

Review of CAVA Conference 2006: ‘21st Century Celts’

8-10 September, County Hall, Truro



What constitutes Celtic identity in the 21st Century? How do modern Celtic identities continue to use (and abuse?) the past? What is the significance of cultural memory and landscape for contemporary Celtic identities? These were some of the questions to be explored by *21st Century Celts*, the inaugural conference of the Celtic Education and Research Network (CERN). The conference was hosted by CAVA, and supported by Cornwall County Council, University of Colorado, University of Exeter, University College Falmouth, and the College of St Mark & St John,

who joined forces for this first in a series of intended conferences, designed to explore and debate the development of Celtic identities across the world. The interdisciplinary nature of the event was represented by the varied research background of the conference planning team: Laura Cripps, Monica Emerich, Kayleigh Milden and Garry Tregidga. Archaeologist Laura Cripps (University of Reading) pointed to the continuing relevance of the heritage of the Celts to today’s society: “Heritage” doesn’t simply relate to the mute material remains of the living entity, alive within the feelings of the communities of as academics need to listen to attitudes and relate them to the and debates within our own

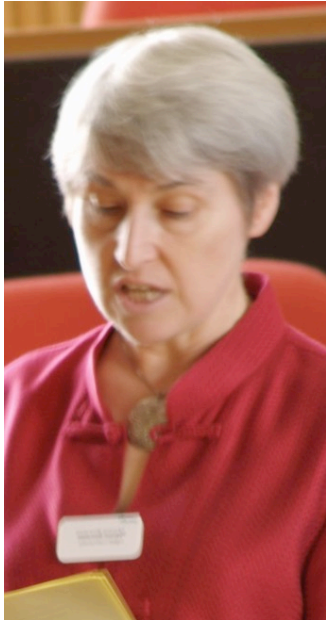
past – it is also a attitudes and the present – and we these views and current discussions fields.’

The conference attracted fourteen countries including the USA. Garry Tregidga international scope to Celtic years the whole concept of been challenged by revisionist diverse range of disciplines. It appropriate therefore that *21st* brought together researchers basis to construct a new vision contemporary, interdisciplinary basis.’ The conference encompassed a wide range of archaeology, cultural memory, contemporary spirituality,



delegates from Japan, Russia and welcomed this Studies: ‘In recent Celtic Studies has scholars from a is entirely *Century Celts* on an international for the subject on a and analytical certainly disciplines including language studies, political science and

the performing arts. Kayleigh Milden commented that ‘What really enthralled me about *21st Century Celts* is that it reflected the diversity and richness of contemporary Celtic identity around the world. The wide range of conference papers, covering topics from archaeology to tattoo imagery, demonstrated the true multidisciplinary nature of contemporary Celtic Studies.’



A team of distinguished international scholars led the conference. Dr Marion Bowman, senior lecturer in Religious Studies at the Open University, gave the first keynote address on the subject of ‘Locating Celticity in the 21st Century’. Marion is the President of the British Association for the Study of Religions, and a past president of the Folklore Society. Her main research interests are contemporary Celtic spirituality, vernacular religion and Glastonbury, and she has published extensively on all these topics. Professor Celeste Ray, Chair of Anthropology at the University of the South in the USA, who is a leading authority on the relationship between heritage, memory and ethnicity, gave the next keynote address. Her recent publications in this area include *Highland Heritage: Scottish Americans in the American South*, published by the University of North Carolina Press (2001) and *Transatlantic Celts*, which was recently published by the University of Alabama Press (2005). Professor Ken

Mackinnon, Honorary Research Fellow in Celtic/Language Planning at the University of Aberdeen, presented the final keynote address on the Sunday. Ken Mackinnon is also Visiting Professor and Reader Emeritus in the Sociology of Language at the University of Hertfordshire. Over many years he has researched into the sociology of Gaelic-speaking communities, and has undertaken a great deal of demographic analysis. Ken was also the principal researcher and author of the Independent Academic Study report on Cornish in 2000.



The conference reception was held at the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro. Ann Trevenen Jenkin, the first female Grand Bard of the Cornish Gorseth, and in 2000 the winner of the Exceptional Celtic Woman of the Year Award, gave the opening address at the museum, which was followed by project exhibitions by Marazion Memories and Perranporth School along with musical performances led by Will Coleman. Other community events during the course of *21st Century Celts* included a performance by the Cornish Dance Team at Perranporth School, a ceilidh by the Pyba Troyl band and an ecumenical Celtic service organised by Cowethas Peran Sans. The conference was also an opportunity to market Cornish culture and business to a global audience. Sponsors included the Cornwall branch of the Celtic Congress, Cornish World, Ginsters, St Austell Brewery, Roddas, Shinermons Games, Visit Cornwall and the National Maritime Museum. Financial support also came from the European Social Fund. We are grateful to everybody that supported this event. A book based on the papers presented at *21st Century Celts* is due to be published. Please contact Garry Tregidga at the Institute of Cornish Studies if you would like to know more about this publication, or for further details about CERN.

What follows is the conference programme and abstracts:

‘21st Century Celts’ Conference Programme

Friday 8th September

09.00-09.30 Registration and Coffee

.40 Welcome (Colin Brewer, vice-chairman of Cornwall Council and Conference Team)

Modern Celtic Identities

09.40-10.15 Marion Bowman (Keynote, Open University) ‘*Locating Celticity in the 21st Century*’

10.15-10.45 Oleg Zotov (Moscow State University) ‘*Celtic Identity in non-Celtic countries: the case of Russia*’

10.45-11.15 Ellen Chapman (University of Newcastle) ‘*Welsh American Identities: constructing and consuming Welshness in the U.S.A*’

- 11.15-11.30 **Break (including a performance by Perranporth Dance Team)**
- 11.30-12.00 Merv Davey (Institute of Cornish Studies, University of Exeter) *'Troyls and Tribulations: Sources and inspirations for Cornish Dance in the 21st Century'*
- 12.00 -12.30 Heather Blenkinsop (California State University) *'Californian Celts'*
- 12.30 -13.00 Joanie Willett (Politics Department, University of Exeter) *'Explaining the Political Economy of Regional Identity: the Case of Cornwall'*

Space and Celtic Identities

- 14.00-14.45 Celeste Ray (Keynote, Sewanee University of the South) *'Trans-Atlantic Celts: Ancestral Tourism and Scottish Clanscapes'*
- .15 Kayleigh Milden and Garry Tregidga (Institute of Cornish Studies, University of Exeter) *'The Border Celts: Spatial Constructions of Cornish Identity'*
- 15.15-15.45 Virginia Bjertnes (University of Neuchatel) *'Bardsey Island: construction of meanings around place in order to pass on values'*
- 15.45-16.00 **Break**
- 16.00-16.30 Andy Phillips (Frys an Spyrys) *'The Celtic Theology of Place'*
- 16.30-17.00 Samantha Hurn (University of Wales, Lampeter) *'Bois y Cobs': The Place of Autochthonous Horses in Rural Welsh Cultural Identity'*
- .30 David Thomson (Truro College), *'In the Blood: Is Cultural Identity the New Race Theory?'*
- .45 *Comments and Questions*
- 18.30–20.00 **Evening reception at the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro, with live music and an official welcome by Ann Trevenen Jenkin (former Grand Bard of Gorseth Kernow)**

(For those who have registered for dinner, we will be moving on to the restaurant at 20.15...)

Saturday 9th September

09.00-09.30 Coffee

Place, Monument, Artefact and Celtic Identities

09.30-10.00 Silvia Alfaye (University of Oxford) '*Sanctuaries and Rituals in the Hispania Celtica*'

10.00-10.30 Dorothy Verkerk (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) '*The Southern Cross is a Celtic Cross: Funerary monuments of Celtic-Americans*'

10.30-11.00 Graham Busby (University of Plymouth) and Patrick Laviolette (University College, London) '*Cornish Celtic Christian Identity – the Evidence*'

11.00-11.15 **Break**

11.15-11.45 Laura Cripps (University of Reading/University of Leicester) '*Archaeology and Identity in Cornwall: the Inter-War years*'

11.45-12.15 Chris Rowland (University of Ulster) '*Return Migration and Identity*'

12.15-12.45 Carolyn Coulter (Temple University, Philadelphia) '*Celtic Identity Online: Cultural Parameters and Defining Characteristics*'

12.45-13.00 *Comments and Questions*

The Performance of Celtic Identity

14.00-14.30 Breesha Maddrell (Centre for Manx Studies, University of Liverpool) '*Mootilating Manx Music – Technology and 'the Tradition*'

14.30-15.00 Sabrina Palm (University of Bonn) '*Celtic Music. Shift. [Perceptions, Images and Identities]*'

- 15.00-15.30 Cinza Curtis (Manx Heritage Foundation, University of Liverpool) '*Celtic Dance on the Isle of Man*'
- 15.30-15.45 **Break**
- 15.45-16.15 Victoria Walters (University of Ulster) '*Performing Celtic Identity - Joseph Beuys*'
- 16.15-16.45 Bob Keys (College of St Mark & St John) '*Projecting the Celtic: Loyalty and Community, Treachery and Betrayal as Themes in European Film Representations of Celtic Identities c. 1930-1950*'
- 16.45-17.15 Eoin Breadon (Cleveland Institute of Art) '*Cultural Connection from Visual Identification through Tattoo Imagery*'
- .30 *Comments and Questions*
- 20.00-23.00 **Troyl/Ceilidh at the 'County Arms', Truro (led by Pyba Troyl)**

Sunday 10th September

09.00-09.30 Coffee

The Language of Celtic Identity

- 09.30-10.15 Ken MacKinnon (Keynote, University of Aberdeen) '*Cornish and the Future of the Celtic Languages*'
- .45 Michael Hornsby (University of Southampton) '*Commodification Of Ethnic Identities: Brittany*'
- 10.45-11.15 Alan Kent (Open University) '*Mozeying on Down: The Cornish Language in America*'
- 11.15-11.30 **Break**
- 11.30-12.30 Discussion:
- Cath Camps (Truro College) '*We are Celts! How does defining ourselves as Celts impact on our professional practice?*'

12.30-12.45 *Final Comments*

.15 **Celtic Ecumenical Service in Cornish and English at Mylor (led by Rev. Andrew Philips)**

Conference Abstracts

Silvia Alfaye (Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford)

Paper Title: *Imagined Sanctuaries: Stones of Human Sacrifices and Rock-Altars in Hispania Celtica*

Influenced by the European Historiography, the Spanish Scholars of the beginning of the 20th Century believed to have found in the Iberian Peninsula rock cult places used by the Celts as venues for the celebration of bloody rituals that included human sacrifices. These discoveries contributed to create a gory perception of the religious systems of the indigenous populations, which still survives not only within the scientific community but also in the popular imagination. However, the re-examination of the archaeological contexts of most of these rock structures suggests that their interpretation as Celtic sanctuaries is more wishful thinking than historical reality, and allow us to reflect on the way that a preconceived idea conditions the interpretation of archaeological remains, and the diffusion of that notion of Celtic religion amongst the masses.

Virginia Bjertnes (University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland)

Paper Title: *Bardsey Island : construction of meanings around a place in order to pass on values*

This study is the result of a fieldwork of two months in Wales in Spring 2005. In approaching a place, Bardsey Island, a small island in north east Wales, as an object carrying meanings, it has been possible to draw out certain elements showing how such a place is constructed, by a group of actors, to fit with an ideal past.

In fact, life on the island is supposed to be close to the “traditional” welsh life; rural and community. The idea there is to live as in the 18th century. Historically, Bardsey Island, or Ynys Enlli in welsh, is a place surrounded by plenty of stories and myths. There is no real history of the island existing to this day, therefore everyone can choose the meaning, the roots they need to define the island.

The island is constructed to be “authentic”; every detail counts. It is used to transmit new values perceived to come from the past. These values are an answer to modern life: life in community, friendship and in harmony with nature. It is a search for roots promoting a link to the past and to traditions and therefore to a more authentic life. However, by this preservation of the heritage, as it is understood for this place, it is not the past, which is aimed but the future: to give a meaning to the present by creating a continuity with the past in order to pass it on to the generations to come.

As a whole, the construction of this place can be understood as a part of the ethnic awakening in Wales: the promotion of welsh culture and identity, the search for roots.

Heather Blenkinsop (University of California)

Paper Title: *Californian Celts*

Lessons in Irish and Scots Gaelic language are held weekly in Los Angeles. Southern California is home to a wellspring of Celtic themed annual fairs and festivals, as well as classes, venues, associations and events. There are guilds, Druid academies, Scottish and Irish dancing troops, Celtic music, plays, concerts and events, clubs, pubs and restaurants attracting tens of thousands of participants. In one Celtic band, bagpipes are accompanied by a didgeridoo and traditional folktales are sometimes told with a transgender twist to suit the audience. I am exploring what it means to be Celtic in Los Angeles by interviewing participants at Southern California’s myriad Celtic festivals and venues over a one-year period. Some participants who identify as Celts are native to Ireland currently living in Los Angeles; others trace their ancestry back four or five generations or more to Scotland. Some clan or tribal lineage appears central to ascribing Celtic identity, however far removed. Is this Celtic identity the result of preservation or reconstruction? The

reaction of the Californian Celts themselves is mixed. Some feel they are continuing family and community traditions passed down through generations. Others admit to a fascination with the popular idea of Celtic culture. All report a need to identify with something noble, to reconnect with their roots, to search for meaning. Such sentiments have fuelled the emergence and continuance of the Celtic fairs and cultural centers and through these venues Celtic identity is reconstructed and transformed in southern California.

Marion Bowman (Open University)

Paper Title: *Locating Celticity in the 21st Century*

In the latter part of the twentieth century the latest in a long line of Celtic revivals occurred, giving rise to numerous discourses around where, how, and in whom Celticity might be located.

Traditional markers and measures of Celticity such as language, geography and ethnicity were challenged. The notion of Celticity was expanded and renegotiated to encompass ever broader conceptions of what might be termed ‘Celtic’, whether art, music, location, costuming, lifestyle, consumer goods or spirituality.

This scene-setting paper will give an overview of some of the locations of what is perceived as Celticity at the start of the 21st century, and the implications this has for the study of the field.

Eoin Breadon (Cleveland Institute of Art)

Paper Title: *Cultural Connection from Visual Identification through Tattoo Imagery*

Celtic iconography, most notably the use of imagery from illuminated manuscripts, as a basis for tattoos has created a borderless identifier of people who are outwardly signifying their intent and desire for inclusion within a larger Celtic identity. Based on historical ties to Scottish and Irish body painting, Pygmalion Tattoo Studio in Greenfield, MA seeks to tie this traditional ritual with modern tattoo practices. The significance of this type of identification allows for the outward cosmetic verbalization of an internal connection to a larger community within Massachusetts that draws its shared history from Celtic migration. The discussion of a created community through body adornment can

attest to what stands as the visual marker of how an individual within a community can identify themselves as Celtic.

Graham Busby (University of Plymouth) and Patrick Laviolette (University College, London)

Paper Title: *Cornish Celtic Christian Identity – the evidence*

Anecdotal and published evidence suggests that, for many visitors, Cornwall possesses Celtic features; these may be tangible or intangible, possibly genuine although more likely ‘constructed’. This paper reviews the ‘drivers’ critical to the development of notions of Cornish Celticity from the eighteenth century to contemporary times, discussing the folklore, festivals, linguistic study, megalithic record, and concomitant perception of ‘Otherness’, leading on to a consideration of Cornish Celtic Christianity. It is argued that the background discussion is essential for representations of Cornwall influence micro-level visitor attractions.

Representations of Cornwall are created by the media, both mass and individual. Postcards are an exemplar of the latter and the comments from a number, from the early twentieth century, are reviewed. Additionally, the content of guidebooks to the county are argued to have helped in the development of perceptions of a Celtic Christianity, the first edition of Murray’s dating from 1851 and emphasizing the importance of the local church as a must-see attraction.

Contemporary evidence for perceptions of Cornish Celtic Christianity is presented, based on church visitors’ book analysis and the results of a substantial three-site survey. ‘Otherness’ is apparent in the *gaze* of many church visitors and, for some, this takes the form of a Celtic Christianity. Statistical associations are provided for a number of variables from the sample of 725 respondents.

Carolyn Coulter (Temple University, Philadelphia)

Paper Title: *Celtic Identity Online: Cultural Parameters and Defining Characteristics*

The transcendence of geographical and cultural boundaries on the Internet has led to a widespread increase in the presence of the online community. This has also led to the increasing need to contextualize contemporary definitions of identity as they pertain to the global village and the shared characteristics that inform and ultimately determine this perceived homogeneity. In the instance of an attempt to (re)define Celtic identity in this

vast and ever expanding forum, an acute analytical sampling of these Celtic based groups determined through self-identifiable characteristics can lead to a wider discourse on how these cross-cultural communities define and share Celtic identity. More importantly, this analysis is meant to highlight the distinctions between what would be considered 'grounded' Celtic identity (via literature, art, landscapes, etc...) that is widely historically based versus the online independently identified Celtic community.

This paper seeks to gain insight into the following questions through the ethnographic analysis of a selected set of online Celtic communities: Who are the self-identified Celtic communities online and what shared characteristics do online Celtic communities employ to define themselves? What, if any, are the cultural parameters of membership within these populations and the specific subsets? What are the motivations for these communities and how have the 'grounded' historical definitions of identity shaped and informed the politics of Celtic identification within the cybersphere? Through this analysis it is evident that many of the current online Celtic communities often use the past to construct a contemporary Celtic identity, thus rendering the Celtic identity as either an incidental construction or an imagined identity, dependent on the point of view.

Cinzia Curtis (Centre for Manx Studies/Manx Heritage Foundation)

Paper Title: '*Celtic*' *Dance on the Isle of Man*

'Manx Dance: The Sword Dance is an ancient ritualistic Manx dance. As with Manx music, one can see the Irish, Scottish and Welsh influences, yet they remain defiantly Manx!' (http://www.celticnationsworld.com/Culture_celtic_dance.htm 27/04/2006)

Manx Dance in the 21st Century is a well-established dance form, full of stylistic variety, creative innovation and respect for the tradition. With five fully subscribed dance groups with a common repertoire and vocabulary of steps and figures, a syllabus within the school curriculum and a basis in collected material it is regularly represented at local events as well as further afield by dancers young and old. As an established dance form it is distinct from its Celtic cousins, although shares common characteristics with folk dances across Europe.

When 'Manx Dance' is 'Googled', the contemporary research tool of choice, a number of references appear, including the above quote from a site dedicated to Celtic culture. This is the total information given about Manx dance on this site. But why is the external view of Manx dance so different to the reality? What is that reality? Why would dance remain 'defiantly' Manx? Defiant in the face of who or what? And what is being implied by a comparison with Irish, Scottish and Welsh dances only when English and French influences are also evident? As part of a larger study exploring the collection, revival and development of Manx dance throughout the twentieth century, this paper discusses the

issues surrounding Manx dance and, through field interviews, the perceptions of 21st century dancers, concentrating on the myth building and subsequent cynicism and mistrust of ‘traditional’ sources as a result of Celtic culture’s ever changing position within contemporary culture. In particular the paper will address how external views, such as that above, have influenced the ideas of Manx dancers in the 21st Century.

Merv Davey (Institute of Cornish Studies, University of Exeter)

Paper Title: Troyls and Tribulations – Sources and inspirations for Cornish Dance in the 21st century

In the early 21st Cornish dance has increasing popularity as an expression of Cornish identity, this paper consider its provenance in terms of source material and reflects on the cultural drivers that inspire it.

Cornish dance is currently well represented within three groups of “folkloric phenomena “: established traditional customs such as Bodmin Riding and the Helston Furry Dance; choreographic presentation in the form of dance displays at concerts, festivals and schools projects; and participatory events (troyls / nosow lowen / ceilis) for weddings, village dances, and festivals.

The core material for Cornish dance is provided from traditions within living memory such as the scoot (step) dances, furry (proceSSIONal) dances and the snakes, snails and serpents of the Sunday school treats. These are supported and expanded with additional material from publications such as “Old Cornwall” and folkloric / antiquarian publications from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A small number of country dances also survived in living memory and these together with elements from the other traditions have provided a base for a developing repertoire of Cornish dance both for demonstration and participation.

There is remarkably little that is dance related in the collections of Baring Gould or Cecil Sharp, both of whom were active in Cornwall. Archive material that has become available within the last four or five years, however, that has significantly added to the repertoire of both music and country dances.

Cornish dance today also inherits the spirit of the early 20th century revivalists, most tangibly in the adoption of Cornish for the names of dance groups and new dances but also in the fusion of a drive for cultural distinctiveness in Cornwall with folk traditions.

Michael Hornsby (University of Southampton)

Paper Title: *The Commodification of Ethnic Identities: The Case of Brittany*

The twentieth century saw a massive abandonment of the Breton Language by native speakers in Brittany (and elsewhere) to the extent that the future of the language is considered seriously endangered by most commentators. In this, Breton is no more unusual than a whole host of other threatened minority languages. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, attempts to halt the demise of the language gained impetus to the extent that more people than ever before are (re-) learning Breton, sending their children to immersion or bi-lingual schools or connecting in a myriad of other ways to the language. Such numbers remain relatively small, though.

This paper explores the split nature of the Breton-speaking community by examining the sense of identity found among ‘traditional’ speakers (i.e. people who learned the language in a family standard and who are generally over sixty years old) and among ‘neo’ speakers (i.e. L2 users of the language and their children). A sense of Breton identity appears to be a big motivational factor amongst the latter group and I will link this to global trends of language commodification, showing the implications such a connection will have for the survival of the language in the twenty-first century. The transformations that the Breton language is undergoing make for a fascinating case study of an ethnic revival in progress. Such transformations may be symptomatic of a stage that obsolescent languages go through and as such, they can add to our understanding of the processes of language death and revitalisation.

Samantha Hurn (University of Wales, Lampeter and University College London)

Paper Title: *‘Bois y cobs’: The place of autochthonous horses in rural Welsh cultural identity*

Contemporary Welsh identity is usually discussed in terms of nationalistic discourse, with language playing a prominent role in differentiating true, Welsh speaking Welsh (Cymro Glan) from the ‘not quite Welsh’ or Cymro di-Gymraeg (the non-Welsh speaking Welsh), and, most importantly, in constructing Welsh identity in direct opposition to the English colonisers. However, there are other equally significant symbolic markers of identity unique to members of particular rural sub-cultures, which are intimately linked with the mythology, lifestyle, livelihood and landscape of the Welsh countryside. The autochthonous Welsh Ponies and Cobs of rural Ceredigion, West Wales are a prime example, being of immense social and cultural significance to members of traditional farming communities in the area. Indeed, the breeding and showing of Welsh Cobs is integral to the way of life for a large number of local people, and has been for centuries,

exemplified by the high density of family owned and run Cob studs (breeding establishments) in the area, and the wide range of performative events for the exhibition of Cobs locally, including the annual Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and the Aberaeron Festival of Welsh Cobs.

These animals are selectively bred as cultural artefacts and prestige objects par excellence, to the extent that the relationship between men (and occasionally women) and the animals they own, breed and show are intersubjective, so that horses play a defining role in the construction of their human counterparts' identities.

The following paper is based on four years of participant observation in the area, and considers the interconnected history of Cobs and people in rural West Wales, and the continued significance of the Welsh breeds in the creation and maintenance of identity and social and political alliances between other members of a community where, to misquote Evans-Pritchard, the dominant social idiom is an 'equine idiom'.

Alan M. Kent (Open University)

Paper title: *Mozeying on Down: The Cornish language in America*

Was Cornish ever spoken in North America? This paper aims to explore the tentative possibilities of Cornish language transcending the Atlantic Ocean and being spoken in North America during the 16th and 17th centuries. Not only were Cornish settlers among the first colonists in the continent, but Breton and Cornish fishing crews appear to have touched the coastline there very early on. I am to consider the extent to which the language was spoken there by these travellers and what evidence remains of their activity. The important location of Tangier Island at the head of the Potomac River appears to be an epicentre of such traces, where a sub-stratum of Cornish perhaps influenced the 'old brogue' and 'special melody' of the speech there. Additionally, I will explore the second wave of emigration to North America, in which many nineteenth-century Cornish miners and farmers carried traces of the language with them, both in vocabulary and grammar. Here I propose to look at what survived and how that shaped the historical identity of the Cornish in North America. The old cowboy term to 'mozey on down' is one such example. I pay particular attention to the mining vocabulary and cultural geographic context of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and Northern California. Finally, the paper seeks to explore the extent of use of Cornish in contemporary America, what the language signifies to modern Cornu-American culture and how it interacts with other Celtic languages in the USA.

Bob Keys (College of St Mark & St John)

Paper Title: *Projecting the Celtic – Loyalty and community, treachery and betrayal as themes in European film representations of Celtic identities, c1930 – c1950*

The paper examines a number of film traditions within European cinema which have represented both Celtic landscapes and Celtic communities as occupying a cultural space on the periphery of modern life while being an element within a wider national culture. These traditions involve both the documentary movement as well as a number of feature films produced by particular directors and studios in Britain, France and Germany in the inter-war and immediate post-war period of the twentieth century. The role of literary tradition and folklore in constructing metaphors for filmic representation is considered in the paper.

However the main emphasis will be on the significance of borders and liminality in establishing both ethnic identity and historical difference within ‘film discourse’. The specific historical crises which culminated in the Second World War provides the context for the ‘textual’ analysis which looks at the way films raised crucial questions in regard to ethnic identity, history, regionalism and nationalism within the broader ideological conflict. The paper will consider some aspects of the representation of Brittany and Bretons in French Cinema and Cornish and Breton communities as depicted in the 1945 Ealing Film, Johnny Frenchman. It will also compare the treatment of the Irish Question and nationalism in the context of war-time British Cinema and German Cinema under the Nazi regime as represented in; *Mein Leben für Irland*, 1941 and *The Halfway House* 1944 and a number of post-war British films on Ireland.

Ken MacKinnon (University of Aberdeen)

Paper Title: *Cornish and the Future of the Celtic Languages*

The decline of the Celtic languages in modern times has been arrested by the resurgence of Welsh in the population censuses 1981 - 2001. Gaelic has continued its decline during this period, albeit with a slight increase amongst school-aged children 1991 - 2001. In contrast Cornish has no-where else to go but up – but there are no census data to illustrate it.

The increases for Welsh are most pronounced amongst young people, and in the areas where Welsh is a local minority language. Welsh-medium education and media have clearly played a great part in this process. However, the migration of Welsh speakers out of the majority area, and migration of English monoglot speakers into this area has

produced the paradox that the majority of Welsh speakers are now located outside the traditional “heartlands”. A similar process has been going on in Gaelic Scotland, with 45% of Gaelic speakers now being usually resident outside the Highlands and Islands, in urban, Lowland Scotland. These processes can be illustrated graphically and by statistical mapping of speaker distributions, educational data, and household and family structures.

The disassociation of Celtic language speakers from their traditional homelands raises the question whether their speech-communities can remain viable, and whether the language can be adequately transmitted in isolated households and minority networks. The revival of Cornish occurs in a similar milieu, and without a Cornish *Gaidhealtachd* or *Bro Gymraeg* raises the question whether the language can be successfully revived at all.

Possible models for this process can be discussed in connection with the ideas of Cornish speakers, users and learners on the future of their language. These opinions can form the basis for discussion of the developing situation of revived Cornish as a possible paradigm for the future of the language in society for the other Celtic languages in present-day Britain.

Breesha Maddrell (Centre for Manx Studies, University of Liverpool)

Paper Title: *Mootilating Manx Music – technology and ‘the tradition’*

‘If you live like a relic you’ll be put in a museum and exhibited’
Moot, ‘Exhibition’, 2006

When the first tracks from electro-acoustic band ‘Moot’ appeared on a compilation of new Manx music entitled ‘Thie Soilshee/The Lighthouse’ (1998), the ‘traditional’ music scene held its breath. Two well-known unaccompanied songs in Manx Gaelic, ‘Arrane Oie Vie’ and ‘Ushag Veg Ruy’, were removed from their more usual context, stretched out and explored in an interface with looped samples and drums, interspersed with acoustic flute. Opinion was divided. Some felt the style ‘very brave and adventurous (traditionalists be warned)...out of this world’. Others – including those traditionalists – not only did not like it, but were apparently confused about where it should belong, particularly within inter-Celtic festival programming. Was it that Moot challenged what was accepted as ‘traditional’, what it is to be Celtic, what it is to be Manx? Moot’s first album ‘Uprooted’ (2001) continued the experimental treatment of traditional material, with the second album, released this year, moving away from the ‘traditional’ to new songs in Manx Gaelic and English, and to social comment.

This paper explores what happens when samples and computer-generated music enter ‘the tradition’ in this way. It suggests that the emergence of Moot can be taken as a sign

of confidence and stability in Manx music – a sign that the fragility of the late 20th century revival is past. In spite of its definite need to belong to the 21st century, could it be that much of Moot’s approach is more ‘traditional’ than ‘the tradition’ would like to believe? New pairings of texts and tunes, the vocalist making the song her own, the generation of new material in Manx Gaelic and social comment – all these, in effect, bring the tradition into the 21st century.

Sabrina Palm (University of Bonn)

Paper Title: *Celtic Music’. Shift [Perceptions, Images and Identities]*

Castles surrounded by fog, pastels and Gaelic fonts, synthesizer sounds and alienated voices - this might be one of the most popular images linked to the term ‘Celtic music’. Here Celtic music is used as a label in a similar manner as ‘world music’ and certain target groups can be seen such as aficionados of New Age and medieval music. But Celtic music also functions as a term describing a set of traditional music, e.g. Irish, Scottish or Breton as well as in a variety of hybrid forms.

All these phenomena are based to differing degrees on the history of the Celts and their culture. However, a number of identities have shifted recently due to the rising use of the Internet, which has often replaced local musicians, and also CDs, as the main medium for listening to and learning new music. The availability of sound-files and sheet notation is on the increase and more and more musicians are reading newsletters and taking part in Internet forums, which have caused these media to gain considerably in economic importance. The Internet provides a forum for people, who might be searching for their history or wishing to be part of a community. These longings are often reflected in advertising, especially for the tourist and drink industries that are both strongly linked to Celtic music. One could therefore gain the impression that the worldwide dissemination and the commodification of Celtic music have loosened the connection to the roots of this musical culture; but that is only one aspect. Even when songtexts or sheet notation are made available on Internet their background is very often provided as well. Young Celtic people sometimes only come in touch with their traditional music through mass media and live events, and this can be regarded as an ongoing historicisation.

Andy Philips (Frys an Spyrys)

Paper Title: *The Celtic Theology of Place*

A sense of place is a category of human experience of the world and a vitally important component of personal identity and well being; as Simone Weil wrote: “To be rooted is perhaps the most important need of the human soul.” It may be that the current

strengthening of Celtic identity is driven by the need to belong and be rooted in an ever-more mobile world.

The paper will review milestones in the development of what is being called the Theology of Place; in 1978 Brueggeman mentioned a spiritual/ psychological crisis of rootlessness in modern society in *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge* and contrasted the rootedness of the Jewish people in the land of Palestine; in 1989 Geoffrey Lane examined Aboriginal geographical spiritual rootedness in his *A Sense of Place*; in 1995 Dorian Llywelyn reviewed the spiritual aspects of Welsh national identity and attitudes to Wales in *Sacred Place, Chosen People*; Belden Lane wrote about North American Indian spiritual attitudes towards land in *Landscapes of the Sacred* in 2002; finally, the abstract's author wrote *Lan Kernow: a Theology of Place for Cornwall* earlier this year.

The Theology of Place postulates that every people's identity, whether Indian, Aboriginal or Celtic, inevitably has a spiritual component to it that helps to define them as a people, that this is linked to geography. However, as the Church declines and becomes generally more marginalised in society, how is this specifically affecting Celtic identities?

Looking at the example of Cornwall, it will be argued that the Church in Cornwall is being displaced in Cornish identity by paganism and Buddhism, that this is partly a result of the Church's weak sense of place. A strategy for a response by the Church will be suggested based on being a fuller and more willing participant in the current Cornish Revival.

Celeste Ray (University of the South, Tennessee)

Paper Title: *Transatlantic Celts: Ancestral Tourism and Scottish Clanscapes*

This paper considers Scottish-American pilgrimage to sites of ancestral emigration in the American South and to the perceived "Celtic clanscapes" of Scotland. While Scotland has a population of five million, more than ten million Americans claim Scottish descent. The Scottish identity embraced by American descendants of Highland, Lowland or Ulster Scots alike is a Highland "Celtic" identity that came to represent the Scots long after most ancestral immigrants left Scotland. Highlandism shapes the heritage of hyphenated Scots who organize themselves in clan-specific associations and, abetted by tourism promoters, view the whole of Scotland as clan lands. Scottish Americans gather in places in America, which they consider evocative of Celtic landscapes and "return" to Scotland (in organized groups and as individuals) to make emotional visits to the scenes of events considered formative of their clan identity and "Celtic heritage." They may also meet their clan chiefs, participate in "clan reunions" with parades and other public rituals in

their chiefs' local communities, and enthusiastically sport clan tartans (earning themselves the label "tartaneers" in Scotland).

Particularly when ethnic identities are symbolic, or reclaimed generations after ancestral immigration, their shape may be offensive to the homeland. Since regaining their own parliament in 1999, Scots have engaged in fresh discussions about national identity and the Scottish diaspora's appropriation of stereotypical and romantic elements of that identity as ethnic shibboleths spurs vitriolic debate. While Scottish scholars and journalists cringe at the enduring success of Highlandism abroad and at the marketing of Scotland as a gateway to a "Celtic" past for heritage tourists from abroad, many Scots and Scottish Americans do establish on-going transatlantic relationships with distant (or perceived) kin through clan-themed tourism, and the Scottish Tourist Board (Visit Scotland) has created a special "Ancestral Tourism" branch and plans a "Year of Homecoming" in 2009.

Chris Rowland (University of Ulster)

Paper Title: *Return Migration and Identity*

The Celtic countries are well known as lands of emigration. But what happens when emigrants and their children choose to come back? Modern Ireland is currently experiencing a large-scale return migration of its citizens from overseas – many of whom are arriving in a 'homeland' they have never seen before. In objective legal terms. Such migrants are indisputably Irish, yet they often encounter a lack of acceptance on the part of the native population based on exclusive perceptions of what constitutes an Irish person. 'Return Migration and Identity' investigates the context and experiences of these homecoming Irish, and what their (mis)treatment tells us about notions of Celtic identity, culture and belonging in modern Ireland.

David Thomson (Truro College)

Paper Title: *In the Blood – Is Cultural Identity the New Race Theory?*

This paper will address the dilemma inherent in the promotion of any sense of cultural

identity: by what criteria does the culture exclude others? However positively
identity
‘other’.
Can this ever be achieved in purely *cultural* terms? Is culture vested in the
landscape
or in the people? Do owners of land own the culture? Do newly arrived
residents
have as much of a claim to the culture as those born within the vicinity? Can
outsiders *ever* truly understand the culture? Is it 'in the blood'?

In various places around the world claims to Celtic identity are couched in terms
that
smack of race more than culture. In some cases, such as in the USA, these are
linked to the ‘Celtic Diaspora’. But can *any* of the claims to Celtic identity be
entirely
free of the taint of racial theory? Evidence of the links between white
supremacists
and Celtic claims in the USA will be examined along with links to separatism in
Italy.
This will then be set alongside the cultural heritage claims of the more traditional
Celtic areas, with particular focus upon Cornwall. The relationship between
heritage
and history will be considered: is history used as a cloak of respectability?

Lowenthal
has suggested that heritage is ‘created to generate and protect group interests, it
benefits us only if withheld from others’. This paper will examine how Celts in
the
21st Century identify ‘others’ for by doing so they identify themselves. The 20th
Century saw the Holocaust in Europe and genocide in Rwanda – can any society
now
afford to indulge in notions of cultural identity that may owe more to the ideas of
Houston Stewart Chamberlain than to the works of the Gorsyth bards?

Dorothy Verkerk (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Paper Title: *The Southern Cross is a Celtic Cross: Funerary Monuments of Celtic-Americans*

Although Scots-Irish immigration to North Carolina, USA, began early in the state's history, it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that Southern Irish-Americans began to use replicas of or visual quotations from the Celtic Cross as funerary markers. The sudden appearance of these crosses in the post-Civil War South raises interesting questions: where did these Americans gain their specific knowledge of the Celtic Cross? Why the choice of the Celtic Cross? What did the Celtic Cross mean personally for these "Celtic-Americans?" Using one case study, this paper explores the Celtic Cross funerary monument as a signifier of religious, economic, and ethnic identity.

Mrs. Florence Steele Martin Vance commissioned for the Martin family of Asheville, North Carolina, an exact replica of the tenth-century St. Martin's Cross on Iona for their family plot. From a prominent Catholic family of Louisville, Kentucky, Florence married John Martin, an Irish immigrant. After his death, Florence married Zebulon Vance, the Civil War governor of North Carolina. Zebulon was harshly criticized for marrying a "Papist" since anti-Catholic feeling was strong in the South. Florence was familiar with anti-Catholic and anti-Irish feeling; her hometown witnessed "Bloody Monday," when at least 20 people were killed and her church, St. Martin's, was attacked.

Florence chose to be buried with the Irish-Catholic Martin family rather than the Vance family, who were buried in relatively modest plot at the base of the hill where Florence's cross dominates the skyline. Even today, the replica of the St. Martin's cross continues to hold a fascination for Americans, who visit her cross in order "to feel its power (groundskeeper, 2005)." It is now an unofficial pilgrimage site for twenty-first century visitors who come to experience its aura. This is the story of a symbol that moves from the monastery, to the cemetery, and then a mystery.

Victoria Walters (University of Ulster)

Paper Title: *Performing Celtic Identity – Joseph Beuys*

This paper will look at examples of the work of German sculptor Joseph Beuys and ask: how does the artist express, challenge, respond to or perform Celtic identity? What does it mean to express identity through art practice? Beuys was strongly influenced and inspired by Celtic culture and myth and he was particularly interested in working on the periphery of the Celtic world; he visited Celtic sites in Ireland and Scotland during the 1970's, responding to the places he visited and people he met in his practice. There is recognition of process in Beuys' practice which connects with contemporary notions of culture as process and his practice in Ireland and Scotland constituted an active engagement with the cultural heritage of places and people, as well as a desire to facilitate change.

Mark Rosenthal has recently argued that Beuys was engaged in "staging sculpture". To what degree were his performed actions a vector for shaping identity? Did his position as

an artist allow him to perform a notion of Celtic identity? How is this different from “everyday” identity if, as contemporary theory argues, identity is itself a performance? Other questions for discussion may include: Did Beuys’ childhood in Kleves, a Celtic, Catholic enclave of Germany and his interest in Celtic culture make his position on Celtic identity particularly relevant? Did the historical context in which he was working affect his notion of what it meant to be a Celt or what it could mean in the future? Did the artist’s engagement with the geography of Scottish and Irish landscapes and related myths convey particular notions of Celtic identity?

Joanie Willett (University of Exeter)

Paper Title: Exploring the Political Economy of Regional Identity; The Case of Cornwall

Cornwall as a region is mired in long term poverty. However it has also come to encapsulate the idea of the ‘rural idyll’. In turn this has helped to make the tourist industry, in selling this dream, arguably the most important industry in Cornwall with evidence that part of Cornwall’s ‘attraction’ is its perceived ‘backwardness’. This is an identity that some organisations (for example Cornwall Enterprise) working within the region recognise needs to be challenged if Cornwall is to ‘regenerate’.

Within regeneration discourse, the idea of identity is becoming increasingly important. Indeed, Bond et al locate the current interest in regional identities as being linked to the need to determine ‘competitive advantage’ within a globalised, neo-liberal economic order. However this must be a process that the Cornish themselves take a lead in.

Previously, Cornwall and its identity have been extensively examined in terms of constructivist analyses of socio- historical factors, belonging and territory, using scholars such as Anderson, Guibernau, Erikson and Smith. These theorists help to answer the question ‘what is Cornishness?’ by highlighting commonalities, national consciousness based around shared values traditions and history, the way that communities are ‘imagined’, and the meaning that the ‘nation’ gives to personal identity. However, although they do deal with some aspects of ‘why’ an identity developed in the way that it did they tend to cover the attendant power from a mechanical perspective and consider identity in terms of ‘belonging to’ rather than the ‘different from’ that will be examined below. Consequently, a deconstruction of the components of Cornishness is essential, examining and exposing the power and interests that have shaped it, and leading to an appreciation of the implications that the articulation of Cornish identity might have. That is not to say that previous analyses are no good, just that a different perspective gives greater depth of understanding and can inject a cross fertilization of ideas to a well used formulae.

Gramsci will be used to highlight how the form that an identity takes depends on the powerful interests surrounding it, and the work of Foucault and Said explains how the representations of outsiders can come to be accepted as truths by members of a group. Connolly offers a deconstruction of identity, looking at it from the perspective of difference, and the 'other'. These are combined with Marxist Political Economy to show how the interests of the powerful (or the bourgeoisie) can alter group identities to suit their economic needs.

The article argues that these are factors that Cornish identity needs to be very aware of in particular during a time of frequent discussion around Cornish identity as a driver for the economy. Furthermore, Cornish people need to ensure that they are a part of the rearticulation of its identity that is surrounding regeneration discourse. Failure to do so is likely to mean that such regeneration will not benefit the Cornish people in the long run, but the elites that have had a voice in the re-formation of the identity.

Oleg A. Zotov (Moscow State University)

Paper Title: *Celtic Identity in non-Celtic Countries: the case of Russia*

From the first sight, wording of the paper may seem paradoxical, but keeping in mind the acknowledged viewpoint that the basic feature of nation is its members' self-identity, the phenomenon of 'non-Celtic Celts' may well be a point of interest for scholars. As we may see by the example of multi-national Russia, 'Celtic' self-identity is not necessarily based on original nationality and language, but frequently shows us how initially alien language and culture can build up a new type of identity. 'Celtic' activities in Russia, rising in last ten years, vary from rather sophisticated forms, such as academic seminars and conferences, language courses and manifold cultural events, to more popular ones, including multitudinous music and dance festivals and schools, fan clubs, neo-druidic communities etc. The situation concerned shows many parallels with what is now called 'a Celtic Renaissance' in Western Europe in the century before last, and can also be characterized: - first, by the elevating popularity of 'celticity' mainly among European-oriented intellectuals, educated in leading universities and graduated between 1990-2000; -secondly, by the absence of distinguished boundary between academic Celtic studies and common celtomania, which significantly affects corresponding literature, both scientific and popular. Translations are numerous, but accurate research works are scarce.

The reason for the growing popularity of Celtic theme in Russia may be seen as a result of the political and cultural process took place in the former Soviet Union, which may be called 'local globalization', similar to an actual globalization in modern Western world. But unlike it, this process consisted in state-supported gradual introduction of a Soviet variant of monoculture, based on the Russian language and literature, accompanied,

however, by a formal and superficial, though demonstrative, support of local national cultures.

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