

## **THE TARNISHED IMAGE ? : FOLK 'INDUSTRY' and MEDIA.**

One aspect of the traditional music scene that has been recognised is that it doesn't have a professionally managed infrastructure. Some of the informal amateur structures within the folk scene are at times one of its greatest strengths but at other times one of its weaknesses. <sup>1</sup>

Three years ago I conducted a selective review of the contemporary folk industry and media from a popular music perspective as part of my doctoral thesis. <sup>2</sup> I concluded that historiographical pressures concerning what folk music actually was and how (or, indeed, whether) it should be marketed had acted in such a way as to minimize economic and cultural progress and positively encourage an inefficient, albeit dedicated, distribution network of information and music. I further suggested that this happened to such an extent that some folk music lovers who entered the 'industry' and attempted to market the music were subject to over-sensitivity and socio-political (and thus generic) pressures and judgements. They had allowed themselves to be deflected from the pursuit of profit by continuing to perceive an opposition between heritage (the natural) and enterprise (the mass-produced); this dichotomy remained central to a continual struggle for meaning.

Although I concluded my discussion of this problem by suggesting that certain sections of the folk music industry and media were beginning to face the challenge of commerce, my monitoring of both areas in the intervening three years has revealed no substantial progress away from the margins of popular music production. My conviction is that the music of the folk 'movement' (if it may still be described as such) remains largely hidden from, and consequently unheard by, the vast majority of the general public. Moreover, despite the efforts of such singers as Billy Bragg, and certain progressive elements within the folk music industry (the internet-based magazine Musical Traditions, for example) to raise the profile of the genre in the United Kingdom, it seems to me that what little is revealed of folk music participation remains tarnished by the revival's own countenance.

After an interval of three years I cannot but ask whether the folk revival has moved into an irretrievable period of decay - or whether it is merely going through the transitional pains of adjustment to the vagaries of postmodernity in popular music production and reception.

The following account, in short, submits that the relationship between what can be conceived as folk music and its presentation remains a significant and persistent problem for the commercial sector of the folk revival. This relationship dictates that the methods and forms of presentation are accompanied by an ever-present sanction of the unacceptable. In circumstances where the range of any music that reaches the public ear is determined at least partly by the nature of the establishment that produces and disseminates it, any such sanction inevitably influences the course of mercantile development.

For example, one of the few advances in profile-raising that the folk 'commercial' sector appears to have made in recent times is in receiving more grant-aid from regional and government arts development directorates. Alan Bell, organiser of the Fylde Folk Festival, recently (spring 2000) became chairman of a new organisation named Folkus (the Folk Arts Network of the North West) because he was 'frustrated by the lack of recognition for the folk arts on his home patch'.<sup>3</sup> Bell is regarded highly in the North West of England for his tireless campaigning for folk music and dance, and it is expected that he will succeed in attracting sponsorship from a variety of funding bodies. Similarly, the relative success of the Folkworks organisation in the North East is a credit to the hard work of fund and profile-raising on behalf of folk music. However, activity of this kind hardly signals economic growth. In fact, one could view this tendency to seek external sponsorship as a desperate measure to underwrite the accumulated debt incurred by various folk-related projects. Folkworks rely upon funding from Northern Arts, Durham City Arts, Durham County Council and the Arts Council of England. It is also a registered charity. These networking bodies have not elicited any notable creative successes in the folk music sector, nor have they expanded investment or production. In fact, they appear

to exist for the purpose of rescuing festival societies from non-profit situations while maintaining, on the musical front, a 'them versus us' stance. One has to ask whether they unwittingly encourage a commercial backwardness. 4

Despite its conspicuously more trendy incarnation as 'Shoots and Roots', the 2000 Edinburgh Folk Festival was forced to fold prior to its customary Easter event, the November 1999 'Shoots and Roots' falling well short of its budgeted income targets. The basic problem was that not enough people were attracted by the presentation of the programme, even though, according to its artistic director Dave Francis, the festival sported 'a balanced commercial and artistic blend and [was] supported by a good publicity campaign on a limited budget'.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps some justifiable suspicion emanates from funding bodies when they observe that what they perceive to have once been a moderately thriving media and production sector of the popular music industry is now failing so spectacularly to sell itself that it has to resort to funding applications to prop-up unstable financial proposals. Not surprisingly, the Scottish Arts Council and Edinburgh City Council both decided not to throw good money after bad after considering the size of the EFF Society's overdraft. The same commentator who recorded the words of Dave Francis quoted above relayed the following 'off the cuff' comments of an unidentified EFF organiser :

...We really set ourselves up as suckers, don't we, when we believe something is worth doing because of its intrinsic worth. Better to be thoroughly crassly commercial - the folks with the purse strings seem to understand that so well; they know the price of everything and the value of nowt! Thatcher's legacy. 6

Thatcher's legacy, perhaps; but the decline in the revival's ability to market itself has recently been reflected widely in similar falling figures and failing projects. The closure of the Edinburgh Folk Festival followed closely on the heels of the failure of the 'Continental Ceilidh' in Lanark, which left a trail of debts to artists. As I write (in June 2000), the HTD Records Summer Folk Day has been cancelled on account of 'very bad

advance ticket sales'.<sup>7</sup> My own experiences of co-promoting the folk duo Show of Hands at Liverpool's Neptune theatre in May 2000 bears similar witness not only to apathy or declining public interest but also to misdirected, irrelevant and consequently unsuccessful marketing. Despite the relative success of the venture, the nature of the promotional material doomed it to unprofitability. Indeed, the 'traditional' associations suggested by the advertising material probably bewildered many. The number of people willing, under these terms, to invest culturally or financially in folk music reception in Liverpool is undoubtedly decreasing. So far as one can see, this process looks like continuing.

There are a number of interconnected reasons for this sorry state. The first is the decline in folk and acoustic music as an everyday musical tool or form of expression, a narrative with recognized, prefabricated musical and social articulations. One can no longer assume that an audience exists for any music project that stands for apparent unity and totality of meaning. Every signifier (in this case, the sound of folk music) eventually 'empties' itself of meaning when it becomes historically disengaged from a particular foundational, synchronic signified (i.e. the thing that it purports to represent: in this case the 'folk revival'). The signified cannot remain umbilically tied to that which it initially symbolized.

Therefore, although young people in the U.K. of the 1990s were ready to embrace music of 'past' eras, they did so in contexts in which it was possible to rearticulate the signifier. The mid-1990s psychedelia, easy and loungecore 'revivals' are good examples of this. Others, too, are the continuing fascination with Swedish pop group ABBA and with 1970s disco, as well as the seemingly ever-present 'revival' of Mod. Whereas the folk revival has adopted a somewhat dogmatic rhetoric that relates current practice directly to a historical, identity-giving foundation, other genres are able to present empty signifiers to which one can attach meaningful but essentially disconnected signifieds. <sup>8</sup> All music is a symbolic representation and inevitably experiences the vagaries of indefinite extension to which all symbols are subject: an open-ended horizon, rather than a determined relation.

Unlike other genres, however, folk music is not readily presented as one that embraces this empty horizon - it is not presumed to enfold a groundlessness. Rather, folk (or 'traditional') music is presented to its audience and its practitioners as an embodiment of apparently concrete argumentative practices and historical solutions (even though this cannot be so for a symbolic signifying practice). This presentation continues to cultivate a conflict perspective rather than openly to acclaim rearticulation. As the anonymous quotation above implies, we are bequeathed an image in which the values 'inherent' in the music are those of ideology, conflict and difference. Our resulting perceptions are of a music 'scene' that represents a challenge to the domination and exploitation of the masses by popular culture and also a struggle for control of the means of production.

At the same time, there has been a steady decline throughout the whole United Kingdom in the importance of manually based music-making and a concomitant steady growth of home studios and computer-based music software. This is part of the great social revolution of our age, and it is a phenomenon by no means confined to Britain. I am not suggesting that folk music production and dissemination will ever cease as a consequence of this change, but technology is helping to challenge the conventional wisdom of taste cultures in complex industrial societies such as our own. The inherited categories of high culture, folk culture and popular culture, together with the host of associated aesthetic gatekeepers (who include critics, reviewers and opinion makers), are being subverted by the heterogeneous mass-mediated cultures of the computer age.

Our increasing prosperity has created a bigger demand for services to cater for our leisure, and this has also had effects on folk music commerce. Despite the failure of the Edinburgh Folk Festival, a modicum of growth has occurred in recent times in the folk festival sector (it is estimated by the English Folk Dance & Song Society that 3 million people now attend folk festivals each summer). However, it could be argued that under these circumstances folk festival culture is a mere reflection of this wealth and leisure. Cheryl Hunt, a spokesperson for the Chester Folk Festival, has expressed her concern that

festival presentations as a whole are failing to expound folk music as a participatory practice and, instead (to paraphrase her words) are 'exhibiting the music inside an event culture where the music merely accompanied the happening'. In May 2000 she stated in a newspaper interview :

The extra events we plan to put on will be very much aimed at audience participation in the form of workshops, sessions, singarounds, dances, etc. 9

But these depictions also have their problems. While such folk performance and reception processes are viewed by many as reflecting a respect for heritage and tradition, these images no longer represent the informal rules and expectations that guide our everyday behaviour (our 'folkways', so to speak). In fact, they can (and do) reek of musical virtuosity and elitism. Sessions and singarounds do not belong to the common musical parlance of young people of the twenty-first century and do not relate to their social mores or everyday social interactions. The social/musical language of the revival, therefore, is not only constrained by its most visible expositions but in addition comes across as antiquated and esoteric - not the greatest incentive to trade! The culture of the folk music revival remains stuck in an 'ideal' form incapable of adjusting to the 'real' and ever-changing patterns of society.

For any popular music genre to survive in the twenty-first century its commercial arm needs to understand how to market that music. Perhaps the one basic axiom valid for all popular music presentation is that the music is obliged to speak on at least two levels at once: first, to other musicians and to the concerned minority that cares about specific meanings; second, to the public at large that cares about other issues pertaining to its own chosen way of life. However, the revivalists tend to demarcate themselves strictly in the market-place: either as increasingly dated but charming 'ancients' (note the William Jackson album entitled 'Celtic Tranquility'), or else as partisans endorsing the solemn 'historical' burden of the coal mine and the pawn shop. It is this second association,

perhaps more than anything else, that alienates the youth of 2000 and the middle-class aspirations arising from it.

To be involved in folk music commerce, therefore, is to align oneself with one or other version of an apparently fixed musical-cum-social policy at a time when the predominant drive in British society and trade is to move away from integrated packages of this kind. In an explosive age of social pluralism and new forms of stratification that is witnessing a rebirth of social snobbery via hedonism and liberal elitism as well as multi-cultural tolerance (and its obverse, racial hatred) the activities and language of the folk revival look increasingly anachronistic. Conversely, the modern world of commerce appears to many folk revivalists as increasingly degenerate in relation to a mythical past.

#### **THE FEAR OF AFFLUENCE - AN 'INDUSTRY' AS SUCH ?**

Certainly, the pop industry's concern for market share continues to be viewed by many within the folk scene as at odds with folk ideas about authenticity and credibility and, especially in the context of the pop industry's marginal status qua industry, remains an object of suspicion for 'folkies', who suspect something amiss and untrustworthy. Chris Sugden writes of 'reducing (music) to the lowest common denominator in order to suit the mass market'.<sup>10</sup> The popular music industry is seen as drawing attention shamelessly to ephemerality, as concentrating on the materiality of people's lives. This conflicts with what survives of the idealistic optimism of the folk revival. A significant proportion of active folkies react negatively towards anything resembling popular music 'business'. At times, they seem to prefer an inefficient marketing network that remains true to its traditions to an efficient one modelled on the practices of capitalist industry. Moving forward via individual initiative, a basic tenet of the popular music industry, often appears less acceptable than advancing via group activity. As a result, there is a very deep-rooted hostility to any attempts at increasing sales via outright commercialism; ambitious projects such as the English Folk Dance and Song Society's Root and Branch (of which more later) have first to justify themselves by being 'thoroughly stimulating...extremely important and worthwhile'.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, despite an ideological reluctance to admit that the capitalist system and present-day reality can have anything to commend them, coupled with a general feeling that once the folk revival 'ceases to be able to appeal to idealists and starts to attract careerists it will lose the moral force which is its greatest traditional asset',<sup>12</sup> the folk music industry in Britain stubbornly endures through a network of relatively small, independent businesses (many of them part-time) and the devotion of enthusiastic amateurs. This network includes record companies, distributors, instrument makers and repairers, retailers, festival organisers, promoters, artist agencies, folk clubs and a periodical-dominated media system. All of these business and media strands compete with each other for musicians, articles and, indeed, consumers; but they also attempt, as if in recognition of a common heritage, to co-ordinate their activities informally through the folk music-related social networks that have survived into the twenty-first century. These networks are bound together in a kind of ideological commonwealth. From a pragmatic business perspective, however, this network often turns out to be something of a chaotic labyrinth. Jeremy Horrall, proprietor of the Telford's Warehouse venue has complained :

...it can be a bit of a nightmare, to be honest. We've had to cancel many times after having a folkie on our [advertising] board for ages. Alexander's [another venue in Chester] have had the same trouble - even with Martin Carthy - he was due there last autumn but failed to show...didn't know anything about it, apparently. It's no good, really. I'm not suggesting that Martin is unprofessional - far from it - but the (I think) Farndon folk club who 'booked' him into Alexander's certainly are!<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the British folk music 'industry' is not (and would not necessarily claim to be) an industry as such, but is instead a rather dispersed community made up of business associates, friends and like-minded enthusiasts. Some parts of this community do attempt to make a living out of the genre (the Adastra agency, for example), but many others, among whom one may mention Alan Surtees, organiser of the Bridgenorth Folk Festival, and the promoter and writer Chris Hockenull, do not. All of them appear to desire a

wider recognition for the music - but not under 'any' terms. For example, recent advertisements in Volume 37 of the folk magazine *The Living Tradition* entice prospective purchasers with such descriptions as 'folksinger, storyteller and community musician' (Pete Castle, p. 24), '..a cerebral musician' (Cormac Breatnach p. 26), '...spirited sets and honest songs...and love of the tradition' (Firebrand p. 48). In this way, the folk music trading sector and media see as their joint task to confirm the existence of not only a musical style, but a valuable historical-cultural entity. There is a general consensus for non-concession - a fear, even, that the music or the artist as a visible attestation of an authentic aesthetic could in some way be compromised.

While such anxieties are perhaps understandable, given the apparent historical nature of the music, they shade into another fear that is far more pernicious (and financially damaging): that once a folk music artist acquires the trappings of popular music he or she will begin to adopt popular music attitudes and habits of mind, becoming totally commercial and corrupt or, at best, losing touch and sympathy with the folk revival. Although there is a history of folk artists leaving the revival for the sake of commercial success (the names include Isla St. Clair, Billy Connolly, Mike Harding, Gerry Rafferty and Barbara Dickson), it is easy to show how inconsistent this negative attitude is, since all of the above-named artists, among many others, have proudly drawn attention to their folk origins. It also appears ill-considered to take as axiomatic that authenticity and commercial success are antithetical, since both can logically be components of the same accomplishment. The problem with the rank categorisation of musical parameters is that there is, quite literally, no area in music (not excluding Gregorian chant) that has not at some time or other been visited and uplifted by musicians of a commercial persuasion.

If this seems a rather dismal portrayal of the way in which culturally inhibitive generic barriers still block the path of expansion for certain kinds of music in Britain today, it illustrates accurately the articles of faith to which many folk adherents continue to cleave. In actual fact, the ad hoc anti-commercial formulations discussed above are not peculiar to the folk revival but are replicated in one form or another in probably every other

‘scene’ in present-day popular music. Sara Cohen, Ruth Finnegan and Barry Shank, amongst others, have described comparable invocations of authenticity in different locations and scenes. <sup>14</sup> This evidence suggests that small sectors within all musical communities strive for authenticity by bucking trends. In any case, as folksinger Bob Buckle testifies, ‘pop star’ egos and antics are not confined to pop music :

Although I enjoyed playing at the Robert Shelton workshop in Liverpool this year (2000), I thought that the ego-centric attitude of a certain folk performer was well out of order. It’s not only the ‘Atomic Kittens’ of this world who suffer from egomania, let me tell you! <sup>15</sup>

However, an assertion that the ‘fundamental honesty of most British folk music business people is a facet which signifies a “difference” from other popular music production practices’ remains vehement within the ranks of the folk revival. <sup>16</sup> It is also claimed that the integrity of the average British ‘folk businessperson’ is exceptionally high (one might cite Tony Engle of Topic, here). Major problems exist, however, for this enlightened folk revival entrepreneur. These stem not only from his or her attempt to reconcile the conflict between respect for ‘tradition’ (whatever **that** is) and the imperatives of successful marketing, but also from the ambiguity of the assumptions that gave rise to folk’s brand of musical and social egalitarianism in the first place. These tenets came into being in non-repeatable historical circumstances (in the brief heyday of Guild Socialism, actually) and through the mediation of what one can only term scholarly elitism, as represented by such early collectors as Cecil Sharp. Both factors make the proclamation of folk’s ‘authenticity’ and the sanctification of its ‘difference’ highly problematic. An artistic manifesto along these dogmatic lines is workable only in the context of a fixed world view - in this instance, a view that finds a musical language tolerable only if it can be explained as a primordial function, a ‘natural’ form of expression in the Roussellian sense.

It is also true that the language and marketing of the folk revival carry a residue of that social climate just after World War II when workers and bosses seemed to stand unalterably opposed to each other and integrity was often equated with hard left political ideology, low commercial aspirations and chronic inefficiency. Indeed, the aforementioned Topic Record Company grew directly out of the Workers' Music Association (the Topic record club, 1939), which was founded in 1936 by the London Labour Choral Union and the Co-operative Musical Association. In reality, the WMA was little more than a nebulous offshoot of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The Workers' Music Association commissioned A.L. Lloyd to write *The Singing Englishman* in 1944 and *Folk Song in England* in 1967 and, within the milieu of post-WW II utopianism, the executive of the WMA fashioned 'tradition' in its own image (thinly disguising itself as the vanguard of a peace movement, in the process).

The folk revival took wing in an age of apparent certainty - that of the onward march of the 'progressive' movement (with whatever more precise political inflection its individual adherents chose to add to it) - but was in time overtaken by a different era symbolised by the fall of the Berlin Wall, to which it reacted by becoming embattled, uncertain and protectionist.

During my four years of doctoral research (1993-7) it became evident to me that at some point in the recent past the folk revivalists has squandered a golden opportunity to broaden the appeal of their music. Having once missed the bus, the revival as a whole had got itself trapped in a vicious circle from which it has since become ever more difficult to escape. Thrown back for support on a hard core of older adherents in the 1980s and 1990s, it found its appeal increasingly narrowed to the horizons of this declining group, trapped among the slogans and banners of the past (as witness, the "Raise Your Banners" event in Sheffield).<sup>17</sup> For this reason, its ability to attract the young steadily declined. Today, much of the folk media finds itself continuing to express the ideas and ideals of a conservative (with a small C) minority group resistant to change.<sup>18</sup>

At a time when class structures at least appear more fluid than ever before, the folk music 'industry' continues championing, and attempting to merchandise, a way of life that is in several respects whole decades out of date. If one is to talk sensibly of growth within folk music's commercial sector, the primary objective must perhaps be to deflate its pretensions and empty it of outdated ideological baggage. This may appear an over-harsh indictment since, after all, there are many enlightened musicians active in the revival. But the folk 'industry' and media taken as a whole remain overly cautious and preservationist, and these actions reflect not only its origins in the aftermath of World War II, but also the deceleration that took place in the early 1980s.

#### **RECORD LABELS - PLAUSIBLE INEFFICIENCY?**

By the late 1970s popular music reception had visibly fragmented as many young people turned to cheap forms of technology in order to create music. As punk rock and new wave came to incorporate cheap synthesisers and drum machines, and as technologically enhanced dance music began to evolve alongside rap and hip-hop, the folk scene failed - perhaps for the first time since the war - to recruit en masse a new generation of followers. In addition, by the early 1980s the major industrial players in the popular music market-place, having temporarily lost ground to a host of independent labels, were forced to re-invent themselves with leaner, younger, more dynamic appendages that were also bent on using technology rather than tradition to its fullest capacity. In addition, many major record companies began also to employ teams of young accountants who saw little future in uncommercial acoustic music and systematically removed from their rosters many leading British folk artists, among whom were Ashley Hutchings, John Martyn and Al Stewart.

In consequence of the growth-contraction economic cycle that had begun to overtake many small businessmen and entrepreneurs by the mid-1970s, such independent record companies as Transatlantic, Island, Topic, Leader, Trailer, Ash, Kicking Mule, Village Thing, Peg and Mooncrest (B&C), and Criminal - all previously very sympathetic to folk and folk/rock, began either to mutate, sell-out to a major with little interest in their back

catalogues or disappear altogether. This caused a huge depression in the folk 'industry' (which places music before economics, as we have observed). The highest-profile casualty was Nat Joseph's Transatlantic label, but Topic (by that time Britain's longest running independent record label) also found the going very tough.

Topic survived thanks to the managerial acumen of Tony Engle, who set up a wholesale distribution network similar to the once defunct but now re-emergent independent Rough Trade cartel. Direct Distribution (as it was named) came to handle at least fifty per cent of all United Kingdom folk distribution and was also a clearing house for independent American labels, among them Bearcat, Blacktop, Philo and Rounder. With the assistance of their wholesale markets, in alliance with Engle's proactive reissue campaigns, Topic reached its golden anniversary in 1999. Yet, like most record labels centred on folk, this albeit obdurate company has a vacillating approach to business and periodically lurches into crisis, displaying an inability to keep financial order. As I write, several Direct Distribution staff have been lured away from Topic by Proper Distribution and Topic appear to have been plunged into financial jeopardy once again. There have even been reports (thankfully spurious) of a visit from the Official Receiver. At least two perspectives on this unhappy event spring to mind. One could argue with some force that poaching of this kind reflects the unacceptable face of the record industry - the sort of activity that Topic disavows by its very existence. Conversely, however, one can hardly blame staff for wishing (as this writer was anonymously but reliably informed) 'to escape the incessant amplification of compliant inefficiency'.

In fact, a disturbingly large proportion of folk music record labels are, like Topic, in deficit even at their present rate of expenditure, which in most cases is well below the requirements of even moderate efficiency. Yet this weak business sense in the folk music industry ironically confers plausibility on it among its leaders and consumers (often the same individuals) by appearing to validate the mystifications of the 'them versus us' ideology embedded in the revival. So it is no surprise to learn that many folk music labels continue to exist uncomplainingly as hand-to-mouth organisations that scorn forward

planning. While there is almost a dread of competition, sales and marketing remain sluggish and inefficient. The recent happenings at Topic suggest that one cannot even begin to discuss the specific problems of sectarian seclusion and outworn convention in the folk music community - not to speak of the question mark over the possibility of an efficient and dynamic folk music based economy - without appreciating how prominent a part ideology, rules and canons play in the equation.

However, a handful of folk music labels have shown an ability to become 'materialist' organisations malgre eux, attracting both idealists and the vilified careerists mentioned earlier in their bid establish viable businesses. I quote from my thesis the opinion of David Longly, of the Whole Wide World Record Retailer based in Yeovil (he is also a former employee of Projection, a casualty of the years around 1990). In October 1996 Longly stated :

I cannot agree that involvement in the folk industry (cottage or otherwise) implies that the heart must rule the head. This attitude has led to the downfall of too many independent labels, festivals, promoters and indeed festival merchandisers, whose enthusiasm for their business activity led them to undervalue administrative and financial considerations. For the public to get the best choice, the best value and the best service, folk businesses must become more professional. Professionalism means being on top of your job, controlling costs, good presentation and most importantly establishing long term trust relationships with suppliers and customers. It does not mean a ruthless drive to dominate the market by monopolising product and driving all competition to the wall. Happily the tendency in the folk world is weighted towards co-operation and I detect a community of shared interest and understanding developing which can only be of benefit to the customer. 19

Whether or not Longly's 'tendency in the folk world...towards co-operation' is actually a sound business platform in the arena of popular music remains to be seen, but survivors such as Cooking Vinyl, Fellside and Park have found themselves having to engage with those very market forces that were redefining traditional ideas about music making and

recording. Cooking Vinyl, for instance, are a fiercely independent label from London launched in 1986. Of all the independents, they have come closest to attaining a 'folk' hit single with Ancient Beatbox (1989) and Billy Bragg (various releases). Arguably the 'biggest' folk/rock band of the 1990s, The Oysterband, is still signed to Cooking Vinyl. The same label also markets a few rock groups having little or no connection with the folk scene, but at least in possession of an indie or punk kudos (Poison Girls, Pere Ubu, the Wedding Present, etc.). This suggests that Cooking Vinyl is fully aware of the capacity of differing genres to follow their individual paths and refuses to accept the conventional, quiescent concept of an archetypically 'traditional' (i.e. 'folk') music.

For many years Fellside was a typically folk part-time operation, but, in order to present folk music professionally to a wider public its proprietor, Paul Adams, went full-time. They now have an active jazz subsidiary (Lake), a URL ([www.fellside.com](http://www.fellside.com)) and a catalogue of new releases by luminaries such as Sandra Kerr and the experimentalists Trykster. They have also reissued former Topic releases, including Frankie Armstrong's 'Lovely on the Water' (FECD 151). In the autumn of 1999 Fellside issued a CD of the original music for the 1970s childrens TV series 'Bagpuss' (mainly the work of Sandra Kerr and John Faulkner with Oliver Postgate). Perhaps not surprisingly, this release became their best seller to date.

Park Records recently celebrated their tenth anniversary - no mean achievement for a folk-related record company - but it was able to do so by widening the base of its market. Ever-present since the label's launch has been Maddy Prior; Maddy's penchant for musical innovation has manifested itself in Park's policies. Northumbrian piper Kathryn Tickell is likewise signed to Park. Tickell has taken Northumbrian instrumentation to a global audience, as well as guesting with such celebrities as the Penguin Cafe Orchestra and Sting. Jacquie McShee, the Carnival Band and Lindisfarne are also on Park's roster.

The survival and modest growth of Cooking Vinyl, Fellside and Park suggest that at least some folk-based labels have responded to the need to broaden the genre (and thus its

appeal), taking their products successfully to purchasers outside the 40-55 age-range, where folk's most loyal public is now concentrated. This is an important step since it is still young people, of whatever social group and disposition, who set trends. Any record company has eventually to come to the realisation that it cannot avoid engaging with the youth market, irrespective of the musical genre purveyed. Not only is British society obsessed with the idea, the image, of youth: it is also a fact that consumers between the ages of ten and twenty-four are the most avid purchasers of discs. There is some evidence that a handful of folk music independents are at last recognising a need to 'follow the money' and to market themselves in a more dynamic, less staid, way in order to reach out to the legions of youth. These companies have remained steadfastly independent. Yet they have managed to upgrade their media relations via press releases, kits and advertising material aimed at stimulating first-time interest in folk music. Other small-time operators such as instrument makers have made similar attempts to combine economic development with a salutary relativism. Perhaps the reservoir of pure idealism is indeed starting to run dry.

#### **SMALL-TIME OPERATORS - INSTRUMENTAL ENTREPRENEURS.**

The folk 'industry' continues to harbour a number of specialist instrument manufacturers. Guitars, melodians, bodhrans, mandolins, pipes, citterns, bouzoukis, flutes, harps, whistles and fiddles are often hand-crafted, their makers relishing the chance to produce an instrument for a connoisseur. There are many craftsmen-manufacturers who produce high-quality instruments in small production runs. These include Andy Perkins (banjos), Dave Shaw and Julian Goodacre (pipes), P.G. Bleazey (flutes, recorders and drums), Tim Phillips and Andy Holliman (violins), Kevin O'Connell (bodhrans), Colin Keefe and John Marlow (various plucked stringed instruments such as mandolas, citterns and guitars) and Hugh Forbes (harps). Pen pictures of three of these dedicated makers can shed light on developments in a different area of the folk revival.

Fylde Guitars (which supplied me with my first fingerpicking guitar in 1978) was set up by Roger Bucknall in the early 1970s. He later experienced financial problems, going out

of business in 1980. Having re-established himself, he expanded into snooker cue manufacturing during the booming 1980s, but then 'positively contracted' in order to meet the more specialist needs of the 1990s, usually selling direct from the works rather than via agencies. We can see from this that, however satisfying in its own right, the making of high-quality instruments is financially precarious. In the first instance, Roger was attracted by the idea that hand-building guitars was gradually disappearing as a craft :

From the start I approached things differently to other makers. This country has a long history of failed manufacturing attempts in guitars, mostly because the makers had an 'arty' approach to the business, and didn't consider that it was necessary to make a profit. Apart from the thing about making musical instruments, I have always been fascinated by the way things are done, and spend a lot of time inventing production methods, so I was able to set up ways of making the guitars that were more accurate and productive than was usual at the time (1973). Nowadays all of the bigger makers employ all sorts of clever jigs and tools, but at the time I think Fylde could have shown most of them a few tricks. 20

Hugh Forbes has built harps, many of which are modelled on mediaeval or Pictish designs, for fourteen years. He is a Canadian who began by building guitars but was captivated by the romance of Celtic Britain and now sells harps to continental Europe, Japan, North America and South Africa. He freely admits, however, that whether many of the instruments actually get played is another matter! Forbes has identified an interest in the mythologised history of Scotland and Ireland and exploited it. Nonetheless, and perhaps in contrast with Roger Bucknall, Forbes also sees himself as belonging to a local community:

Yes, I do all sorts of things...I run 'build a harp in a day' courses for youngsters, and two week courses, too. I dearly want more harps in schools. Cost has been against it previously, but now I'm offering a basic kit instrument at around £150, easily affordable...I'm establishing a trust, also; the Historic Harp and Clarsach Trust for

educational and research work. I'm handing over designs for my cheaper instruments so they can control the royalties. 21

On the other hand, Colin Keefe (who is currently building a new fingerpicking guitar for me) constructed his first guitar - an electric - on a Black & Decker 'workmate' bench in his bedroom and between 1985 and 1991 went to college to study instrument making. After a short time with Patrick Eggle Guitars he took a certificate in adult education teaching and initiated the manufacture of his own instruments. For Colin, education, craftsmanship and a heavy dose of musical broad-mindedness have been part of his rite of passage :

I'm now teaching just the one evening class at a local Community College. Business is busy enough for me. I currently have 14 instruments on order...from a 34-string Celtic harp to an 8-string electric! Along with this, I have a large workload of restoration and repair jobs. 22

The future direction for these small manufacturers is difficult to predict, but noteworthy changes in attitudes and values are occurring. Many ingrained music stereotypes are being challenged by their existence, and all three men mentioned above seem to be generating kinds of business that were not open to them only a few years ago. The experiences of these entrepreneurially minded craftsmen suggest that, in reality, outright socialism and capitalism are only ideal types that are rarely, if ever, encountered in a pure form. Consideration of any economic situation must include context and contingency: rhetoric about purity, class struggle and sell-outs is unproductive. Forbes and Keefe, for example, belong to a new breed of craftsman that manages to combine central elements of both capitalism and altruism, refusing to elevate one musical genre over another or trade in rhetorical platitudes about the specialisation of musical traditions. What, however, of the media?

**THE MEDIA (i) - BROADCASTING - SPECIALISATION OR MARGINALISATION?**

Throughout the 1950s the exposure of folk music on the radio gradually increased to a point where, by the 1960s, folk artistes could be heard at various times on the BBC. Following the advent of Radio 1 in 1967, however, folk music was perceived as being too specialised for pop listeners. Radio 2 producers likewise viewed folk as a specialised genre and effectively ceased to broadcast it during the day. This specialisation (and thus marginalisation) was highly contextual since, by the late-1960s, all popular music was undergoing pigeon-holing of one form or another on the part of so-called experts. Thematic specialisation and the social codes and conventions that went with it overtook folk music, so producing a specialised context within which it was subsequently to be confined. Indeed, Frances Line, a great supporter of folk music, described her station's main objective during her period as head of BBC Radio 2 in the 1980s, as 'ratings by day, reputation by night'. Retrospectively, it can be seen that a process of cultural prioritisation and categorisation developed and then compacted; as a consequence of massive digital communication/recreation competition during the 1980s, night time radio specialisation only succeeded in further marginalisation (preaching to the converted).

But there are other, more strictly pecuniary reasons for the dearth of folk music on the radio. During the late 1990s BBC local radio stations became increasingly more orientated around sport-and-talk. Although this worked to the financial advantage of local radio, it tended to erode its long-standing support for folk music. Inherited needle-time and performance fees are a perennial source of conflict between PPL and the BBC local stations, for which PPL and PRS fees can amount to as much as 10 per cent of the annual turnover. In these circumstances it pays to minimise the broadcasting of music of any kind. Special deals are struck, however, for the repeated use of certain popular music tracks. In 1999 a new contract to that effect was signed between BBC local radio stations and the PPL. As a result, a new batch of in-house CDs was produced by the BBC for continual play by the stations, the fees having already been agreed. With the possible exception of a few numbers by such artists as John Denver, Cat Stevens and The Seekers, songs that could accurately be described as 'folk' scarcely figured in this new batch of 'core radioplay' CDs.

Folk music programmes invariably occupy evening slots on BBC local or regional radio. This means that they have also suffered from the growth of interest in Premier League football. Practically all folk and jazz programmes are required to be pre-recorded for local radio. This enables them to be rescheduled (or “dumped”, as I was informed by a BBC Radio Merseyside personality) should a football occasion prove too enticing.

It would be fair to claim that folk music has been condemned to a degree of radio exile. After much media speculation, Andy Kershaw was finally removed from the DJ roster at Radio 1 in May 2000. Mike Harding’s Pebble Mill-based hour of folk music each Wednesday on Radio 2 is now the sole nationally broadcast folk programme in the United Kingdom. Very few commercial radio stations display anything more than a fleeting interest in folk music and their DJs seldom have any knowledge whatever of the genre. Most of the regional folk programmes that have been broadcast have been entrusted to enthusiastic amateurs. My own experience of broadcasting at BBC Radio Merseyside confirms that local radio has come to rely entirely on these enthusiasts, without whom there would probably be no folk music programmes left on air at all. But the neglect has arisen not simply because the institutions have treated folk music unfairly. It is quite clear that the traditional authority of folk music, grounded in custom and habit, no longer reflects the roots of many visible aspects of British society.

For instance, while the BBC continues to promote the Radio 2 Young Tradition Awards, one wonders whether the award has an unintentionally adverse effect on the stimulation of interest in folk music amongst younger listeners. The most obvious points remain that, although Radio 2 is currently the most popular BBC national radio station, the vast majority of its listeners are white and aged over forty. The editor of Folk Roots (now known as F-Roots), Ian A. Anderson, comments :

As far as I know the entry rules have never specified what tradition the competitors should come from, but the finalists are always white anglo/celts. There has never been

any sign of young musicians from the multiplicity of other cultural traditions in the UK today, and no clue apparently given that they would qualify, be welcome or be fairly judged. Of course I don't know what efforts the BBC makes to remedy this, but they aren't working. 23

In this case, 'tradition' is allowed to be defined by the myth of its origins - those which appear to predate the contaminating expansion of the culture industry of multinational capitalism. This view, both essentialist and metaphysical, of what constitutes folk identity continues to be mythologized and turned into folklore in a number of disturbing ways : indigenist, nationalist and 'thirdworldist'.

#### **THE MEDIA (ii) : JOURNALS & F-ROOTS: A HIDEBOUND MEDIA?**

There are a number of folk publications available in 2000, It would be misleading, however, to declare that they were all accessible on the 'open' market. They range from fanzine-like publications, processed on computers and/or photocopiers (e.g. North West Buzz, Shire Folk), to the long-established EFDSS publications (English Dance & Song and Folk Music Journal), not forgetting such top-of-the-range product as F-Roots itself, which is very glossy and highly professional, even giving away a couple of free CDs every year. F-Roots can occasionally be purchased at W.H.Smith, but many of the others are harder to find.

In between North West Buzz and F-Roots there exists a pyramidal structure of magazines with regional perspectives Examples are Taplas, The Living Tradition, Irish Music, Set and Turn Single, North West Folk and Folkwrite. Magazines remain important points of contact for local musicians and mouthpieces for the local folk organisations such as the North West Folk Federation. Despite the proliferation in the UK of media conglomerates (e.g. Emap), none of the British folk journals has fallen under their sway.

For instance, the EFDSS has always published writings for its members. The Journal of the Folk Song Society was founded in 1899 for the purpose of publishing collected songs. Since 1936 the society has also published a quarterly entitled English Dance and Song that enjoys runs of about 4,500-5,000. Both publications have an academic slant and for many years represented the rather cloistered opinions of the EFDSS hierarchy. More recently (2000), however, the Society has attempted to address the changing nature of folk music definitions with projects such as CD-magazine Root and Branch. This is perhaps the most 'radical' venture in policy and marketing that has ever come from this organisation, a bulwark of folk music preservation: the creation of a linked CD and magazine that aim to explore the diversity of music traditions.

Each issue of Root and Branch contains a full-length CD, articles and essays, facsimilies and photographs. Its content embraces song, music, collectors, performers and historiography. Every issue has a theme that links the text, graphics and music. For example, the second issue ('Everybody Swing') deals with the post-World War II era in which the folk revival gathered momentum, delivering an interesting historical account of those years. The selection of tracks on the CD, however, is even more absorbing, for it includes music from such diverse sources as Big Bill Broonzy, Lord Kitchener, Ken Colyer and George Webb's Dixielanders (full recognition, perhaps for the first time by those at Cecil Sharp House since the memorable 'Folk Blues Happening' of 1965, that popular music can forge its own traditions). In June 2000 Phil Wilson stated on behalf of the society :

Times have changed and we need to look to the future. We need to think about the role of the EFDSS in a world that is progressively becoming globalised. Cultural differences are breaking down...so what is our role? As a first question who do we represent?...We need to ask more questions. How many people in Britain are involved in folk culture? ...Are there as many people involved as some people say? three million go to festivals but how many of these are the same people? Are we really reaching new audiences? 24

Wilson's point about 'new audiences' is a genuine concern. The magazine with the highest profile and the biggest sales in the folk world is F-Roots. This magazine delves into what it describes as 'roots' music; the name of the journal was in fact changed from Southern Rag in the 1980s in order to encompass the growing market in this country for world music. In 1998 the word 'folk' itself became abbreviated to 'f' in its title (in imitation of, say, the pop group M-People). This must be seen as a highly symbolic shift in the magazine's ethos: an attempt to capture the attention of a younger readership.

Sadly, despite this transformation, F-Roots continues to present folk music as an anodyne substance soaked in the values and mores of its largely middle-class clientele. Folk music soundtracks are mediated in terms of what the journal perceives its audience demographics to be. This approach takes account of age, class, ethnic and gender locations and (not least) financial stability; but it fails to subject to debate its own global perception taken from that demographic standpoint or its own sense of good taste. Describing this form of literature as 'cultural capital' Roy Shuker cites an apt aphorism of Bourdieu to the effect that 'nothing more clearly affirms one's class, nothing more infallibly classifies, than tastes in music'.<sup>25</sup> Certainly, if F-Roots is anything to go by, it would appear that nothing more clearly affirms class than the **media's** interpretation of one's taste in music!

F-Roots presupposes, true to EFDSS tradition, a core of natural, unspoilt musical truth: a distinction between 'real' music and the 'artificial' products of the manipulator. Interestingly, the use of the word 'roots' in the context of a British folk magazine clearly conveys the idea that 'folk' is of the First World, whereas 'roots' are proper to the Second and Third Worlds. British musical isolationism may have been successfully challenged by F-Roots' warm embrace of 'roots' music, but the implication remains that foreign forms are to be sampled as exotic novelties. 'Roots' music is written about as if it is the creation of 'unspoilt' (for which read: backward) natives, who, as much for our benefit as for their own, continue to interpret reality in a way forgotten by time. The term carries strong hints of an imperialistic past and a neo-imperialistic present.

Even in the most recent copies of F-Roots, the demand that attention be paid to, say, African or Latin American art is still framed within a dichotomy that ascribes essences to categories. This opposition is articulated in various ways: as that between the local (pure) and the international (corrupted); between the past (rootedness) and the present (dissolution); between popular culture (participation) and mass culture (alienation). In this Manichaeian scheme of things, modern life is found guilty of having destroyed the characteristics of true identity through a conglomeration of external influences that are invariably deemed baneful and threatening and which lead to falsifications or travesties of original, authentic culture. F-Roots is, perhaps, a good example of a cultural product that finds itself obliged to authenticate its own judgemental relevance. Even though it is itself a product, it cultivates the self-image of an arbiter of aesthetic pleasure and a cheerleader of collective nostalgia without ever acknowledging the limits of its own discourse.

#### **ANALYSIS : THE NEW FRONTIERS?**

The presentation of folk music assumes something more than just a musical style. It is a point of identification, an expression of something 'authentic', and a source of affective alliances between fans, business partners and professional musicians (indeed, many professionals could earn far more money in non-musical careers). However, the needless polarisation that opposes the authentic to the commercial has stultified growth in all but the most progressive areas of the folk commercial sector. The folk media still largely feel that folk music portrayal cannot encompass both polarities. In Volume 157 of Folk Roots Ian Croft asked how the folk revival was expected to succeed when growth led - apparently - to the destabilisation of the reasons for being involved in the first place. Peter Heywood, editor of The Living Tradition, continues to question whether a traditional music agency (such as exists in the United States) would seek to serve the folk scene or to control it. It appears that, for these writers at least, folk music has become rationalized as an 'artistic' and specifically traditional music that needs vigilance and networking on the part of its adherents to prevent it from 'selling-out'.

This sell-out, however, remains problematic as long as the folk media deliver-up a Pygmalion-style judgement over tradition in such an idealised, obsessive manner. Folk music rationale continues to be encased within a self-fulfilling prophecy of dissociation and isolation from pop traditions. This is clearly illogical. Economic and political circumstances have changed so much that many folk music perspectives created and nurtured within the era of post-World War II utopianism have been obsolete for some time. <sup>26</sup> It is now possible to speak of (and market successfully!) a hip-hop tradition or a surf tradition quite easily. Yet the folk media's theoretical development since the glory days of quasi-Marxism has been modest, and a simplistic hate-love attitude towards popular music and urban society still saturates most folk writing, leaving the reader with a composite image of the twisted dialectics of inextricable contradictions about the apparent over-abundance of cultural product.

With a few notable exceptions, the folk 'industry' and media continue to define themselves negatively: by what they perceive themselves not to be. For some, the apparent incompatibility of folk art and mediated commerce remains at the nexus of the folk revival's existence. Folk music is still seen as having heroically evaded commercial structures, whereas mass art has been captured by them and watered down as a consequence. I quote the words of folk writer Chris Sugden on this point :

...I have a vision. I think that we could work towards a folk equivalent of real ale. Real ale aims to be an honest, natural product, not altered to suit some idea of modern tastes...promoted for its own intrinsic qualities...The Campaign for Real Folk - I'll drink to that. <sup>27</sup>

Folkies who share Sugden's outlook always assume that technology and trade have historically been **external** influences upon music: that music has somehow struggled **against** these authorities. Yet to divide music communication from technology,

production and finance, even in a pre-industrial society, is as fraudulent as separating 'real' from 'manufactured' ale. As Keith Negus writes :

Musical composition and performance have always depended on the instrument technologies available; whether European classical music, orally transmitted folk music, music of different regions of the African continent or contemporary popular music with its complex industrial networks of production and distribution. The character, conventions and reception of a particular music have been shaped by the machines of sound creation. 28

No genre of music can ever achieve full independence from the economic pressures of a market economy. Sugden's view leads to an impasse: the folk industry and media attempt to function as relatively non-commercial businesses, marketing and discussing a potentially commercial music, while at the same time protecting that same music from the influence of a commercial structure that would bring its message to an infinitely larger number of people. As long as this relationship with an 'outside world' of popular music continues to be a problem, folk music will forever be hard to find on the radio, on stage and in the record shops. Only the already converted, willing to expend effort on searching out product, will be served with any degree of satisfaction.

The defects of the ideologies and strategies so far intrinsic to the folk music commercial sector are obvious and glaring. It is not difficult to see what is needed to put them right. One has to remember, however, that folk music lovers regard themselves as existing within an egalitarian movement. This means that the real changes must occur in the minds of large numbers of those involved if any commercial and organisational progress is to be made. Reforms must, in other words, be approved by the folkies themselves. There must accordingly be a 'root-and-branch' change of attitude towards presentation, historiography and commerce. Folk music lovers themselves are not only the ones responsible for folk music's failing visage: in a very real sense, they are also its main victims.

Of course, it takes great courage to persist in presenting and marketing the values of one's choice as absolutely binding - a voice crying out in the wilderness - but a little pragmatic modesty on the part of folk music discourse is surely also needed in order to present the music to a public that wishes to absorb it into its existing lifestyles. Without that modesty, the folk music industry's attempts simultaneously to sell product and confirm the historical validity of their flawed thesis creates merely a symbolic phantom - an ideal that represents a frozen vision from the past. A pressing alternative surely lies in the use of folk commerce and media as a means of continuous confrontation with ideas about the authentic and unique, an engagement with the presentation of the hitherto unrepresentable. Such a confrontation is not a cynical rejection but a positive act of faith in the multifarious valid uses to which folk music can be put.

For some years, there has been a folk magazine on the Internet that goes by the name of Musical Traditions. Its editor, Rod Stradling, actually published my doctoral thesis there in its entirety, despite its popular music perspective. Musical Traditions also helped me to finish compiling the discography of the Topic label that I began as part of my study. This journal has recently been joined by a new Internet magazine called freefolk.com, the editor of which is Mike Raven. So perhaps the e-mail and the World Wide Web, where all others have failed, can reconfigure and recontextualise avowedly 'authentic' folk art in the most modern of all contexts. Advanced technology is now providing a home base for conflicts and debates over precisely what constitutes 'real' folk music. This is surely a clear indicator that folk music can indeed move forward without suddenly abandoning its cherished dialectic about the anterior. The folk revival, which traditionally has looked towards the past, must now widen its focus to include the future if it is to be commercially viable.

Any reconfiguration must also include a reformation of the structure of the folk business world, purging itself of its stagnant, conservative elements and harnessing the winds of change instead of resisting them. The folk industry has to make itself more purposeful,

more cohesive, more effective and (that dread word!) more popular. It would assist those in the folk music industry if folk music were regarded as merely one genre among many rather than as a superior and non-mercantile musical soundtrack. The present splendid isolation of folk, which finds itself disassociated even from other popular music genres, is largely antediluvian, reflecting the issues and events of yesterday, not of today. The revival has to find a new dynamic to replace the old, fading, appeal to working-class solidarity and opposition to capitalism in any form. The commercial sector has to break down the rigid generic barriers and remove the paralysing sense of 'superiority' (and, conversely, of insecurity) that underlies the presentation of the music.

But in order to do this the folk media have somehow to question the attitudes of those whose aspirations they exist to express. These several encounters must go hand in hand if the folk revival, its 'industry' and its networking, are to get anywhere. For let us be clear about the alternatives. The choice certainly lies between growth and stagnation, but it will rarely be posed directly. There will always be extraneous issues that intrude - special complications or mitigating factors. If the folk 'industry' and media refuse to jump the hurdle, the consequences will not be immediately catastrophic. It may well be some time before the consequences becomes noticeable at all. All that will happen is that the slow slide towards impotence and failure will accelerate until it is finally too late to do anything about it.

Footnotes :

1. Peter Heywood, 'Editorial', The Living Tradition, Jan-Feb 1996, p.4.
2. Michael Brocken, The British Folk Revival: An Analysis of Folk/popular Dichotomies from a Popular Music Studies Perspective. Institute of Popular Music/Department of Music, University of Liverpool, 1997.

3. Peter Heywood, 'Flowers of Edinburgh Wilt!', The Living Tradition 37, March-April 2000, p.12.

4. The use of the expression 'folk arts' is not without significance here since the term 'folk music' has frequently been replaced by 'folk arts' (or 'roots') for grant portfolio purposes during the late 1990s. Marion Leonard of the Institute of Popular Music found fundraising for her Coventry - Liverpool Irish music and dance exhibition Talking Traditions (June, 2000) difficult, because it was considered to fall within the area of folk 'music', rather than folk 'arts'.

5. Peter Heywood, 'Flowers of Edinburgh Wilt!', The Living Tradition 37, March-April 2000, p.14.

6. *ibid*, p.15.

7. Un-named editorial, Hit The Dust 27 (HTD Records newsletter), June-September 2000. p.1.

8. The popularity of the 1992 motion picture soundtrack 'Reservoir Dogs' (MCA MCD10541) is a good example, here. The re-presentation of hit songs such as 'Little Green Bag' by the George Baker Selection and 'Stuck in the Middle With You' by Stealer's Wheel clearly displays significant recontextualisations. A priori notions of these songs are confiscated by the movie and the reception processes of that movie.

9. 'Folk Festival's Extra Events' Chester and District Standard 18th May 2000, interview with Cheryl Hunt, p.19.

10. Chris Sugden, 'There Are Three Ways of Being "Folk"', The Living Tradition 20, March-April 1997, p. 37.

11. Eddie Upton, review of Root & Branch. 'What's Afoot?'. Quoted in Root & Branch publicity material, EFDSS summer 2000.
12. Interview by the author with Geoff Speed, BBC Radio Merseyside folk music presenter, May 2000.
13. Interview by the author with Jeremy Horrall, proprietor Telford's Warehouse, June, 2000.
14. Cohen, Sara 1992, Rock Culture in Liverpool. Liverpool, University Press. Finnegan, Ruth 1989, Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. Shank, Barry 1988, Dissonant Identities: The Rock 'n' Roll Scene in Austin, Texas. New England (USA), Wesleyan University Press.
15. Interview by the author with Bob Buckle, folksinger, June 2000.
16. Geoff Speed, May 2000.
17. It is hardly necessary to draw the parallels with classical music and jazz, both of which have experienced comparable 'greying' for reasons (primarily those of noncommercialism) that are partly the same.
18. See letters page The Living Tradition 36 and the subsequent replies.
19. David Longly, The Whole Wide World Record Retailer, Yeovil. 'Come Write Me Down', Folk Roots 160, October 1996, pp. 81-82.
20. Interview by the author with Roger Bucknall, April 1994.

21. Steve McGrail, 'The Harpmakers', The Living Tradition 37 March-April 2000; quoting Hugh Forbes, p. 47.
22. Interview by the author with Colin Keefe, Luthier Guitars, June 2000.
23. Ian A. Anderson, 'The Editor's Box', Folk Roots 160 October, 1996, p. 17.
24. Phil Wilson, 'Who Are We? The EFDSS and the Future', English Dance & Song 62/2, summer 2000, p.9.
25. Roy Shuker, Understanding Popular Music. London, Routledge, 1994, p. 16.
26. See Colin Harper's observations on this point in Mojo, July 2000, p.74.
27. Chris Sugden, 'There are Three Ways of Being "Folk"', The Living Tradition 20 March-April 1997, p. 37.
28. Keith Negus, Producing Pop: Culture and Conflict in the Popular Music Industry. London, Edward Arnold, 1992, p. 28.

