1933 trip, the Lomaxes recorded in the penitentiaries of five states, as they sought to document “the Negro who had the least contact with jazz, the radio, and with the white man ... The convicts heard only the idiom of their own race.”’

¹⁰⁸ G Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p238.

Defending A L Lloyd's anglicized versions of ballads like *Tam Lin*, MacColl aligned himself far more closely to the idea of living tradition than might be expected from common conceptions of his policy: 'in a sense, all folk-songs are forgeries. All that we possess is a body of texts and tunes in a state of constant change, of evolution and devolution.'¹⁰⁹ Recordings of the BBC Radio Ballads are particularly instructive in this respect, with oral history and music from the folk revival interspersed in a ground-breaking montage where the listener can literally hear authenticity shift over the course of an hour-long broadcast.¹¹⁰ Thus, fisherman Sam Lerner reportedly mistook MacColl's song *Shoals of Herring* (phrased to suit the local vernacular with the help of Laban's theory of efforts) for a song which he had known all his life - and a 'traditional' song was instantaneously manufactured.¹¹¹ Clear North Eastern parallels exist to this near instant adoption into the tradition of new compositions, notably Ed Pickford's *Ee, Aye, Aa Cud Hew*, and the melodies to which Alex Glasgow set Joe Wilson's *Sally Wheatley*.¹¹²

New songs entered the canon and, as Chapter Five demonstrated, new styles were imported even into rural Northumberland via recordings and radio. Mike Yates has noted that 'source' singer, Fred Jordan, was happy to learn from recordings or printed music:-

Singers, traditional or otherwise, pick up songs wherever they can. It might worry a scholar where a song comes from, but, to a singer, a good song is a good song.¹¹³

To Yates' comment that the song's provenance might worry a scholar, I would add that it might also worry an ardent folk club revivalist, although, given the region's

¹⁰⁹ Ewan MacColl, *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1990), p290

¹¹⁰ E MacColl; C Parker; P Seeger, *The Radio Ballads*, (eight programmes first broadcast by BBC Radio between 1958 and 1964, (Topic TSD801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808), particularly *Singing the Fishing* (TSCD 803).

¹¹¹ see S Richards, *Sonic Harvest – Towards Musical Democracy* (Amber Lane Press, Oxford, 1992), p91.

¹¹² E Pickford, *Ee Aye, Aa Cud Hew*, collected in A L Lloyd, (Ed), *Come All Ye Bold Miners - Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields* (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 2nd edition, 1978), pp146-147; A Glasgow, melody for *Sally Wheatley*, on A Glasgow, *Now and Then* (originally released 1970s, now reissued as MWM CDS 21); J Wilson, *Bonny Sally Wheatley in Tyneside Songs and Drolleries* (Newcastle, 1890s, SR Publishers facsimile edition, Wakefield, 1970), pp6-7.

¹¹³ M Yates, 'Bob Blake and the re-invented self', *Musical Traditions*, Article MT184, 18th August 2006, <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/blake.htm>.

long print and music-hall tradition, rather less in the North East than elsewhere. Therefore, whatever troubled the Birtley audience about the Boldon Banjoes, it was unlikely to be as simple as the repertory or the performance style alone, and the following paragraphs will explore the role of subjective value judgements as opposed to 'objective' scholarship in defining the authentic.

There is the simple possibility that it was a matter of 'taste': that the Boldon Banjoes produced something that was aesthetically unpleasant to the folk club audience.¹¹⁴ Much as Douglas has demonstrated that taste is itself a social construct, whether or not the sound produced was pleasant to contemporary ears may have led the audience to use the concept of authenticity as a rationalization after the event.¹¹⁵ A musician or listener who found the simplicity of a folk tune viscerally appealing or the 'plunk, plunk, thud' of the Banjoes unattractive might well have sought to justify their preference by references to authenticity and artlessness. This again raises the issue of 'upwards conflationism': did the socio-cultural layer necessarily dictate the taste, or did the prevailing taste of the cultural layer sometimes shift the discourse of the socio-cultural?¹¹⁶ Once again, the answer would appear to lie in a two-way traffic, or a cyclical pattern.

This final section, then, returns to consumption as an expression of personality, of alienation, of exploration into other cultures. It will review the above examples of tussles over authenticity in the light of the frameworks set out by Cohen and Campbell, which demonstrate that consumption patterns, particularly those where authenticity is at issue, are profoundly linked to one's sense of self. Frith has noted the similarities in the discourses at play in classical, folk and commercial music:-

What is involved here is not the creation and maintenance of three distinct, autonomous musical worlds but, rather, the play of three historically evolving discourses across a single field.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Or there may have been other issues than authenticity at stake here: banjoes sometimes had uncomfortable associations with black-face minstrel shows, and the repertoire was of the 'chirpy' type that left-wing intellectuals saw as promoting the opiate effect of false consciousness on the hedonistic, non-revolutionary elements of the working class.

¹¹⁵ See M Douglas, *Thought Styles* (Sage, London, 1996), pp50-76.

¹¹⁶ See M Archer, M Archer, *Culture and Agency – The place of culture in social theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp46-70.

¹¹⁷ p42.

It is not a question of what you play but how you perceive what you play. And how you perceive it is attributable to the idea that all these forms of music are, 'in one way or another handling the issues thrown up by their commodification.'¹¹⁸ If the music was not commodified, it could be judged purely on its functional aptness (for instance, could the village dance to it or could troops march to it?). As soon as it became something to be consumed as a matter of personal taste then it became a matter of value judgements. Lewis has highlighted this shift from traditional contexts to personal preferences in a myriad of cultural choices:-

I couldn't help mulling over the whole idea of the folk "club". If this music belonged to us all, why did it need its own club? Why was it a hobby to sing folk songs? Why weren't we all just doing it all the time? How had this part of England's heritage come to be hidden in a darkened room full of Thermos flasks and crisps?¹¹⁹

How much these consumer choices and value judgements mean to the individual depends on the depth of experience they seek: be it recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental or existential.

My contention is that, at the time from the 1950s through to the 1970s when commodification of music was allowing a hitherto unimaginable diversity of tastes (and, hence, value judgements), the search for authenticity in folk music was frequently an experimental one. As discussed above, the folk boom was populated by those who sought an alternative to the alienation they experienced but who were not passionate long-term converts to the particular form of folk music (rock, punk or reggae might serve equally well), however, it was fuelled by the enthusiasts who drew a more existential experience and a powerful *communitas* from clubs that revisited the cultures of the past. Colls succinctly locates this search for authenticity, not within any objective links with traditional communities, but rather within the self:-

¹¹⁸ S Frith, *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford University Press, 1998), p45.

¹¹⁹ R Lewis, *The Magic Spring* (Atlantic, London, 2005), p13.

The Dusty Road Ramblers, after all, had rambled out of Kirkby, just as the Stones had rolled out of suburbia, and they and a thousand other English bands had said what they wanted to say in the rhythms of Mississippi and Chicago. This was authenticity too. Alex Campbell had lived in London composing Scottish folk songs about Lady Douglas's Lament. But after street singing in Paris, where he discovered American folk, he found the courage to acknowledge his real heritage in a Glasgow of work and whisky. It wasn't that Campbell 'dug' Robbie Burns less, just that he loved Woody Guthrie more. Ewan MacColl (born Jimmie Miller, Coburg Street, Salford) had called Bob Dylan (born Robert Zimmerman, Third Avenue East, Duluth, Minnesota) a 'youth of mediocre talent', but the shame was that MacColl failed to recognize that Zimmerman had travelled in search of his authentic self no less than Miller had travelled in search of his.¹²⁰

In the early 1960s, Pete Seeger grappled with the fact that he was a non-traditional singer, and asserted it was better not to imitate field recordings, instead 'it seems to me that the first duty of any artist is to produce good art ... it is my duty to be authentically myself'.¹²¹ Or, as Richards has it, 'authenticity ... has nothing to do with the pedigree of the influences pressed into service in one's art. It concerns personal honesty, integration and integrity. It links the artist's being with his work.'¹²²

What was special about authenticity in the North East? As the preceding discussions of various 'expressive goods' have shown, what was happening in the folk revival in and around Tyneside was a reflection of international struggles towards personal meaning. One aspect that gave the debate a particularly North Eastern perspective was the relative dearth of absolutes on which to draw: if a Sharpian definition of authenticity had been applied, most North Eastern song and music (being notated and printed) would have failed to qualify. Similarly, the frequent traffic between 'folk' and 'popular' cultures seen in the cases of Jackie Toaduff, Alex Glasgow and the Boldon Banjoes, while not unique, was unusually marked and gave folk forms, 'authentic' or otherwise, considerable purchase in the imaginations of the general population. Further, in regions like the North East, or Ireland, or the Mississippi Delta, authenticity was not merely canonical or stylistic, it was couched in terms of,

¹²⁰ R Colls, *Identity of England* (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp370-371.

¹²¹ P Seeger, 'What's in a Word?', *Spin*, 2/9, c1963/4, p2.

¹²² S Richards, *Sonic Harvest: Towards Musical Democracy* (Amber Lane, Oxford, 1992), p89.

if not class, certainly remoteness from power. In a society of increasing social mobility, the loose anchors of the newly promoted (and as Chapter Four demonstrated, these were especially significant in the North East) could be secured by recalling the harsh realities of the past: it was an act of personal validation for young graduates like Tom Gilfellow or David Oliver to be able to experience the authentic culture of their parents.

It should be clear at the end of this chapter that, whatever its role in North Eastern particularity, or in the folk revival, authenticity is not a simple question of accuracy or reconstruction, rather it is a quest for validation. In Weberian terms, it might be viewed as a *wertrational* or an affective response to the present: a rational or emotional seeking out of some eternal truth to be found in a lost, traditional 'golden age'. Lewis perfectly encapsulates the visceral (or, as Cohen would have it, existential) quality in taking part in folk culture:-

This is the crux of it. It doesn't matter what the origins are. ... It doesn't matter if this is what people did before Christianity or not. What matters is that they are doing it now. They do it because they enjoy it and because it feels right.¹²³

There is resonance here with the contested authenticity of the Allendale Tar Barls ceremony described in Chapter Six. Whether or not it is historically genuine might be hotly debated but is beside the point. Authenticity lies in the experience and perception of contemporary participants.

¹²³ R Lewis, *The Magic Spring* (Atlantic, London, 2005), pp141-142.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to deconstruct the layers of identity and ideology that went into the creation of the North Eastern folk revival, to establish whether or not this differed substantially from the wider folk revival, and to understand its role within the construction of a more general North Eastern identity. Several key themes emerge, relating to regionalism, mediation, heritage and authenticity, and they point to considerable continuities between attitudes in the period under study and the present day understanding of folk culture in society.

Paasi has distinguished the latent identity of a region (its geographical and institutional demarcations) from manifest regional identity as lodged in the consciousness of its inhabitants. Each informs the other, but a geographical region is a rather empty construct unless there is a cognitive and an affective sense of belonging that can be mobilized into collective action in pursuit of shared goals.¹ There is no doubt that the regional consciousness lodged within the people of the North East was a strong one and that culture played a major part in this. But Paasi raises a further question of vital significance to this study:

Regional identities are collective narratives on who and what ‘we’ and ‘our region’ are and how these differ from others. The definition of social identities always includes a normative element of power. Important questions are therefore who makes regional distinctions and classifications? Is it the identity of ordinary people? Or is it a ‘written identity’ created by scientists, politicians, administrators, cultural activists or entrepreneurs?²

This thesis has demonstrated that there was considerable blending between vernacular and written identities in the North East between 1950 and 1975. Without a strong core regional identity on which to draw, it would seem likely that the written identity as expressed by politicians and the media would have been different: more tentative; more prescriptive. There were a great many factors that built the social and

¹ A Paasi, ‘Bounded Spaces in the Mobile World: Deconstructing ‘Regional Identity’, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 93/2, 2002, 137-148, especially p139.

² *Ibid*, p146.

cultural capital that underpinned this identity, but the region's folk music traditions were clearly one of them.

Key to this, as explained throughout the preceding pages, is the fact that the links between continuous tradition and its mediated revival were unusually strong in the North East, so much so that the divisions between the sources of tradition and the new bohemian youth were very narrow, very permeable and frequently represented a gap of only one generation or less. Further, by understanding the North Eastern history of cultural patronage, it is evident that the blurring between the mediators and the mediated; the patrons and the patronized, appears to have existed for as long as folklore. It may have become most obvious after the Romantic urge of Scott, Herder or Rousseau to collect the outpourings of a 'natural and innocent' poor (the starting point of most studies of revival), but it was around before then. People hired the creative members of 'the folk' to exploit their culture long before that. The best of those creative people were specialists: and probably not that much more widespread than they are today – hence the generational transfer through *griot* style families (the idea that the professionalized expert performer was an outcome of revival is therefore spurious). What is interesting about revivals in the North East is that this was relatively comfortably accepted from the start: with a relative lack of purist 'hand-wringing' over whether or not the music emanated from untainted representatives of an unlettered peasantry or a downtrodden proletariat. This thesis has clearly highlighted elements where these archetypes mattered, but has demonstrated a more prevalent acceptance of the diversity of culture, where music hall nestled alongside pipe tunes and shepherds learned songs from the gramophone.

Of course, this phenomenon was unusual, but not unique, therefore to look at mediation in this way – as a development out of tradition rather than as its disruption and expropriation - may also pay dividends regarding the national scene and other regions. Lloyd indicated his sympathy with this way of thinking, that folk revival could be more than a mere dilution of 'pure' tradition, in the closing words of *Folk Song in England*:

Better than to lament the loss of ancient gold will be to try to understand its permutation into another metal which, though it may be baser, may still surprise us by being nobler.³

Vic Gammon has reinforced this attitude:

Our folk traditions are not ‘bogus’: they are what they are. The notion of ‘faked stuff’ relies on ideas of authenticity that amount to nothing else than a form of cultural self-hatred.⁴

This suggests that, if studies expend too much effort in debunking invented tradition, they miss the genuine expression that runs alongside perceived mediation. And Chapter Four in particular highlighted that the ‘genuine’ and the ‘mediated’ could co-exist even within the same person.

Yet, as Chapter Eight demonstrated, concerns about preserving unadulterated traditions were responses to significant historical moments of flux. Previous revivals had sprung into being during the early years of industrialization and at its peak. The revival under study occurred at the cusp of industrial decline and certainly at a time when old loyalties (to class, nation, or locality) were comprehensively redrawn into a ‘global village’. In all these cases, cleaving to a more intuitive past and to ‘authenticity’, is a logical response to the spectre of rationalization. Malvina Reynolds’ metaphor of *Little Boxes* precisely summed up this problem.⁵ Throughout the thesis, authenticity has been shown to be historically significant. Alienation was lessened – or at least managed - by entering into the liminal state and the *communitas* created by sharing and negotiating the music of one’s heritage. Even for ‘source’ musicians, the cult of authenticity afforded them new audiences and new, cross-generational friendships. It was an affective route into an extended community of like minds (Finnegan’s ‘urban pathways’).⁶ And the response could also be individual. Contested and illusory as the concept might be, to pursue a version of

³ A L Lloyd, *Folk Song in England* (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1967, Panther edition, London, 1969), p412.

⁴ V Gammon, ‘One hundred years of the Folk-Song Society’, in I Russell and D Atkinson (Eds), *Folk Song: Tradition, Revival and Re-Creation* (Elphinstone Institute, Aberdeen, 2004), 14-27, p23.

⁵ This metaphor – paralleling the building of suburban ‘identikit’ housing with the training of people into uniform and alienated social roles - is discussed in Chapter Seven.

authenticity allowed the individual to feel good about himself/herself. Was it therefore inherently false: a sticking plaster over the wounds of alienation and change? I would argue not, even though the search for authenticity tells us more about those who continue the tradition than about those from whom it derives. The search for roots is surely a part of the human condition, and musical roots are only a – powerfully emotional – part of this.

The nostalgic response to modernity was an international phenomenon, but we have seen that it had a peculiarly North Eastern refraction. The region had industrialized early and it had also been markedly early in linking culture to regeneration projects, before the ‘post-industrial’ era had begun in earnest. Retention of cultural capital and a sense of belonging were particularly significant needs as mobility caused the old working-class certainties to recede:

And who can teach you a heritage?
Who can learn you a poem?
We’re lost in a difficult, frightening age
and no one can find what was home.⁷

Keith Armstrong’s words about dislocation from the past were written in the new millennium but could equally apply to the 1960s and ‘70s. The perception of imminent loss of identity is much the same. There is, however, a clear distinction between now and then. Then, political ideals remained a prevalent source of concrete hope. The people who aligned themselves with the folk movement – be they young bohemians who benefited from the legacy of the 1945 Labour government, or the older generation like Jack Elliott - had absorbed their values from the 1930s and World War II. Their meta-narratives were linked to faith in social progress and folk music was not merely an arm of nostalgia, it was also a tool with which to change the world. Clearly, this is historically significant, and this thesis has therefore considered it in some detail. Politics and the ideology of anti-commercialism ran throughout the folk revival and certainly touched the region, but I

⁶ R Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-making in an English town* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp323-324. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

⁷ K Armstrong, ‘An Oubliette for Kitty’, *Imagined Corners* (Smokestack Books, Middlesbrough, 2004), 18-19, p19.

have shown that there were other markers, other layers of identity and motivation in the North East. This means once again that folk revival in the region (and probably elsewhere) cannot be understood unless we move beyond a simple notion of the expropriation of popular forms in the service of a particular philosophy. This returns us once again to the layers of identity discussed at the start of this chapter.

The region was 'dreamed', and the folk scene was 'dreamed', just as much as an Aboriginal songline. But songlines also represent real routes across real territory. 'Singing' an identity - be it regional or political or based upon taste - was a powerful territorial marker, a way of retaining a sense of belonging at a time when old allegiances were failing. Even national identity was perceived to be receding in the face of Cold War alliances, mass consumerism and rapid social change. Only certain people were fully committed to singing their region through folk music, others were happy to absorb the international gloss of pop or its surrogate in the nightclubs and working mens' clubs. Yet, particularly in the North East, the region had been sung for a long time. The reach of old songs with a local theme into the popular psyche was not unique (witness the popularity of cockney music hall choruses), but elsewhere these songs were rarely adopted by the folk scene.

Again, and in conclusion, it is the blend of folkloric and traditional, oral and literate, mediated and mediators, that renders the regional revival distinct. The songs, the tunes and the dances had sufficient hold on the popular consciousness as to never fully become fully associated with the worst caricatures of folk culture as a costume party populated by middle class romantics.

Thor wis lots o' lads and lasses there, aall wi' smilin' faces
Gannin' along the Scotswood Road to see the Blaydon Races.⁸

The ubiquity of choruses, such as this one from *Blaydon Races* is testament not only to how North Eastern particularity was expressed, but also to the widespread mechanisms by which it was constructed in the first place. The regional folk revival therefore had less need to actively 'revive' than was common elsewhere (though,

⁸ G Ridley, *The Blaydon Races*, in C E Catcheside-Warrington, *Tyneside Songs Vol I*, (J G Windows, Newcastle, 1911), pp12-13.

again, the fact that this phenomenon was unusual rather than unique suggests potential for parallel studies). *The Keel Row; Dance to your Daddy; Keep Yor Feet Still, Geordie Hinney; The Lambton Worm; The Water of Tyne; Bonny at Morn; Cushie Butterfield; Wherever ye gan, you're sure to find a Geordie* – all of these songs were used by folk revivalists, yet all – or at least their choruses - were considered by the region's indigenous population to belong to them. The second folk revival represented an international historical moment of special significance to a relatively small interest group with a relatively brief and peripheral influence on mainstream culture. But in the North East of England it was simply a distinctive phase in a longer, more populist – and ongoing - tradition.

Appendix One

Tables of North Eastern Folk Clubs & Organizations

TABLE 1: NORTH EASTERN FOLK CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS 1950-1975, listed in alphabetical order

NAME OF CLUB/ORGANIZATION	DAY OF WEEK	START YEAR	UNTIL	LOCATION	NOTES	ORGANIZERS, RESIDENTS, OR OTHER DETAILS
ALNWICK GATHERING	Annual	1949	present	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	COLIN BRADFORD
ALNWICK PIPERS' SOCIETY		1977	present	Northumberland	PIPERS SOCIETY	GEORGE MITCHELL
ASHINGTON LAMPGLASS ARTS CENTRE F C	Friday/Thursday	1964	present	Northumberland South		TEACHERS FROM SEATON HIRST PRIMARY SCHOOL
ASHINGTON/WANSBECK FESTIVAL	Annual	1971	unknown	Northumberland South		
BALMBRA'S COUNTRY & WESTERN NIGHT	Tuesday	1969	1975	Newcastle Central	C & W	
BALMBRA'S GEORDIE MUSIC HALL	Wed, Thur, Fri, Sat	1962	1981	Newcastle Central	MUSIC HALL	DICK IRWIN, JOE GING, JOE BENNETT
BALMBRA'S JET SET FOLK CLUB	Monday	1969	unknown	Newcastle Central		RICK TEMPERLEY
BALTIC TAVERN, NEWCASTLE QUAYSIDE		1974	1976	Newcastle Central	SINGAROUND	JIM MAGEEAN AND ALAN FITZSIMMONS
BANKS OF THE TYNE (formerly Cricketers' Arms), Bill Quay/Hebburn	Tuesday	1975	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		HEDGEHOG PIE AND FRIENDS
BARLEY MOW, QUAYSIDE		1971	1975	Newcastle Central		STEFAN SOBELL
BARLEYCORN FC, VICTORIA AND COMET	Saturday	1969	1971	Newcastle Central	STRONG POLICY CLUB	STEFAN SOBELL; JOHN REAVIE; MIKE ROBSON; ANDY & SARAH HARRISON
BELFORD HOUSE, HENDON	Thursday	1974	unknown	Sunderland	VENUE A WMC FOR SUNDERLAND SHIPYARD	BRUCE STORY SNR, (SON RAN THE GLEBE FOLK CLUB)
BENFIELDSIDE MORRIS, CONSETT		1963	present	Durham North	MORRIS/SWORD	
BILLINGHAM, BLACK HORSE	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
BILLINGHAM, BLACKSMITHS ARMS	Sunday	1974	unknown	Teesside		THE WILSON FAMILY
BIRTLEY - CEILDH/SOCIAL nights	Wed, monthly	1970	unknown	Durham North	CEILDH/SOCIAL	THE ELLIOTT FAMILY
BIRTLEY - Red Lion; The Three Tuns; now RAOB	Wednesday	1961	present	Durham North		THE ELLIOTT FAMILY
BISHOP AUCKLAND, ACLET HOTEL	Sunday	1971	unknown	Durham South		
BISHOP AUCKLAND, FOLK FORUM, CASTLE HOTEL	Sunday	1970	unknown	Durham South		
BISHOP AUCKLAND, WEAR VALLEY FOLK CLUB		1970	unknown	Durham South		
BLUEBELL, FULWELL	Tuesday	1974	unknown	Sunderland		KEITH GREGSON
BLYTH, THE BURGLAR'S DOG FOLK CLUB		1978	unknown	Northumberland South	BLUES	DAVE FORSHAW AND PETER AFENDOUSIS
BRASS MAN, NEWCASTLE		1971	1975	Newcastle Central		STEFAN AND LIZ SOBELL
BRIDGE - CEILDH/SOCIAL NIGHTS	Tues, fortnightly	1965	unknown	Newcastle Central	CEILDH/SOCIAL	JOHNNY HANDLE, GRAHAM BINLESS, COLIN ROSS, ALISTAIR ANDERSON
BRIDGE/Folksong & Ballad (New Orleans Club, the Sink, and the Liberal Club all	Thursday	1968	present	Newcastle Central		JOHNNY HANDLE; LOUIS KILLEN
BYKER, (possibly THE SHIP or the CUMBERLAND?????)	Sunday lunchtime		present	Newcastle East	SESSION	
CHESTER-LE-STREET, BRITISH LEGION CLUB	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Durham North		DAVID YOUNG; ANN STOUT; BRIAN KELL; JIM LOWERY; BILL DODD
CHEVIOT, BELLINGHAM	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Northumberland		
CHILLINGHAM HOTEL, HEATON	Thursday	1969	unknown	Newcastle East		
COACH HOUSE, LITTLE CORBY	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Cumbria		
COMHALTAS CEOLTOIRI EIRREAN	Sunday lunchtime	1970	present	Newcastle Central	IRISH CULTURAL ORGANIZATION	JOHN DOONAN A LEADING FIGURE, ALSO JOE CRANE; TONY CORCORAN
CORBRIDGE, BLUE BELL	Friday	1975	mid 70s	Northumberland		CAROLE HILL AND MIKE SUTTON
COTHERSTONE (Teesside), FOX AND HOUNDS	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
COUNTY FOLK CLUB, GOSFORTH	Wednesday	1975	unknown	Newcastle North		
CRAMLINGTON, BLAGDON ARMS (now Comrades Club)	Tuesday	1972	present	Northumberland South		
CRAWCROOK, RISING SUN	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		
CULLERCOATS, THE BAY HOTEL	Monday	1968	1984?	North Tyneside		JACK ROUTLEDGE AND TONY GILLMAN
DARLINGTON, BOLIVAR F C, THE BOLIVAR BAR, IMPERIAL HOTEL		1970	unknown	Durham South		PAUL CRUDDAS
DARLINGTON, CIV SERV ASSOC, BRIDGE/GOLDEN COCK/BOOT AND	Tuesday	1964	unknown	Durham South		MARTIN BASHFORTH, THEN TONY FOXWORTHY
DARLINGTON, FOLK CLUB, ARTS CENTRE	Thursday	1980	present	Durham South		TOM HUGHES
DARLINGTON, GOLDEN COCK	Saturday	1966	1970	Durham South		MICK SHEEHAN; THEN JOHN WISE AND COLIN RANDALL
DARLINGTON, KETTON OX RUGBY CLUB		1970	unknown	Durham South		
DARLINGTON, THE BRITANNIA	Saturday	1978	1980	Durham South		KEN ALLEN

DARLINGTON, THREE CROWNS/RAILWAY HOTEL	Thursday	1970	unknown	Durham South	club named 'Bognor Trenchcoat'; parodying Fleetwood Mac	
DAVY LAMP, WASHINGTON	Saturday	1974	present	Durham North		TERRI AND ERIC FREEMAN
DURANT HALL, RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION DANCES	occasional	1959	unknown	Newcastle Central	BARN DANCES/CEILDHVS SOCIALS	RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION
DURHAM CITY FOLK CLUB, LORD SEAHAM, GILESGATE MOOR	Thursday	1977	unknown	Durham		I McCULLOUGH
DURHAM COUNTY FOLK ALLIANCE		1975	unknown	Durham	SPLINTER GROUP FROM NE FOLK FEDERATION	
DURHAM RAMS SWORD AND MORRIS		1962	present	Durham	MORRIS/SWORD	
DURHAM, CITY HOTEL	Thursday	1971	unknown	Durham		
DURHAM, FRAMWELLGATE MOOR, MARQUIS OF GRANBY	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Durham		
DURHAM, GILESGATE, GRANGE FOUNDRY	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Durham		
DURHAM, SALUTATION, FRAMWELLGATE MOOR	Thursday	1972	after 1974	Durham		
EASINGTON, KINGS HEAD HOTEL	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Durham East		
EFSSS		1932	present	National		
ELSDON	monthly	1970	after 1975	Northumberland		BASIL CLOUGH
ESTON FOLK CLUB, THE BAY HORSE	Wednesday	1970	1980	Teesside		REDCAR LONGSWORD DANCERS
ESTON, CLEVELAND BAY HOTEL	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
FAT OX, FOLK CLUB, HOLYWELL	Thursday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		
FELLING, THE ROYAL TURF, SUNDERLAND ROAD	Saturday		1969	Gateshead/South Tyneside		ANDY HARRISON; TONY WILSON; DAVE SUTHERLAND; ALEX McKIE
FISHERMAN'S ARMS, HARTLEPOOL HEADLAND		1969		Teesside		
FOLK AT THE POST OFFICE INN, (opp St Nicholas' Cathedral)	Saturday	1975	unknown	Newcastle Central		STEFAN AND LIZ SOBELL
FORD ARMS TRADITIONAL FOLK CLUB	Friday	1975	unknown	Northumberland		
GATESHEAD FOLK CLUB, DUN COW, HIGH STREET	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	FORMED OUT OF CROWN FC AND HAMMER FC	
GATESHEAD, CROWN FOLK CLUB	Saturday	1968	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED WITH DUN COW	ALAN PATCHETT AND BOB KINIFIC
GATESHEAD, HAMMER FOLK CLUB		1968	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED WITH DUN COW	
GATESHEAD, HONEYSUCKLE		1970	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	BLUES	RAY STUBBS
GATESHEAD, QUARRYMAN'S ARMS		1978	1979	Gateshead/South Tyneside	BLUES	
GATESHEAD, TECHNICAL COLLEGE		1973	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		KIM AND RAY BIBBY
GOSFORTH ASSEMBLY ROOMS		1969	unknown	Newcastle North	FOLK AND BLUES	
GOSFORTH FOLK CLUB, GOSFORTH HOTEL	Tuesday	1975	unknown	Newcastle North		
GRAND HOTEL, TYNEMOUTH	Thursday	1976	unknown	North Tyneside		
GUISBOROUGH, GLOBE HOTEL	Friday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
HALTWHISTLE, RAILWAY HOTEL		1975	unknown	Northumberland	SINGAROUND	
HARTLEPOOL FOLK SONG CLUB, MARKET HOTEL, LYNN STREET	Sunday	1965	after 1969	Teesside		GRAHAM WHITELY
HARTLEPOOL, NURSERY INN	Sunday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
HEWORTH, THE SWAN	Friday/ Monday	1968	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		ALAN PATCHETT AND BOB KINIFIC
HEXHAM ABBEY FOLK FESTIVAL	annual	1966	1972	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	ROGER FREER; THEN NORMAN SUCKLING
HEXHAM MORRIS		1976	present	Northumberland	MORRIS/SWORD	
HEXHAM, ROYAL HOTEL; then BEAUMONT HOTEL	Monday	1964	after 1974	Northumberland		GREG MILNE; IRVINE McVEIGH AND OTHERS
HEXHAM, THE HYDRO		1974	unknown	Northumberland		STUDENTS FROM TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE
HIGH POINT HOTEL, WHITLEY BAY	Monday/Tuesday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		
HIGH SPEN RAPPER TEAM		1954	present	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	GEORDE GIBBON AND FRED FOSTER AND THEIR FAMILIES
HORDEN FOLK CENTRE, BELL HOTEL; FORMERLY PETERLEE	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Durham East		BERT AND IRIS GALSON AND OTHERS
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING, ROBBIE BURNS	Tuesday	1974	unknown	Durham East		
IMPERIAL HOTEL, JESMOND	Saturday	1978	unknown	Newcastle East		RESIDENT GROUP - STANLEY ACCRINGTON
KILLINGWORTH SWORD DANCERS		1972	1982	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
KINGSMEN RAPPER TEAM, Newcastle University		1949	present	Newcastle Central	MORRIS/SWORD	NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
LANCHESTER, BLACK BULL	Monday	1972	unknown	Durham North		
MARSDEN INN, SOUTH SHIELDS	Sunday	1964	present	Gateshead/South Tyneside		JIM IRVINE AND THE MARSDEN RATTLERS; AND OTHERS
MIDDLESBROUGH		1962	unknown	Teesside		
MIDDLESBROUGH, ALBERT SOCIAL CLUB	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		

MIDDLETON ST GEORGE F C, MIDDLETON ST GEORGE COLLEGE		1972	unknown	Durham South		
MONKSEATON MORRIS		1955	present	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
MORPETH GATHERING	annual	1968	present	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	ROLAND BIBBY; LATER KIM BIBBY-WILSON
NEW DARNELL INN, NEWCASTLE	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Newcastle Central		
NEWCASTLE, BRIDGE, YCND FOLK SONG NIGHTS	Saturday/ Monday	1964		Newcastle Central	POLITICAL GROUP PLUS MUSIC	
NEWCASTLE FESTIVAL	Annual			Newcastle Central	FESTIVAL	
NEWCASTLE GENERAL HOSPITAL FOLK CLUB, MILVAIN CLUB	Wednesday	1975	unknown	Newcastle West		
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY FOLK CLUB, TRENT HOUSE		1967	unknown	Newcastle Central		
NEWCASTLETON FESTIVAL, LIDDESDALE	annual	1970	present	Scottish Borders	FESTIVAL	
NEWTON AYCLIFFE, IRON HORSE FOLK CLUB		1965	unknown	Durham South		PETE THOMPSON
NEWTON PARK HOTEL	Monday	1968	unknown	Durham South		
NORTH EAST FEDERATION OF FOLK CLUBS		1967	1976	Regionwide	UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION	PETE ELLIOTT; DAVE SUTHERLAND; CAROLE HILL AND OTHERS
NORTH SHIELDS, THE CANNON		1971		North Tyneside		
NORTHUMBRIAN TRADITIONAL GROUP, including Shiremoor Marras		1962	1981	Newcastle Central		JOE BENNETT
PERCY ARMS, FRONT STREET, TYNEMOUTH	Tuesday	1968	after 1972	North Tyneside	LARGE CLUB THAT DREW BIG NAMES	
PETERLEE		1968	1968	Durham East	MERGED WITH HORDEN	
PLOUGH, MITFORD	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Northumberland		
PONTELAND, BLACKBIRD INN	Tuesday	1975	unknown	Northumberland South		
PONTELAND, NORTHUMBERLAND COLLEGE FOLK CLUB	Thursday	1968	unknown	Northumberland South		
PONTELAND, SEVEN STARS INN	Friday	1968	unknown	Northumberland South	IRISH MATERIAL	RESIDENT GROUP - THE REIVERS
PRUDHOE - DR SYNTAX	Sunday	1973	unknown	Northumberland South	SINGAROUND	BRIAN WATSON; GEORDIE HUNTER
PRUDHOE (WEST WYLAM INN)	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Northumberland South		DEREK ROBSON AND MICHAEL WATSON
QUARRINGTON HILL, CO DURHAM		1969		Durham South		
REDCAR FESTIVAL (now Saltburn)	annual	1968	present	Teesside	FESTIVAL	JOHN TAYLOR
REDCAR, PENNEY HEDGE, SALTSCAR HOTEL	Friday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
REDCAR, THE CUTTY WREN, HOTEL ROYAL, HIGH ST, REDCAR	Thursday	1965	present	Teesside		COLIN MATHER, THEN JOHN TAYLOR
REDCAR, THE STOCKTON HOTEL		1970	1972	Teesside		IAN RUSSELL AND KEN ALLEN
RICHMOND FOLK CLUB, ROYAL OAK	Friday	1965	unknown	Teesside		JOHN DEIGHTON
ROTHBURY FESTIVAL	annual	1977	present	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	
ROYAL EARSDON SWORD DANCERS YOUTH TEAM		1947	1950	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING SOCIETY, NEWCASTLE		1950	present	Newcastle Central	CEILIDH/SOCIAL	
RYHOPE, RAILWAY INN,	Thursday	1974	unknown	Sunderland		
RYTON, ADDISON		1978	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		
SEAHAM, CASTLEREAGH	Sunday	1974	unknown	Durham East		
SEAHAM, DUN COW INN	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Durham East		
SEAHAM, SEATON HOTEL	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Durham East		
SEATON SLUCE, KING'S ARMS		1975	unknown	North Tyneside		RESIDENT GROUP - BALLAST HILL
SEDFIELD, HARDWICK HALL HOTEL	Friday	1972	unknown	Durham South		
SHIREMOOR MARRAS		1962	1981	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
SHIREMOOR, EARSDON AND DISTRICT FOLK FESTIVAL		1975	unknown	North Tyneside	FESTIVAL	
SPITLEY BRIDGE, railway inn, then the Victoria, then the Kings Head	Tuesday	1961	after 1968	Durham North		KEN DAY; THEN DAVE VARTY AND BILL SABLES
SOUTH EAST N'LAND TECHNICAL COLLEGE FC, WALLSEND	Wed, fortnightly	1968	unknown	North Tyneside		
SOUTH SHIELDS COUNTY FOLK CLUB		1965	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED INTO SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES	
SOUTH SHIELDS FOLK SONG SOCIETY, THE BEACON, LAWIE TOP	Sunday	1964	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	FEATURED ARTISTS SUCH AS J HANDLE & JIM SHARP	
SOUTH SHIELDS FRENCHMAN'S FORT FOLK AND BLUES CLUB		1965	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED INTO SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES	
SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES	Friday	1968	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	BLUES/CONTEMPO RARY SLANT	DAVE SUTHERLAND; PIGMEAT; HOKUM HOTSHOTS; BOB GILROY AND OTHERS
ST MARY'S COLLEGE, FENHAM	Sun, fortnightly	1967	unknown	Newcastle West	MIX OF NE AND AMERICAN MATERIAL	
STAINCLIFFE TRAD & CONT FC, Staincliffe Hotel, Seaton Carew	Friday	1974	after 1976	Teesside		KEITH GREGSON
STANDROP, KINGS ARMS	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Durham South		

STANLEY FOLK CLUB, SHIELD ROW INN	Wednesday	1967	unknown	Durham North		BENNY GRAHAM
STANLEY, TEMPERLEY ARMS AND GARDEN HOUSE WMC	Friday/ Saturday	1962	unknown	Durham North	INFORMAL SINGAROUND OUTSIDE OF REVIVAL	
STOCKTON, NEWMAN'S COFFEE HOUSE		1961	unknown	Teesside		TONY FOXWORTHY
STOCKTON FOLK CLUB, STORK AND CASTLE HOTEL		1964	unknown	Teesside		TONY FOXWORTHY
STOCKTON FOLK FESTIVAL (2 days)		mid 60s	unknown	Teesside	FESTIVAL	
STOCKTON, The Kings Arms (later the Sun Inn)	now Tues monthly	1961	present	Teesside		JOHNNY HANDLE; THEN RON ANGEL
SUNDERLAND FOLK CENTRE, The Chesters/Rose & Crown/George & Dragon	Sunday/ Friday	1965	1969	Sunderland		MIKE ELLIOTT; ED PICKFORD; ERIC MAXWELL AND RICHARD MAXWELL
SUNDERLAND FOLK SONG CLUB, GRANGE HOTEL, FULWELL	Monday/ Tuesday	1964	after 1975	Sunderland		E G HOLLIDAY; THE KEELMEN AND JIM BOYES
SUNDERLAND, BELL'S HOTEL	Sunday	1972	unknown	Sunderland		
SUNDERLAND, GLEBE/ROYALTY	Wednesday	1973	after 1986	Sunderland		BRUCE STOREY JNR, (FATHER RAN BELFORD HOUSE CLUB)
SUNDERLAND, NICKELODEON CLUB, THE LONDONDERRY	Friday	1969	unknown	Sunderland		MIKE ELLIOTT, NICK FENWICK AND ED PICKFORD
SWAINBY, BLUE ANCHOR FOLK CLUB, BLACKSMITHS ARMS	Sunday	1972	unknown	N Yorkshire		
TEESSIDE / BILLINGHAM EISTEDDFODD	annual	1968	present	Teesside	FESTIVAL	
THE GREY HORSE, SHIREMOOR		1968	1968	North Tyneside	replaced by Bay Hotel, Cullercoats	
THE VIKING, JARROW	Friday	1972	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		HEDGEHOG PIE AND LAMPLIGHT
TRIMDON, RED LION/Bird in the Hand	now Fri monthly		present	Durham South		
TURK'S HEAD, South Shields	Saturday	1969	1969	Gateshead/South Tyneside		MEMBERS OF SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES CLUB
TYNEMOUTH FOLK CLUB, GRAND HOTEL	Thursday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		GEORGE GREEN
TYNEMOUTH FOLK FESTIVAL	annual	1969	1973	North Tyneside	FESTIVAL	
TYNEMOUTH FOLK MOOT	annual	1974	1987	North Tyneside	FESTIVAL (dance oriented)	
TYNESIDE IRISH CENTRE/Westmorland Rd/Tara Club, Royal Arcade		1946	present	Newcastle Central	IRISH CULTURAL ORGANIZATION	JOHN DOONAN; LATER JOE CRANE; TONY CORCORAN
TYNESIDE TRADITIONAL FOLK CLUB		1978	unknown	North Tyneside		
WALLSEND ARTS CENTRE	occasional	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		
WALLSEND, NEW WINNING FOLK SONG CLUB	Wednesday	1968	unknown	North Tyneside		RAY TRAMBLE
WASHINGTON, THE THREE HORSESHOES, USWORTH	Tuesday	1968	unknown	Durham North		SID CHAMBERS; NEIL DEVLIN
WEST CORNFORTH, CO DURHAM		1968	unknown	Durham South		
WEST MONKSEATON Folk & Acoustic Music Club, HUNTING LODGE	Wednesday	1977	unknown	North Tyneside		
WHEATSHEAF, NEW YORK, TRADITIONAL FOLK CLUB	Wednesday	1974	unknown	North Tyneside		
WHEATSHEAF, MONKWEARMOUTH	Sunday	1974	unknown	Sunderland		
WHITLEY BAY, REX HOTEL	Sunday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		TRIANGLE
WINLATON RAPPER		1920	present	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	JACK ATKINS A MAJOR PRESENCE
WOLVISTON, THE WILSON FOLK CLUB	Sunday	1975	unknown	Teesside	SUCCEEDED BILLINGHAM BLACKSMITHS ARMS	THE WILSON FAMILY

TABLE 2: NORTH EASTERN FOLK CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS 1950-1975, chronological order of formation

Club/Organization	Frequency	Year	Status	Area	Style	Key Figures
WINLATON RAPPER		1920	present	Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	JACK ATKINS A MAJOR PRESENCE
EFSSS		1932	present	National		
TYNESIDE IRISH CENTRE/Westmorland Rd/Tara Club, Royal Arcade		1946	present	Newcastle Central	IRISH CULTURAL ORGANIZATION	JOHN DOONAN; LATER JOE CRANE; TONY CORCORAN
ROYAL EARSDON SWORD DANCERS YOUTH TEAM		1947	1950	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
ALNWICK GATHERING	Annual	1949	present	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	COLIN BRADFORD
KINGSMEN RAPPER TEAM, Newcastle University		1949	present	Newcastle Central	MORRIS/SWORD	NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING SOCIETY, NEWCASTLE		1950	present	Newcastle Central	CEILIDH/SOCIAL	
HIGH SPEN RAPPER TEAM		1954	present	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	GEORDIE GIBBON AND FRED FOSTER AND THEIR FAMILIES
MONKSEATON MORRIS		1955	present	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
BRIDGE/Folksong & Ballad (New Orleans Club, the Sink, and the Liberal Club all previous venues)	Thursday	1958	present	Newcastle Central		JOHNNY HANDLE; LOUIS KILLEN
DURANT HALL, RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION DANCES	occasional	1959	unknown	Newcastle Central	BARN DANCES/CEILIDH/SOCIALS	RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION
BIRTLEY – Red Lion; The Three Tuns; now RAOB	Wednesday	1961	present	Durham North		THE ELLIOTT FAMILY
SHOTLEY BRIDGE, Railway Inn, then the Victoria, then the Kings Head	Tuesday	1961	after 1968	Durham North		KEN DAY; THEN DAVE VARTY AND BILL SABLES
STOCKTON, NEWMAN'S COFFEE HOUSE		1961	unknown	Teesside		TONY FOXWORTHY
STOCKTON, The Kings Arms (later the Sun Inn)	now Tues monthly	1961	present	Teesside		JOHNNY HANDLE; THEN RON ANGEL
BALMBRA'S GEORDIE MUSIC HALL	Wed, Thur, Fri, Sat	1962	1981	Newcastle Central	MUSIC HALL	DICK IRWIN, JOE GING, JOE BENNETT
DURHAM RAMS SWORD AND MORRIS		1962	present	Durham	MORRIS/SWORD	
MIDDLESBROUGH		1962	unknown	Teesside		
NORTHUMBRIAN TRADITIONAL GROUP, including Shiremoor Marras		1962	1981	Newcastle Central		JOE BENNETT
SHIREMOOR MARRAS		1962	1981	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
STANLEY, TEMPERLEY ARMS AND GARDEN HOUSE WMC	Friday/Saturday	1962	unknown	Durham North	INFORMAL SINGAROUND OUTSIDE OF REVIVAL	
BENFIELDSIDE MORRIS, CONSETT		1963	present	Durham North	MORRIS/SWORD	
ASHINGTON LAMPGLOSS ARTS CENTRE F C	Friday/Thursday	1964	present	Northumberland South		TEACHERS FROM SEATON HIRST PRIMARY SCHOOL
DARLINGTON, CIV SERV ASSOC, BRIDGE/GOLDEN COCK/BOOT AND SHOE/BRTANNIA	Tuesday	1964	unknown	Durham South		MARTIN BASHFORTH, THEN TONY FOXWORTHY
BEAUMONT HOTEL	Monday	1964	after 1974	Northumberland		GREG MILNE; IRVINE McVEIGH AND OTHERS
MARSDEN INN, SOUTH SHIELDS	Sunday	1964	present	Gateshead/South Tyneside		JIM IRVINE AND THE MARSDEN RATTLERS; AND OTHERS
NEWCASTLE, BRIDGE, YCND FOLK SONG NIGHTS	Saturday/Monday	1964		Newcastle Central	POLITICAL GROUP PLUS MUSIC	
SOUTH SHIELDS FOLK SONG SOCIETY, THE BEACON, LAWE TOP	Sunday	1964	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	FEATURED ARTISTS SUCH AS J HANDLE & JIM SHARP	
STOCKTON FOLK CLUB, STORK AND CASTLE HOTEL		1964	unknown	Teesside		TONY FOXWORTHY
SUNDERLAND FOLK SONG CLUB, GRANGE HOTEL, FULWELL	Monday/Tuesday	1964	after 1975	Sunderland		E G HOLLIDAY; THE KEELMEN AND JIM BOYES
BRIDGE – CEILIDH/SOCIAL NIGHTS	Tues, fortnightly	1965	unknown	Newcastle Central	CEILIDH/SOCIAL	JOHNNY HANDLE, GRAHAM BINLESS, COLIN ROSS, ALJSTAIR ANDERSON
HARTLEPOOL FOLK SONG CLUB, MARKET HOTEL, LYNN STREET	Sunday	1965	after 1969	Teesside		GRAHAM WHITELEY
NEWTON AYCLIFFE, IRON HORSE FOLK CLUB		1965	unknown	Durham South		PETE THOMPSON
REDCAR, THE CUTTY WREN, HOTEL ROYAL, HIGH ST, REDCAR	Thursday	1965	present	Teesside		COLIN MATHER, THEN JOHN TAYLOR
RICHMOND FOLK CLUB, ROYAL OAK	Friday	1965	unknown	Teesside		JOHN DEIGHTON
SOUTH SHIELDS COUNTY FOLK CLUB		1965	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES	
SOUTH SHIELDS FRENCHMAN'S FORT FOLK AND BLUES CLUB		1965	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED INTO SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES	
SUNDERLAND FOLK CENTRE, The Chesters/Rose & Crown/George & Dragon	Sunday/Friday	1965	1969	Sunderland		MIKE ELLIOTT; ED PICKFORD; ERIC MAXWELL AND RICHARD MAXWELL
DARLINGTON, GOLDEN COCK	Saturday	1966	1970	Durham South		MICK SHEEHAN; THEN JOHN WISE AND COLIN RANDALL
HEXHAM ABBEY FOLK FESTIVAL	annual	1966	1972	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	ROGER FREER; THEN NORMAN SUCKLING
TEESSIDE / BILLINGHAM EISTEDDFODD	annual	1966	present	Teesside	FESTIVAL	

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY FOLK CLUB. TRENT HOUSE		1967	unknown	Newcastle Central		
NORTH EAST FEDERATION OF FOLK CLUBS		1967	1976	Regionwide	UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION	PETE ELLIOTT; DAVE SUTHERLAND; CAROLE HILL AND OTHERS
ST MARY'S COLLEGE, FENHAM	Sun, fortnightly	1967	unknown	Newcastle West	MIX OF NE AND AMERICAN MATERIAL	
STANLEY FOLK CLUB, SHIELD ROW INN	Wednesday	1967	unknown	Durham North		BENNY GRAHAM
CHESTER-LE-STREET, BRITISH LEGION CLUB	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Durham North		DAVID YOUNG; ANN STOUT; BRIAN KELL; JIM LOWERY; BILL DODD
CULLERCOATS, THE BAY HOTEL	Monday	1968	19847	North Tyneside		JACK ROUTLEDGE AND TONY GILLMAN
GATESHEAD FOLK CLUB, DUN COW, HIGH STREET	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	CROWN FC AND HAMMER FC	
GATESHEAD, CROWN FOLK CLUB	Saturday	1968	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED WITH DUN COW	ALAN PATCHETT AND BOB KINIFIC
GATESHEAD, HAMMER FOLK CLUB		1968	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED WITH DUN COW	
HEWORTH, THE SWAN	Friday/Monday	1968	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		ALAN PATCHETT AND BOB KINIFIC
HORDEN FOLK CENTRE, BELL HOTEL; FORMERLY PETERLEE	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Durham East		BERT AND IRIS GALSON AND OTHERS
MORPETH GATHERING	annual	1968	present	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	ROLAND BIBBY; LATER KIM BIBBY-WILSON
PERCY ARMS, FRONT STREET, TYNEMOUTH	Tuesday	1968	after 1972	North Tyneside	LARGE CLUB THAT DREW BIG NAMES	
PETERLEE		1968	1968	Durham East	MERGED WITH HORDEN	
PONTELAND, NORTHUMBERLAND COLLEGE FOLK CLUB	Thursday	1968	unknown	Northumberland South		
PONTELAND, SEVEN STARS INN	Friday	1968	unknown	Northumberland South	IRISH MATERIAL	RESIDENT GROUP - THE REIVERS
PRUDHOE (WEST WYLAM INN)	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Northumberland South		DEREK ROBSON AND MICHAEL WATSON
REDCAR FESTIVAL (now Saltburn)	annual	1968	present	Teesside	FESTIVAL	JOHN TAYLOR
SOUTH EAST NLAND TECHNICAL COLLEGE FC, WALLSEND	Wed, fortnightly	1968	unknown	North Tyneside		
SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES	Friday	1968	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	BLUES/CONTEMPORARY SLANT	DAVE SUTHERLAND; PIGMEAT; HOKUM HOTSHOTS; BOB GILROY AND OTHERS
THE GREY HORSE, SHIREMOOR		1968	1968	North Tyneside	replaced by Bay Hotel, Cullercoats	
WALLSEND, NEW WINNING FOLK SONG CLUB	Wednesday	1968	unknown	North Tyneside		RAY TRAMBLE
WASHINGTON, THE THREE HORSESHOES, USWORTH	Tuesday	1968	unknown	Durham North		SID CHAMBERS; NEIL DEVLIN
BALMBRA'S COUNTRY & WESTERN NIGHT	Tuesday	1969	1975	Newcastle Central	C & W	
BALMBRA'S JET SET FOLK CLUB	Monday	1969	unknown	Newcastle Central		RICK TEMPERLEY
BARLEYCORN FC, VICTORIA AND COMET	Saturday	1969	1971	Newcastle Central	STRONG POLICY CLUB	STEFAN SOBELL; JOHN REAVIE; MIKE ROBSON; ANDY & SARAH HARRISON
CHILLINGHAM HOTEL, HEATON	Thursday	1969	unknown	Newcastle East		
FISHERMAN'S ARMS, HARTLEPOOL HEADLAND		1969		Teesside		
GOSFORTH ASSEMBLY ROOMS		1969	unknown	Newcastle North	FOLK AND BLUES	
NEWTON PARK HOTEL	Monday	1969	unknown	Durham South		
QUARRINGTON HILL, CO DURHAM		1969		Durham South		
SUNDERLAND, NICKELODEON CLUB, THE LONDONDERRY	Friday	1969	unknown	Sunderland		MIKE ELLIOTT, NICK FENWICK AND ED PICKFORD
TURK'S HEAD, South Shields	Saturday	1969	1969	Gateshead/South Tyneside		MEMBERS OF SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES CLUB
TYNEMOUTH FOLK FESTIVAL	annual	1969	1973	North Tyneside	FESTIVAL	
WEST CORNFORTH, CO DURHAM		1969	unknown	Durham South		
BIRTLEY - CEILIDHSOCIAL nights	Wed, monthly	1970	unknown	Durham North	CEILIDHSOCIAL	THE ELLIOTT FAMILY
BISHOP AUCKLAND, FOLK FORUM, CASTLE HOTEL	Sunday	1970	unknown	Durham South		
BISHOP AUCKLAND, WEAR VALLEY FOLK CLUB		1970	unknown	Durham South		
COMHALTAS CEOLTOIRI EIRREAN	Sunday lunchtime	1970	present	Newcastle Central	IRISH CULTURAL ORGANIZATION	JOHN DOONAN A LEADING FIGURE, ALSO JOE CRANE; TONY CORCORAN
DARLINGTON, BOLIVAR F.C, THE BOLIVAR BAR, IMPERIAL HOTEL		1970	unknown	Durham South		PAUL CRUDDAS
DARLINGTON, KETTON OX RUGBY CLUB		1970	unknown	Durham South		
DARLINGTON, THREE CROWNS/RAILWAY HOTEL	Thursday	1970	unknown	Durham South	club named 'Bognoir Trenchcoat', parodying Fleetwood Mac	
ELSDON	monthly	1970	after 1975	Northumberland		BASIL CLOUGH
ESTON FOLK CLUB, THE BAY HORSE	Wednesday	1970	1980	Teesside		REDCAR LONGSWORD DANCERS
GATESHEAD, HONEYSUCKLE		1970	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	BLUES	RAY STUBBS
NEWCASTLETON FESTIVAL, LIDDESDALE	annual	1970	present	Scottish Borders	FESTIVAL	
REDCAR, THE STOCKTON HOTEL		1970	1972	Teesside		IAN RUSSELL AND KEN ALLEN
ASHINGTON WANSBECK FESTIVAL	Annual	1971	unknown	Northumberland South		

BARLEY MOW, QUAYSIDE		1971	1975	Newcastle Central		STEFAN SOBELL
BISHOP AUCKLAND, ACLET HOTEL	Sunday	1971	unknown	Durham South		
BRASS MAN, NEWCASTLE		1971	1975	Newcastle Central		STEFAN AND LIZ SOBELL
DURHAM, CITY HOTEL	Thursday	1971	unknown	Durham		
NORTH SHIELDS, THE CANNON		1971		North Tyneside		
BILLINGHAM, BLACK HORSE	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
COTHERSTONE (Teesside), FOX AND HOUNDS	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
CRAMLINGTON, BLAGDON ARMS (now Comrades Club)	Tuesday	1972	present	Northumberland South		
CRAWCROOK, RISING SUN	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		
DURHAM, FRAMWELLGATE MOOR, MARQUIS OF GRANBY	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Durham		
DURHAM, GILESGATE, GRANGE FOUNDRY	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Durham		
DURHAM, SALUTATION, FRAMWELLGATE MOOR	Thursday	1972	after 1974	Durham		
EASINGTON, KINGS HEAD HOTEL	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Durham East		
ESTON, CLEVELAND BAY HOTEL	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
GUISBOROUGH, GLOBE HOTEL	Friday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
HARTLEPOOL, NURSERY INN	Sunday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
KILLINGWORTH SWORD DANCERS		1972	1982	North Tyneside		MORRIS/SWORD
LANCHESTER, BLACK BULL	Monday	1972	unknown	Durham North		
MIDDLESBROUGH, ALBERT SOCIAL CLUB	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
MIDDLETON ST GEORGE F.C., MIDDLETON ST GEORGE COLLEGE		1972	unknown	Durham South		
NEW DARNELL INN, NEWCASTLE	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Newcastle Central		
REDCAR, PENNEY HEDGE, SALTSCAR HOTEL	Friday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
SEAHAM, DUN COW INN	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Durham East		
SEAHAM, SEATON HOTEL	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Durham East		
SEDFIELD, HARDWICK HALL HOTEL	Friday	1972	unknown	Durham South		
SUNDERLAND, BELL'S HOTEL	Sunday	1972	unknown	Sunderland		
SWAINBY, BLUE ANCHOR FOLK CLUB, BLACKSMITHS ARMS	Sunday	1972	unknown	N Yorkshire		
THE VIKING, JARROW	Friday	1972	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		HEDGEHOG PIE AND LAMPLIGHT
GATESHEAD, TECHNICAL COLLEGE		1973	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		KIM AND RAY BIBBY
PRUDHOE - DR SYNTAX	Sunday	1973	unknown	Northumberland South	SINGAROUND	BRIAN WATSON; GEORDIE HUNTER
SUNDERLAND, GLEBE/ROYALTY	Wednesday	1973	after 1986	Sunderland		BRUCE STOREY JNR, (FATHER RAN BELFORD HOUSE CLUB)
BALTIC TAVERN, NEWCASTLE QUAYSIDE		1974	1976	Newcastle Central	SINGAROUND	JIM MAGEEAN AND ALAN FITZSIMMONS
BELFORD HOUSE, HENDON	Thursday	1974	unknown	Sunderland	VENUE A WMC FOR SUNDERLAND SHIPYARD	BRUCE STORY SNR, (SON RAN THE GLEBE FOLK CLUB)
BILLINGHAM, BLACKSMITHS ARMS	Sunday	1974	unknown	Teesside		THE WILSON FAMILY
BLUEBELL, FULWELL	Tuesday	1974	unknown	Sunderland		KEITH GREGSON
CHEVIOT, BILLINGHAM	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Northumberland		
COACH HOUSE, LITTLE CORBY	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Cumbria		
DAVY LAMP, WASHINGTON	Saturday	1974	present	Durham North		TERRI AND ERIC FREEMAN
HEXHAM, THE HYDRO		1974	unknown	Northumberland		STUDENTS FROM TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING, ROBBIE BURNS	Tuesday	1974	unknown	Durham East		
PLOUGH, MITFORD	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Northumberland		
RYHOPE, RAILWAY INN,	Thursday	1974	unknown	Sunderland		
SEAHAM, CASTLEREAGH	Sunday	1974	unknown	Durham East		
STAINCLIFFE TRAD & CONT FC, Staincliffe Hotel, Seaton Carew	Friday	1974	after 1976	Teesside		KEITH GREGSON
STAINDROP, KINGS ARMS	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Durham South		
TYNEMOUTH FOLK MOOT	annual	1974	1987	North Tyneside	FESTIVAL (dance oriented)	
WHEATSHEAF, NEW YORK, TRADITIONAL FOLK CLUB	Wednesday	1974	unknown	North Tyneside		
WHEATSHEAF, MONKWEARMOUTH	Sunday	1974	unknown	Sunderland		
BANKS OF THE TYNE (formerly Cricketers' Arms), Bill Quay/Hebburn	Tuesday	1975	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		HEDGEHOG PIE AND FRIENDS
CORBRIDGE, BLUE BELL	Friday	1975	mid 70s	Northumberland		CAROLE HILL AND MIKE SUTTON
COUNTY FOLK CLUB, GOSFORTH	Wednesday	1975	unknown	Newcastle North		
DURHAM COUNTY FOLK ALLIANCE		1975	unknown	Durham	SPLINTER GROUP FROM NE FOLK FEDERATION	
FAT OX, FOLK CLUB, HOLYWELL	Thursday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		
FOLK AT THE POST OFFICE INN, (opp St Nicholas' Cathedral)	Saturday	1975	unknown	Newcastle Central		STEFAN AND LIZ SOBELL
FORD ARMS TRADITIONAL FOLK CLUB	Friday	1975	unknown	Northumberland		
GOSFORTH FOLK CLUB, GOSFORTH HOTEL	Tuesday	1975	unknown	Newcastle North		
HALTWHISTLE, RAILWAY HOTEL		1975	unknown	Northumberland	SINGAROUND	
HIGH POINT HOTEL, WHITLEY BAY	Monday/Tuesday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		
NEWCASTLE GENERAL HOSPITAL FOLK CLUB, MILVAIN CLUB	Wednesday	1975	unknown	Newcastle West		

PONTELAND, BLACKBIRD INN	Tuesday	1975	unknown	Northumberland South		
SEATON SLUICE, KING'S ARMS		1975	unknown	North Tyneside		RESIDENT GROUP - BALLAST HILL
SHIREMOOR, EARDSON AND DISTRICT FOLK FESTIVAL		1975	unknown	North Tyneside	FESTIVAL	
TYNEMOUTH FOLK CLUB, GRAND HOTEL	Thursday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		GEORGE GREEN
WALLSEND ARTS CENTRE	occasional	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		
WHITLEY BAY, REX HOTEL	Sunday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		TRIANGLE
WOLVISTON, THE WILSON FOLK CLUB	Sunday	1975	unknown	Teeside	SUCCEEDED BILLINGHAM BLACKSMITH'S ARMS	THE WILSON FAMILY
GRAND HOTEL, TYNEMOUTH	Thursday	1976	unknown	North Tyneside		
HEXHAM MORRIS		1976	present	Northumberland	MORRIS/SWORD	
ALNWICK PIPERS' SOCIETY		1977	present	Northumberland	PIPERS SOCIETY	GEORGE MITCHELL
DURHAM CITY FOLK CLUB, LORD SEAHAM, GILSGATE MOOR	Thursday	1977	unknown	Durham		I McCULLOUGH
ROTHBURY FESTIVAL	annual	1977	present	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	
WEST MONKSEATON Folk & Acoustic Music Club, HUNTING LODGE	Wednesday	1977	unknown	North Tyneside		
BLYTH, THE BURGLAR'S DOG FOLK CLUB		1978	unknown	Northumberland South	BLUES	DAVE FORSHAW AND PETER AFENDOULIS
DARLINGTON, THE BRITANNIA	Saturday	1978	1980	Durham South		KEN ALLEN
GATESHEAD, QUARRYMAN'S ARMS		1978	1979	Gateshead/South Tyneside	BLUES	
IMPERIAL HOTEL, JESMOND	Saturday	1978	unknown	Newcastle East		RESIDENT GROUP - STANLEY ACCRINGTON
RYTON, ADDISON		1978	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		
TYNESIDE TRADITIONAL FOLK CLUB		1978	unknown	North Tyneside		
DARLINGTON, FOLK CLUB, ARTS CENTRE	Thursday	1980	present	Durham South		TOM HUGHES
STOCKTON FOLK FESTIVAL (2 days)		mid 60s	unknown	Teeside	FESTIVAL	
BYKER, (possibly THE SHIP or the CUMBERLAND?????)	Sunday lunchtime		present	Newcastle East	SESSION	
FELLING, THE ROYAL TURF, SUNDERLAND ROAD	Saturday		1969	Gateshead/South Tyneside		ANDY HARRISON; TONY WILSON; DAVE SUTHERLAND; ALEX McKIE
NEWCASTLE FESTIVAL	Annual			Newcastle Central	FESTIVAL	
TRIMDON, RED LION/Bird in the Hand	now Fri monthly		present	Durham South		

TABLE 3: NORTH EASTERN FOLK CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS 1950-1975, listed by geographical area

CLUB NAME	MEET	FOUNDED	STATUS	AREA	NOTES	CONTACTS
COACH HOUSE, LITTLE CORBY	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Cumbria		
SEAHAM, GILESGATE MOOR	Thursday	1977	unknown	Durham		McCULLOUGH
DURHAM COUNTY FOLK ALLIANCE		1975	unknown	Durham	SPLINTER GROUP FROM NE FOLK FEDERATION	
DURHAM RAMS SWORD AND MORRIS		1962	present	Durham	MORRIS/SWORD	
DURHAM, CITY HOTEL	Thursday	1971	unknown	Durham		
DURHAM, FRAMWELLGATE MOOR, MARQUIS OF GRANBY	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Durham		
DURHAM, GILESGATE, GRANGE FOUNDRY	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Durham		
DURHAM, SALUTATION, FRAMWELLGATE MOOR	Thursday	1972	after 1974	Durham		
EASINGTON, KINGS HEAD HOTEL	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Durham East		
HORDEN FOLK CENTRE, BELL HOTEL; FORMERLY PETERLEE	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Durham East		BERT AND IRIS GALSON AND OTHERS
HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING, ROBBIE BURNS PETERLEE	Tuesday	1974	unknown	Durham East		
SEAHAM, CASTLEREAGH	Sunday	1974	unknown	Durham East		
SEAHAM, DUN COW INN	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Durham East		
SEAHAM, SEATON HOTEL	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Durham East		
BENFIELDSIDE MORRIS, CONSETT		1963	present	Durham North	MORRIS/SWORD	
BIRTLEY - CELIDH/SOCIAL nights	Wed, monthly	1970	unknown	Durham North	CELIDH/SOCIAL	THE ELLIOTT FAMILY
BIRTLEY - Red Lion; The Three Tuns; now RAOB	Wednesday	1961	present	Durham North		THE ELLIOTT FAMILY
CHESTER-LE-STREET, BRITISH LEGION CLUB	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Durham North		DAVID YOUNG; ANN STOUT; BRIAN KELL; JIM LOWERY; BILL DODD
DAVY LAMP, WASHINGTON	Saturday	1974	present	Durham North		TERRI AND ERIC FREEMAN
LANCHESTER, BLACK BULL	Monday	1972	unknown	Durham North		
SHOTLEY BRIDGE, Railway Inn, then the Victoria, then the Kings Head	Tuesday	1961	after 1968	Durham North		KEN DAY; THEN DAVE VARTY AND BILL SABLES
STANLEY FOLK CLUB, SHIELD ROW INN	Wednesday	1967	unknown	Durham North		BENNY GRAHAM
STANLEY, TEMPERLEY ARMS AND GARDEN HOUSE WMC	Friday/Saturday	1962	unknown	Durham North	INFORMAL SINGAROUND OUTSIDE OF REVIVAL	
HORSESHOES, USWORTH	Tuesday	1968	unknown	Durham North		SID CHAMBERS; NEIL DEVLIN
BISHOP AUCKLAND, ACLET HOTEL	Sunday	1971	unknown	Durham South		
BISHOP AUCKLAND, FOLK FORUM, CASTLE HOTEL	Sunday	1970	unknown	Durham South		
BISHOP AUCKLAND, WEAR VALLEY FOLK CLUB		1970	unknown	Durham South		
DARLINGTON, BOLIVAR F C, THE BOLIVAR BAR, IMPERIAL HOTEL		1970	unknown	Durham South		PAUL CRUDDAS
DARLINGTON, CIV SERV ASSOC, BRIDGE/GOLDEN COCK/BOOT AND SHOE/BRITANNIA	Tuesday	1964	unknown	Durham South		MARTIN BASHFORTH, THEN TONY FOXWORTHY
DARLINGTON, FOLK CLUB, ARTS CENTRE	Thursday	1980	present	Durham South		TOM HUGHES
DARLINGTON, GOLDEN COCK	Saturday	1966	1970	Durham South		MICK SHEEHAN; THEN JOHN WISE AND COLIN RANDALL
DARLINGTON, KETTON OX RUGBY CLUB		1970	unknown	Durham South		
DARLINGTON, THE BRITANNIA	Saturday	1978	1980	Durham South		KEN ALLEN
DARLINGTON, THREE CROWNS/RAILWAY HOTEL	Thursday	1970	unknown	Durham South	Trenchcoat; parodying Fleetwood	
MIDDLETON ST GEORGE F C, MIDDLETON ST GEORGE COLLEGE		1972	unknown	Durham South		
NEWTON AYCLIFFE, IRON HORSE FOLK CLUB		1965	unknown	Durham South		PETE THOMPSON
NEWTON PARK HOTEL	Monday	1968	unknown	Durham South		
QUARRINGTON HILL, CO DURHAM		1968		Durham South		
SEDGEFIELD, HARDWICK HALL HOTEL	Friday	1972	unknown	Durham South		
STAINDROP, KINGS ARMS	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Durham South		
TRIMDON, RED LION/Bird in the Hand	now Fri monthly		present	Durham South		
WEST CORNFORTH, CO DURHAM		1968	unknown	Durham South		
BANKS OF THE TYNE (formerly Cricketers' Arms), Bill Quay/Hebburn	Tuesday	1975	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		HEDGEHOG PIE AND FRIENDS
CRAWCROOK, RISING SUN	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		
FELLING, THE ROYAL TURF, SUNDERLAND ROAD	Saturday	1969		Gateshead/South Tyneside		ANDY HARRISON; TONY WILSON; DAVE SUTHERLAND; ALEX McKIE
GATESHEAD FOLK CLUB, DUN COW, HIGH STREET	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	FORMED OUT OF CROWN FC AND HAMMER FC	

GATESHEAD, CROWN FOLK CLUB	Saturday	1968	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED WITH DUN COW	ALAN PATCHETT AND BOB KINIFIC
GATESHEAD, HAMMER FOLK CLUB		1968	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED WITH DUN COW	
GATESHEAD, HONEYSUCKLE		1970	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	BLUES	RAY STUBBS
GATESHEAD, QUARRYMAN'S ARMS		1978	1979	Gateshead/South Tyneside	BLUES	
GATESHEAD, TECHNICAL COLLEGE		1973	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		KIM AND RAY BIBBY
HEWORTH, THE SWAN	Friday/ Monday	1968	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		ALAN PATCHETT AND BOB KINIFIC
HIGH SPEN RAPPER TEAM		1954	present	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	GEORDIE GIBBON AND FRED FOSTER AND THEIR FAMILIES
MARSDEN INN, SOUTH SHIELDS	Sunday	1964	present	Gateshead/South Tyneside		JIM IRVINE AND THE MARSDEN RATTLETS; AND OTHERS
RYTON, ADDISON		1978	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		
SOUTH SHIELDS COUNTY FOLK CLUB		1965	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED INTO SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES	
SOUTH SHIELDS FOLK SONG SOCIETY, THE BEACON, LAWE TOP	Sunday	1964	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	FEATURED ARTISTS SUCH AS J HANDLE & JIM SHARP	
SOUTH SHIELDS FRENCHMAN'S FORT FOLK AND BLUES CLUB		1965	1968	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MERGED INTO SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES	
SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES	Friday	1968	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside	BLUES/CONTEMPORARY SLANT	DAVE SUTHERLAND; PIGMEAT; HOKUM HOTSHOTS; BOB GILROY AND OTHERS
THE VIKING, JARROW	Friday	1972	unknown	Gateshead/South Tyneside		HEDGEHOG PIE AND LAMPLIGHT
TURK'S HEAD, South Shields	Saturday	1969	1969	Gateshead/South Tyneside		MEMBERS OF SOUTH TYNE FOLK AND BLUES CLUB
WINLATON RAPPER		1920	present	Gateshead/South Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	JACK ATKINS A MAJOR PRESENCE
SWAINBY, BLUE ANCHOR FOLK CLUB, BLACKSMITHS ARMS	Sunday	1972	unknown	N Yorkshire		
EFDSS		1932	present	National		
BALMBRA'S COUNTRY & WESTERN NIGHT	Tuesday	1969	1975	Newcastle Central	C & W	
BALMBRA'S GEORDIE MUSIC HALL	Wed, Thur, Fri, Sat	1962	1981	Newcastle Central	MUSIC HALL	DICK IRWIN, JOE GING, JOE BENNETT
BALMBRA'S JET SET FOLK CLUB	Monday	1969	unknown	Newcastle Central		RICK TEMPERLEY
BALTIC TAVERN, NEWCASTLE QUAYSIDE		1974	1976	Newcastle Central	SINGAROUND	JIM MAGEEAN AND ALAN FITZSIMMONS
BARLEY MOW, QUAYSIDE		1971	1975	Newcastle Central		STEFAN SOBELL
BARLEYCORN FC, VICTORIA AND COMET	Saturday	1969	1971	Newcastle Central	STRONG POLICY CLUB	STEFAN SOBELL; JOHN REAVIE; MIKE ROBSON; ANDY & SARAH HARRISON
BRASS MAN, NEWCASTLE		1971	1975	Newcastle Central		STEFAN AND LIZ SOBELL
BRIDGE - CEILIDH/SOCIAL NIGHTS	Tues, fortnightly	1965	unknown	Newcastle Central	CEILIDH/SOCIAL	JOHNNY HANDLE, GRAHAM BINLESS, COLIN ROSS, ALISTAIR ANDERSON
BRIDGE/FolkSong & Ballad (New Orleans Club, the Sink, and the Liberal Club at previous venues)	Thursday	1968	present	Newcastle Central		JOHNNY HANDLE; LOUIS KILLEN
COMHALTAS CEOLTOIRI EIRREAN	Sunday lunchtime	1970	present	Newcastle Central	IRISH CULTURAL ORGANIZATION	JOHN DOONAN A LEADING FIGURE, ALSO JOE CRANE, TONY CORCORAN
DURANT HALL, RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION DANCES	occasional	1959	unknown	Newcastle Central	BARN DANCES/CEILIDH/SOCIALS	RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION
FOLK AT THE POST OFFICE INN, (opp St Nicholas' Cathedral)	Saturday	1975	unknown	Newcastle Central		STEFAN AND LIZ SOBELL
KINGSMEN RAPPER TEAM, Newcastle University		1949	present	Newcastle Central	MORRIS/SWORD	NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
NEW DARNELL INN, NEWCASTLE	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Newcastle Central		
NEWCASTLE FESTIVAL	Annual			Newcastle Central	FESTIVAL	
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY FOLK CLUB. TRENT HOUSE		1967	unknown	Newcastle Central		
NEWCASTLE, BRIDGE, YCND FOLK SONG NIGHTS	Saturday/ Monday	1964		Newcastle Central	POLITICAL GROUP PLUS MUSIC	
NORTHUMBRIAN TRADITIONAL GROUP, including Shiremoor Marras		1962	1981	Newcastle Central		JOE BENNETT
ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING SOCIETY, NEWCASTLE		1960	present	Newcastle Central	CEILIDH/SOCIAL	
TYNESIDE IRISH CENTRE/Westmorland Rd/Tara Club, Royal Arcade		1946	present	Newcastle Central	IRISH CULTURAL ORGANIZATION	JOHN DOONAN; LATER JOE CRANE; TONY CORCORAN
BYKER, (possibly THE SHIP or the CUMBERLAND?????)	Sunday lunchtime		present	Newcastle East	SESSION	
CHILLINGHAM HOTEL, HEATON	Thursday	1969	unknown	Newcastle East		
IMPERIAL HOTEL, JESMOND	Saturday	1978	unknown	Newcastle East		RESIDENT GROUP - STANLEY ACCRINGTON
COUNTY FOLK CLUB, GOSFORTH	Wednesday	1975	unknown	Newcastle North		
GOSFORTH ASSEMBLY ROOMS		1969	unknown	Newcastle North	FOLK AND BLUES	
GOSFORTH FOLK CLUB, GOSFORTH HOTEL	Tuesday	1975	unknown	Newcastle North		

NEWCASTLE GENERAL HOSPITAL FOLK CLUB, MILVAIN CLUB	Wednesday	1975	unknown	Newcastle West		
ST MARY'S COLLEGE, FENHAM	Sun, fortnightly	1967	unknown	Newcastle West	MIX OF NE AND AMERICAN MATERIAL	
CULLERCOATS, THE BAY HOTEL	Monday	1968	1964?	North Tyneside		JACK ROUTLEDGE AND TONY GILLMAN
FAT OX, FOLK CLUB, HOLYWELL	Thursday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		
GRAND HOTEL, TYNEMOUTH	Thursday	1976	unknown	North Tyneside		
HIGH POINT HOTEL, WHITLEY BAY	Monday/Tuesday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		
KILLINGWORTH SWORD DANCERS		1972	1982	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
MONKSEATON MORRIS		1965	present	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
PERCY ARMS, FRONT STREET, TYNEMOUTH	Tuesday	1968	after 1972	North Tyneside	LARGE CLUB THAT DREW BIG NAMES	
ROYAL EARSDON SWORD DANCERS YOUTH TEAM		1947	1950	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
SEATON SLUICE, KING'S ARMS		1975	unknown	North Tyneside		RESIDENT GROUP - BALLAST HILL
SHIREMOOR MARRAS		1962	1961	North Tyneside	MORRIS/SWORD	
SHIREMOOR, EARSDON AND DISTRICT FOLK FESTIVAL		1975	unknown	North Tyneside	FESTIVAL	
SOUTH EAST N'LAND TECHNICAL COLLEGE FC, WALLSEND	Wed, fortnightly	1968	unknown	North Tyneside		
THE GREY HORSE, SHIREMOOR		1968	1968	North Tyneside	replaced by Bay Hotel, Cullercoats	
TYNEMOUTH FOLK CLUB, GRAND HOTEL	Thursday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		GEORGE GREEN
TYNEMOUTH FOLK FESTIVAL	annual	1968	1973	North Tyneside	FESTIVAL	
TYNEMOUTH FOLK MOOT	annual	1974	1987	North Tyneside	FESTIVAL (dance oriented)	
TYNESIDE TRADITIONAL FOLK CLUB		1976	unknown	North Tyneside		
WALLSEND ARTS CENTRE	occasional	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		
WALLSEND, NEW WINNING FOLK SONG CLUB	Wednesday	1968	unknown	North Tyneside		RAY TRAMBLE
WEST MONKSEATON Folk & Acoustic Music Club, HUNTING LODGE	Wednesday	1977	unknown	North Tyneside		
WHEATSHEAF, NEW YORK, TRADITIONAL FOLK CLUB	Wednesday	1974	unknown	North Tyneside		
WHITLEY BAY, REX HOTEL	Sunday	1975	unknown	North Tyneside		TRIANGLE
ALNWICK GATHERING	Annual	1949	present	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	COLIN BRADFORD
ALNWICK PIPERS' SOCIETY		1977	present	Northumberland	PIPERS SOCIETY	GEORGE MITCHELL
CHEVIOT, BELLINGHAM	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Northumberland		
CORBRIDGE, BLUE BELL	Friday	1975	mid 70s	Northumberland		CAROLE HILL AND MIKE SUTTON
ELSDON	monthly	1970	after 1975	Northumberland		BASIL CLOUGH
FORD ARMS TRADITIONAL FOLK CLUB	Friday	1975	unknown	Northumberland		
HALTWHISTLE, RAILWAY HOTEL		1975	unknown	Northumberland	SINGAROUND	
HEXHAM ABBEY FOLK FESTIVAL	annual	1966	1972	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	ROGER FREER; THEN NORMAN SUCKLING
HEXHAM MORRIS		1976	present	Northumberland	MORRIS/SWORD	
HEXHAM, ROYAL HOTEL; then BEAUMONT HOTEL	Monday	1964	after 1974	Northumberland		GREG MILNE; IRVINE McVEIGH AND OTHERS
HEXHAM, THE HYDRO		1974	unknown	Northumberland		STUDENTS FROM TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE
MORPETH GATHERING	annual	1968	present	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	ROLAND BIBBY; LATER KIM BIBBY-WILSON
PLOUGH, MITFORD	Wednesday	1974	unknown	Northumberland		
ROTHBURY FESTIVAL	annual	1977	present	Northumberland	FESTIVAL	
ASHINGTON LAMPGLASS ARTS CENTRE F C	Friday/Thursday	1964	present	Northumberland South		TEACHERS FROM SEATON HIRST PRIMARY SCHOOL
ASHINGTON WANSBECK FESTIVAL	Annual	1971	unknown	Northumberland South		
BLYTH, THE BURGLAR'S DOG FOLK CLUB		1976	unknown	Northumberland South	BLUES	DAVE FORSHAW AND PETER AFENDOUSIS
CRAMLINGTON, BLAGDON ARMS (now Comrades Club)	Tuesday	1972	present	Northumberland South		
PONTELAND, BLACKBIRD INN	Tuesday	1975	unknown	Northumberland South		
PONTELAND, NORTHUMBERLAND COLLEGE FOLK CLUB	Thursday	1968	unknown	Northumberland South		
PONTELAND, SEVEN STARS INN	Friday	1968	unknown	Northumberland South	IRISH MATERIAL	RESIDENT GROUP - THE REIVERS
PRUDHOE - DR SYNTAX	Sunday	1973	unknown	Northumberland South	SINGAROUND	BRIAN WATSON; GEORDIE HUNTER
PRUDHOE (WEST WYLAM INN)	Wednesday	1968	unknown	Northumberland South		DEREK ROBSON AND MICHAEL WATSON
NORTH EAST FEDERATION OF FOLK CLUBS		1967	1976	Regionwide	UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION	PETE ELLIOTT; DAVE SUTHERLAND; CAROLE HILL AND OTHERS
NEWCASTLETON FESTIVAL, LIDDESDALE	annual	1970	present	Scottish Borders	FESTIVAL	
BELFORD HOUSE, HENDON	Thursday	1974	unknown	Sunderland	VENUE A WMC FOR SUNDERLAND SHIPYARD	BRUCE STORY SNR, (SON RAN THE GLEBE FOLK CLUB)
BLUEBELL, FULWELL	Tuesday	1974	unknown	Sunderland		KEITH GREGSON
RYHOPE, RAILWAY INN,	Thursday	1974	unknown	Sunderland		
SUNDERLAND FOLK CENTRE, The Chesters/Rose & Crown/George & Dragon	Sunday/Friday	1965	1969	Sunderland		MIKE ELLIOTT; ED PICKFORD; ERIC MAXWELL AND RICHARD MAXWELL

SUNDERLAND FOLK SONG CLUB, GRANGE HOTEL, FULWELL	Monday/ Tuesday	1964	after 1975	Sunderland		E G HOLLIDAY; THE KEELMEN AND JIM BOYES
SUNDERLAND, BELL'S HOTEL	Sunday	1972	unknown	Sunderland		
SUNDERLAND, GLEBE/ROYALTY	Wednesday	1973	after 1966	Sunderland		BRUCE STOREY JNR, (FATHER RAN BELFORD HOUSE CLUB)
SUNDERLAND, NICKELODEON CLUB, THE LONDONDERRY	Friday	1969	unknown	Sunderland		MIKE ELLIOTT, NICK FENWICK AND ED PICKFORD
WHEATSHEAF, MONKWEARMOUTH	Sunday	1974	unknown	Sunderland		
BILLINGHAM, BLACK HORSE	Tuesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
BILLINGHAM, BLACKSMITHS ARMS	Sunday	1974	unknown	Teesside		THE WILSON FAMILY
GOTHERSTONE (Teesside), FOX AND HOUNDS	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
ESTON FOLK CLUB, THE BAY HORSE	Wednesday	1970	1980	Teesside		REDCAR LONGSWORD DANCERS
ESTON, CLEVELAND BAY HOTEL	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
FISHERMAN'S ARMS, HARTLEPOOL HEADLAND		1969		Teesside		
GUISBOROUGH, GLOBE HOTEL	Friday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
HARTLEPOOL FOLK SONG CLUB, MARKET HOTEL, LYNN STREET	Sunday	1965	after 1969	Teesside		GRAHAM WHITELY
HARTLEPOOL, NURSERY INN	Sunday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
MIDDLESBROUGH		1962	unknown	Teesside		
MIDDLESBROUGH, ALBERT SOCIAL CLUB	Wednesday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
REDCAR FESTIVAL (now Saltburn)	annual	1968	present	Teesside	FESTIVAL	JOHN TAYLOR
REDCAR, PENNEY HEDGE, SALTSCAR HOTEL	Friday	1972	unknown	Teesside		
REDCAR, THE CUTTY WREN, HOTEL ROYAL, HIGH ST, REDCAR	Thursday	1965	present	Teesside		COLIN MATHER, THEN JOHN TAYLOR
REDCAR, THE STOCKTON HOTEL		1970	1972	Teesside		IAN RUSSELL AND KEN ALLEN
RICHMOND FOLK CLUB, ROYAL OAK	Friday	1965	unknown	Teesside		JOHN DEIGHTON
STAINCLIFFE TRAD & CONT FC, Staincliffe Hotel, Seaton Carew	Friday	1974	after 1976	Teesside		KEITH GREGSON
STOCKTON, NEWMAN'S COFFEE HOUSE		1961	unknown	Teesside		TONY FOXWORTHY
STOCKTON FOLK CLUB, STORK AND CASTLE HOTEL.		1964	unknown	Teesside		TONY FOXWORTHY
STOCKTON FOLK FESTIVAL (2 days)		mid 60s	unknown	Teesside	FESTIVAL	
STOCKTON, The Kings Arms (later the Sun Inn)	now Tues monthly	1961	present	Teesside		JOHNNY HANDLE; THEN RON ANGEL
TEESSIDE / BILLINGHAM EISTEDDFODD	annual	1966	present	Teesside	FESTIVAL	
WOLVISTON, THE WILSON FOLK CLUB	Sunday	1975	unknown	Teesside	SUCCEEDED BILLINGHAM BLACKSMITHS ARMS	THE WILSON FAMILY

APPENDIX TWO

The Folk Revival's Reach within the Region

As was clear from the table of active folk organizations in Appendix One, much of the available information is incomplete or provisional. Some folk clubs appear in the records only once and there is no indication of when they closed. It therefore follows that any assessment of the reach of the folk revival into the general population must be provisional. I have included short-lived clubs and, where the close date of a club is unknown, I have opted to assume it remained open for at least part of the subsequent decade. Naturally, this may well inflate the figures, but it appears to provide the closest achievable indicator of the ratio of population to folk organizations.

Significantly, Russell has noted that in 1913 (a relatively high water mark for the brass band movement, though he estimates that the 1890s represented the absolute numerical peak¹), there was one brass band for approximately every 15,500 people.² Therefore, in many respects, the figure calculated here for the 1970s is surprising: it would be a common assumption that brass bands were infinitely more of a popular phenomenon than the folk clubs. An explanation may lie in the fact that bands would require a quorum of players, many of whom would be faithful to one particular band: folk clubs could operate with very few members and these were likely to travel around the region visiting other clubs throughout the week. Nonetheless, the apparent reach of the clubs in the 1970s is quite impressive, given the range of alternatives then available.

¹ D Russell, "'What is Wrong with Brass Bands?': Cultural Change and the Band Movement, 1918-c1964', in T Herbert (Ed), *The British Brass Band: A Musical and Social History* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 68-121, p69.

² *Ibid.*, p70.

CENSUS YEAR	POPULATION, DURHAM	POPULATION, NORTH'LAND ³	REGIONAL TOTAL	FOLK CLUBS, etc, in DECADE PRIOR TO CENSUS DATE	No of PEOPLE per FOLK CLUB
1951	1,463,868	798,424	2,262,292	7	323,185
1961	1,515,643	821,243	2,336,886	17	137464
1971	1,409,637	795,952	2,205,589	85	25948
1981	1,164,726	1,430,943	2,595,669	149	17421

Table 4: Ratio of Population to Folk Organizations, 1951-1981.

³ Office for National Statistics, *200 Years of the Census in Durham; 200 Years of the Census in Northumberland* (2001): <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/bicentenary/pdfs/durham.pdf>; <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/bicentenary/pdfs/northumberland.pdf>. The radical changes in Northumberland and Durham's respective populations in 1981 are due to local government reorganization in 1974 which resulted in the new counties of Tyne and Wear (counted with Northumberland) and Cleveland (counted with Durham).

Appendix Three

Folksong & Ballad Club: Wording of Membership Card

[Front page]

Membership card:

FOLKSONG & BALLAD
NEWCASTLE

Name

No

THE BRIDGE HOTEL
CASTLE GARTH
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE 1

Each Thursday 7.30 pm

[Mission statement on inner pages]

FOLKSONG & BALLAD, NEWCASTLE, the name by which this organisation has come to be known, is concerned exclusively with promoting a wider appreciation and a deeper understanding of the great heritage of traditional folksong, balladry and instrumental folk music of the British Isles and especially that of Northumbria. It also seeks to encourage and further the natural evolution of contemporary work within this culture.

To call FOLKSONG & BALLAD, NEWCASTLE, a club or a society would tend to mislead since it differs considerably from that which is usually associated with these terms. In this organisation it is sought to combine the sincere and even scholarly approach of the society with the informality of the club.

The principal activity of the organisation is to present a series of concert meetings at which folksong, ballad and folk music is performed in the traditional style: singers and musicians of national repute by reason of their work in the field of authentic folk music being regularly featured. Further activities include courses of illustrated lectures in conjunction with other societies and educational organisations, magazine and press articles on selected aspects of folk music, and serious consideration of the opportunities which arise from time to time of presenting folk music in the traditional style to wider audiences.

Unlike many organisations involved in the current revival of interest in folk music, FOLKSONG & BALLAD, NEWCASTLE, maintains a strict impartiality to current politics and to the associated national and international problems.

This organisation is not concerned with making profits: work done by the resident singers who comprise its committee is completely voluntary. Funds which accumulate are used exclusively for expenses incurred by the organisation.

*LAURIE CHARLTON
Organiser*

Appendix Four

Questionnaire Format

Some Questions About Your Involvement in Folk Music

1. What is your full name?
- 1.2 When and where were you born?
- 1.3 If you were not born in the NE region, when did you first move here?
- 1.4 Have you travelled much outside the NE region, and if so where?

2. What kinds of music particularly appealed to you when you were growing up?
 - 2.1 What kinds of music can you remember hearing in your home as a child?
 - 2.11 Were your parents (or any other close family members) musically active?
 - 2.12 Did any family members encourage your musical interests?
 - 2.2 What kind of music can you remember hearing at school?
 - 2.21 Do you recall any teachers who encouraged your musical interests?
 - 2.3 Did you have formal music tuition, in or out of school?
 - 2.4 When did you begin playing/singing music/songs you had chosen for yourself?
 - 2.41 What kind of music/songs did you like then?

3. When did you first become aware of folk/traditional music?
 - 3.1 What were the first folk songs/tunes that particularly appealed to you?
 - 3.2 Who were the first folk performers to make an impression on you?
 - 3.3 Did any radio or TV programmes encourage your interest in folk music?
 - 3.31 Did you find any books or magazines particularly influential on your music at the time?
 - 3.32 Did you hold, or were you aware of, any political ideas that encouraged your interest in folk music?
 - 3.33 Were you part of a work, educational, or leisure environment where folk music was a popular activity among your acquaintances?

- 3.4 What were the first folk records that you bought?
- 3.5 When did you start going to folk clubs/concerts/ceilidhs/festivals?

- 4. When did you begin playing and/or singing folk music yourself?
 - 4.1 When did you begin performing in public?
 - 4.11 What sort of events/venues did you perform at?
 - 4.2 At what point did you start getting paid to perform?
 - 4.3 When did you begin to perform outside the NE region?
 - 4.31 Did travelling more widely affect your performance style, or repertoire?
 - 4.4 When did you begin to think of yourself as a professional performer?
 - 4.41 In what ways did turning professional affect your music?
 - 4.42 Did it affect your style or presentation in any way?
 - 4.5 How much have your own musical tastes changed over the years?
 - 4.6 How different is your current repertoire from the material you used to play/sing when you started out as a performer?
 - 4.61 Has your repertoire or style been altered by external changes – for instance, in society or in the local environment?
 - 4.62 How different is your performing style from what it was in your early days?
 - 4.7 In what ways have audiences changed since you began performing?
 - 4.8 In what ways has the working environment for a folk musician/singer changed since you started performing professionally?

- 5. When and how did you get involved in running a folk club?
 - 5.1 As a club organizer, what kinds of music/song did you try to promote?
 - 5.2 Which guest artists were you particularly keen to book?
 - 5.3 When did your club begin to develop a distinctive identity of its own?
 - 5.31 Can you explain what it was that made the club distinctive?
 - 5.32 What kind of audience did your club attract?
 - 5.33 Please, if you have any membership/subscription records or other relevant documentation from the club, might you be willing to photocopy these and attach them?
 - 5.4 In what ways do you think your club may have influenced the development of folk/traditional music in this region?
 - 5.5 In what ways have clubs changed since you first became involved with them?

- 5.6 If you weren't involved in running a club, what changes would you have made to the clubs you visited had you been their organizer?
6. What do you think is special about the traditional music and song of the North East?
- 6.1 Do you believe there is a clear distinction between the music of constituent parts of the region – such as Tyneside, Northumberland, rural Durham, Wearside, Teesside?
- 6.11 Could you explain when and how you became aware of this North Eastern specialness?
- 6.12 How has your knowledge and appreciation of the music/song of this region developed since then?
- 6.2 When did you start to compose songs/tunes yourself?
- 6.21 How firmly are your own compositions grounded in the North East tradition?
- 6.3 Do you feel that NE traditional music (as generally performed today) retains a strong regional identity – or is it becoming more cosmopolitan?
- 6.31 What do you see as the biggest challenges now facing people who seek to preserve and promote traditional music, song and dance in this region?
7. Are there any other questions I should have asked you?¹

¹ It should be noted that in this questionnaire, I avoided asking direct questions regarding social background and educational attainment. This was a conscious choice based on an understanding that there is some (justified) defensiveness among the folk community regarding the preoccupation of researchers with class and mediation. To broach the subject as a core part of the questionnaire could risk an overriding guardedness from some sources. Therefore I attempted to address such issues during interviews after establishing rapport with the interviewees. Likewise, where sufficient trust had been established, I would follow up written questionnaire responses with some additional questions regarding social background and education.

Appendix Five

Description of recorded interviews in alphabetical order

Minidisc recording transferred to MP3: interview with Alistair Anderson, recorded at Newcastle University, 5th March 2004. Alistair Anderson was born in Tynemouth on 18th March 1948. A member of Folksong and Ballad while still a schoolboy in the 1960s, Anderson has become a leading figure in folk music internationally, as one of the most famous exponents of English concertina, as a composer of pieces such as *Steel Skies*, as a promoter of the Northumbrian tradition, and latterly as one of the keystones of both Folkworks and the Traditional Music degree at Newcastle University.

Minidisc recording transferred to MP3: interview with Kim Bibby-Wilson, recorded at the interviewee's home in Morpeth, 26th February 2004. Kim Bibby Wilson was born in Gosforth on 13th November 1953 into a family passionately involved in Northumbrian tradition. Her father, Roland Bibby, was the originator of the Morpeth Gathering and since his death Ms Bibby-Wilson has continued to be the organiser of this event, as well as being a keen promoter of the Northumbrian smallpipes. She and her brother have also performed folk music around the region (and occasionally abroad) since the 1960s.

Tape recording: interview with Joe Crane at Cumberland Arms, Byker, 19th March 2006. Joe Crane is a leading figure in the promotion of Irish culture on Tyneside, and a longstanding committee member of both the Irish Centre and the Tyneside Irish Festival. Among other folk music interests, he plays uilleann pipes and holds regular sessions for experienced and aspiring players at the Cumberland Arms.

Minidisc recording transferred to MP3: interview with Bob Davenport, recorded at the Swallow Hotel, Gateshead, 16th March 2005. Bob Davenport was born in Gateshead in 1932. He moved to London in the 1950s where he rapidly became a leading figure in the burgeoning folk movement, particularly in the North London Irish traditional music scene. He continued to live in London apart from brief sojourns back to his native North East during the 1960s and '70s. His huge tenor voice has graced recordings since the 1950s to the present day, he has sung in major national festivals, and he has been one of the most voluble promoters of the populist (favouring context over text) definition of folk music.

Minidisc recording transferred to MP3: interview with Carole Garland, recorded by Mike Sutton 5th August 2004. Carole Garland was born in Australia in 1942, but her parents returned to the North East from their services posting when Ms Garland was only one year old. During the 1960s and '70s she became a regular at folk clubs throughout the Newcastle area, an organiser of festivals and a performer in a duo with her then husband. Since then, Ms Garland has settled in Australia, but she makes regular trips back to the North East of England to attend traditional events such as Alwinton Show.

Minidisc recording: interview with Tom Gilfellow, recorded at his home in Gateshead, 21st March 2003. Tom Gilfellow was born in Stanley, Co Durham in the 1940s. An early regular at Folksong and Ballad Club (nicknamed 'the bairn' because he was still at school), he returned to the North East after university to become a club resident and a member of the High Level Ranters. He was, along with A L Lloyd, a key figure in the rediscovery of pitman poet Tommy Armstrong, and was one of the main voices on the Topic LP dedicated to this songsmith. Gilfellow's guitar style has been very influential throughout the folk scene and he continues to perform professionally.

Minidisc recordings transferred to MP3: interviews with Benny Graham (A) by Mike Sutton on 10th April 2002; (B) by author at author's home in Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, 20th May 2003. Benny Graham was born at South Moor, Co Durham on 12th May 1952. He formed and ran folk clubs in and around the Stanley area of Co Durham throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and has sung in folk clubs,

theatres (he is also a well-regarded actor) and maritime festivals. For several years, he presented the folk music show on Newcastle's first independent radio station, Metro Radio. A member of the vocal harmony group, Pegleg Ferret, he continues to perform around the UK and abroad.

Minidisc recording transferred to MP3: interview with Keith Gregson, recorded at his home in Sunderland, 12th February 2004. Keith Gregson was born in London in 1948. His family moved to Cumbria in the 1950s, where the young Gregson became involved in folk dancing. Gregson moved to Newcastle in 1973 and became involved in the Newcastle University folk club. Combining his career as a teacher with his interest in folk music, he performed in and organised folk clubs around the Sunderland and Hartlepool areas, as well as running 'folk camps' to allow parents and children to enjoy folk music during school holidays. Gregson is also a historian and has published a notable biography of Ned Corvan (see Bibliography).

Minidisc recording: interview with Johnny Handle, recorded by Mike Sutton, 25th February 2002; and Tape recording: interview with Johnny Handle recorded by the author at The Bridge Hotel, Newcastle, 3rd March 2004. Johnny Handle was born John Pandrich at Wallsend on 15th March 1935. He acquired his nickname (a derivation of 'pan-handle') due to a youthful fascination with geology: its assonance with the name of a composer was purely a happy coincidence. His first musical involvement was in playing piano and double bass for traditional jazz groups, eventually moving into skiffle and ultimately towards folk music as one of the founding members of Folksong and Ballad Club and The High Level Ranters. A noted songwriter, he has penned several internationally-known songs, perhaps most famously *Farewell to the Monty*. He continues to perform a huge and entertaining repertoire of North Eastern songs, usually accompanying himself on piano or accordion, and was one of the leading consultants on the FARNE (Folk Archive Resource North East) website.

Minidisc recording transferred to MP3: interview with Doreen and Bryan Henderson, recorded at their home in Birtley on 13th December 2004. Doreen Henderson (née Elliott) was born in Birtley to Jack and Em Elliott, the patriarch and

matriarch of the noted singing family. She married Bryan Henderson in the 1950s. Both their voices are heard on the famous Smithsonian Folkways LP, *The Elliots [sic] of Birtley* and they continue to perform and to run the Birtley Folk Club that was started by the family in the early 1960s. The Elliots are generally considered to be true examples of the continuous tradition as found in industrial communities, a heritage of which the family are famously proud.

Minidisc recording transferred to MP3: a conversation with Hannah Hutton in a discussion group led by Joey Oliver at The Sage Gateshead, 22nd February 2005. Hannah Hutton grew up on a farm in North Northumberland close to the Scottish border and absorbed songs from family, friends, records and radio. She married the noted Northumbrian piper Joe Hutton and the couple eventually settled in Rothbury, where Hannah has continued to live after Joe's death in 1995. Hannah Hutton only began to sing in public, at Alistair Anderson's instigation, during the late 1980s, but has since become a favourite at festivals such as Whitby, where she is hailed as a marvellous example of living tradition.

Minidisc recording: interview with Patricia Jennings, recorded at her home in Wallington, 14th July 2003. Born into the Trevelyan family of Wallington (she was the daughter of Sir Charles Philips Trevelyan and Lady Trevelyan), Patricia Jennings is a keen Northumbrian piper and has been President of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society, a position she retained until she was in her nineties. She provided a home for fellow piper Jack Armstrong in his latter years and the two recorded an album of duets which they regularly performed at the tearooms of Wallington Hall.

Minidisc recordings transferred to MP3: interviews with Louis Killen, recorded at The Bridge Hotel, Newcastle on 9th March 2004 and 30th March 2004. Louis Killen was born in Gateshead on 19th January 1934. One of the world's most noted ballad singers and an early proponent of English concertina within the second revival, Killen had first been attracted to jazz and skiffle but discovered as a member of Oxford's Heritage Society that his own local folk music was of great importance. He went on to become a founder member, along with Johnny Handle, of Folksong and Ballad club in Newcastle, but followed the peripatetic lifestyle of the professional performer and soon travelled to London and eventually the USA, where

he performed with the Clancy Brothers and was a fixture on Pete Seeger's environmental ship, *The Clearwater*. He returned to Gateshead in 2004 and continues to perform both solo and in a well-received duo alongside Mike Waterson.

Notes taken from telephone interview with Brian Mawson, 20th May 2005. Brian Mawson has worked for Newcastle's main music store, J G Windows, since the 1960s, and has set up several record companies including Mawson & Wareham and Rubber Records. The catalogues of both these companies were considerably weighted towards regional material, and Mawson & Wareham have in recent years released a major boxed set of CDs entitled *The Northumbria Anthology*.

Minidisc recording transferred to MP3: interview with Lance Robson, recorded at his home in Morpeth, 8th December 2004. Lance Robson is President of the Northumbrian Musical Heritage Society and was, from the late 1930s until his wartime call-up, Secretary of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society. He has written a multi-volume history of the Northumbrian smallpipes and keeps a museum of bagpipes at his home.

Minidisc recording transferred to MP3: interview with Colin Ross and Ray Fisher, recorded at their home in Whitley Bay, 7th March 2005. Ray Fisher was born in Glasgow in 1940, and sang in a duo with her brother Archie, achieving national fame through touring and television. Her powerful voice, further developed through informal training with the great Scottish traveller singer Jeannie Robertson, can be heard on the seminal Topic LP *The Iron Muse*. A 1962 visit to Newcastle brought her to Folksong and Ballad Club where she would meet her future husband, Colin Ross, and she settled in the North East shortly afterwards. As well as continuing to be a club resident and noted touring and performing artist, she presented a BBC Newcastle folk music programme in the 1970s.

Colin Ross was born in North Shields and began playing classical violin in local orchestras before becoming drawn to accompanying local folk dance teams, as well as learning to play Northumbrian smallpipes. He was an early member of Folksong and Ballad club and an influential part of the High Level Ranters. In the late 1970s, he was able to retire from his post as a lecturer in sculpture at Newcastle Polytechnic

in order to become one of the first full-time professional smallpipe makers. Ross is further the Technical Advisor to the Northumbrian Pipers' Society.

Tape recording: interview with Jean Spence at her office in Durham University, 21st October 2004. Jean Spence, who lectures in sociology, was born in Seaham in the 1950s and developed an interest in folk music due mainly to BBC Schools programmes such as *Singing Together*. She attended folk clubs in Seaham in the 1960s and early 1970s but, although she still enjoys the music, her interest fell away as other demands on her time grew.

Appendix Six

A Recollection: **EFDSS and the Shepherds**

The following story recounted by Johnny Handle is included here not only because it is a wonderfully colourful tale among the many personal myths of the folk revival, but also because it contrasts the scholarly approach of some mediators with the playfulness of ‘source singers’ for whom music was primarily an entertainment. It further demonstrates how young North Eastern revivalists found that their alignment fell somewhere between mediators and mediated, but with most admiration for the representatives of the continuous tradition:-

There was a time when the English Folk Song and Dance Society was doing very little on Tyneside, and I said, well, if you can’t beat them, join them. So I got meself voted on the Committee. They weren’t producing song concerts, they were mainly having tea dances, which seems to be their strongest thing, which was great for people who loved doing that, they loved doing the dances properly. But I thought, well, with the power of an organization like English Folk Song and Dance, this is a nice umbrella thing that we could get under and get something. So I got on the Committee and we started some song, well, song and music concerts, for local people. And I got the shepherd Jimmy White to come down, who sings, well used to sing, in a very broad accent. And also in the same concert, Billy Pigg. And this was, well I thought it was great. And it was in the YMCA, a lovely terraced hall. Billy Conrad from Ashington, the whistle- player and maker came down, so it was a pretty rich mixture. A lot of the pipers’ society’s people came to hear Billy. But of course Jimmy got approached by a Daily Mirror reporter, taken across to the Eldon Grill at the interval after he’d done his first spot, and filled up with ale. And Jimmy full of ale was quite careless about his approach.

So ... Billy was doing this sort of final, great, most beautiful spot, you see, and Jimmy had been dragged off, saying ‘I’ve still got some mair songs, ye

knaa'. And I was there with me blue suit on stage. Jimmy would find a pin in his lapel and he would stagger across the stage and move towards Billy Pigg and pretend that he was going to put the pin in his bag, you see, when Billy was in the middle of a beautiful slow air. I mean, this was absolutely sweat-gathering embarrassment, and the members of the Pipers' Society, the old hierarchy, were standing opposite saying 'Get him off, get him off!' Billy's still trying to play whatever it was, *The Wild Hills o'Wannie*, or something, and smiling at Jimmy White, knowing that he wouldn't do it, because apparently this had happened in some village hall when Jimmy was full of beer. And I just wanted the stage to swallow me up. Because I didn't know what to do, I mean I was trying to get hold of Jimmy and he was a very strong shepherd. And I was trying to do it diplomatically, like you do on the stage, you know, and he's saying, 'Fucking get off us,' you know, so you have to say, 'Come on Jimmy', 'Ah bloody aad pipes, you divvent want to hear them. Aa'm going to prick the pipes ...'. So that was the one I remember the most, because I'd built this concert up and got lots of flyers out for it and really thought this is going to be it, and the EFDSS are going to have a local branch that's worthy of the North East.¹

¹ Johnny Handle interviewed by Mike Sutton, 25 February 2002, recording in my possession. Handle recounted much the same tale to the author on 3rd March 2004, but this earlier account is the fullest. The fact that it is obviously a favoured and much-told story implies that it has informed Johnny Handle's own practice and understanding of folk tradition.

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