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## NATIONAL IDENTITY AND POPULAR MUSIC: QUESTIONING THE 'CELTIC'

### Introduction

The term 'Celtic' is encountered in a variety of contexts when exploring a range of cultural and social concerns. James Porter has pointed to two aspects of this usage in considering 'traditional' music. He notes that in one sense the 'accuracy' of the term is not as important as its performative role in shaping identities. So the existence of, for example, both a festival and a radio show entitled 'Celtic Connections' is significant in potentially shaping views of both music and national identity. However, in another sense he notes the concerns of a number of scholars that the term is misleading; it is, he suggests, 'stretching plausibility to refer to the idioms of Lowland Scotland [...] as "Celtic"'.<sup>1</sup> However, this distinction is not applied with care (if at all) when we come to discussions of popular music.<sup>2</sup> This brings in its train a number of problems. This article focuses on the contributions of two artists, Ian Anderson and Richard Thompson, whose music is often seen as primarily English.<sup>3</sup> However, the argument presented here is that they are actually crafting forms of *British* music which draw upon a number of traditions, including those from Scotland. These two artists are of particular interest in that they are both Anglo-Scots, whose work has been described variously as gloomy or cynical, although they might prefer the term realistic. In some ways their work can be seen to be marked by the traits that I.G.C. Hutchison has recently attributed to the contribution of Presbyterianism to Scottish life: 'logic, adherence to principle, democracy, and self-analysis'.<sup>4</sup> In using the term 'Celtic', as some have, to describe their music we run the risk of missing the complexities of these contributions to their work. The term 'Celtic' risks an essentialist approach which both masks the very different traditions within Scotland and does not help in explaining the emergence of distinctively British forms of music.

The problems rest with a broad-brush use of the term 'Celtic' on both sides of the border, albeit with different agendas at work. South of the border, the usage is a careless one, in which the term is used to refer to Scotland, Ireland and Wales, sometimes in a fashion which implies close connections between the three. For example, Morgan's patrician social history of Britain from 1945 to 1989 refers sweepingly to 'the Celtic Nations'.<sup>5</sup> As Robbins points out, such labels are profoundly misleading, as they ignore divisions both between and within such 'nations'.<sup>6</sup> He also observes that the process of formation of Scotland in particular was so complex that 'the broad categorization of "Celtic" seems to me quite inappropriate'.<sup>7</sup> However, such broad categorisations are also freely used north of the border. For example, at an early stage in Purser's compendious history of *Scotland's Music* he notes that "'Celtic" is used almost

exclusively to mean Scotland and Ireland because it is convenient and economical to do so'.<sup>8</sup> The results of this strategy can be seen in the very limited treatment that is accorded to certain types of music, as illustrated by the sketchy discussion of the bothy ballads of north east Scotland compared to other (especially Highland) forms, despite the careful location by Ian Carter of the former tradition in a context of small farming.<sup>9</sup> Such failure to attend to the specific social and cultural context is encouraged by the broad-brush term 'Celtic'. At the same time as Purser was using the term in this fashion, Malcolm Chapman was producing his trenchant critique of what he terms the 'construction of a myth'. He argued that much of what we take to be 'Celtic', especially in modern times, is actually the projection of values on to the 'other'. With the growth of industrialisation there was 'an increasing elaboration of the Celts as free, unpredictable, natural, emotional, impulsive, poetical, artistic, expressive, unreliable (and so on)'.<sup>10</sup> Chapman applies this argument to music in a later piece, although, as Stokes and Bohlman note, with relatively little attention to the concrete details of traditional music in the areas he considers.<sup>11</sup> However, what is important about his argument is that it draws our attention to the different strands that make up what we might call 'Scottishness'. Accounts which simply draw upon Celtic traditions to build their picture of what it is to be Scots, such as that supplied by Pittock, neglect these alternative traditions.<sup>12</sup>

In order to contextualise our discussion of music and national identity we need first to consider, albeit necessarily briefly, the question of national identity. We can start by recognising this as a process rather than a state, and a process moreover than is full of conflict and tension.<sup>13</sup> However, some of the language that is used in debates around national identity can tend to exaggerate fluidity and choice. For these reasons we may prefer 'emergence' to 'invention' and social 'constitution' to social 'construction'.<sup>14</sup> For the discussions of the invention of national identity tend to downplay the enduring and durable aspects of national identity that emerge, argues McCrone, from governance rather than sentiment. 'In other words,' he argues 'people think of themselves as Scottish because of the micro-contexts of their lives reinforced by the school system' and this focus on enduring practices can be usefully related to some of the features that Hutchison noted of one particular form of Scottish identity.<sup>15</sup> In our discussion of the contribution of our two artists to aspects of Scottish identity we will be particularly influenced by this attention to ways of thinking conditioned by taken for granted practices.

However, the relationship between popular music and the formation of such identities can be conceived of in a number of different forms. We can distinguish initially between direct and indirect forms of influence. Direct refers to those artists who have deliberately and consciously tried to invoke aspects of musical practice to shape national identity. Such approaches are most closely associated with forms of 'traditional' music. Such attempts are not limited to Scotland; a major project of one of Richard Thompson's earlier collaborators, Ashley Hutchings, has been the drive to recreate a distinctively English form

of music, one based on an exploration of traditional forms of music and dance such as the Morris.<sup>16</sup> Whatever the undoubted success of such endeavours in musical terms, however, they have tended to remain rather marginal preoccupations in terms of their broader influence. Of more importance might be said to be rather more indirect attempts to fashion contemporary musical forms in such a way as to reflect aspects of particular national identities. In Scotland, for example, the band Big Country met with considerable success in the early 1980s (including a number 1 album) with a style which included the emulation of the bagpipes on electric guitar and lyrics which addressed Scottish themes. However, this might be extended to include styles of vocal delivery, as most notably with the Proclaimers (strangely neglected by Gardiner) who sang in uncompromisingly Leith accents as opposed to the dominant mid-Atlantic tones favoured by most popular music acts. The impact is still more indirect in the case of Thompson and Anderson. Whilst aspects of styling influenced by both Scots and English traditions can be detected in their music (as will be discussed in more detail below) the influence here is more in concerns expressed in the lyrics of songs. This takes two forms. One is with themes of a particularly Scottish nature, more clearly observed in Anderson's work. However, the argument to be pursued here is that underlying much of their lyrical development are the features of a Lowland Scottish tradition that is obscured by the label of 'Celtic', something which will form the main concern of our discussion below.

We begin by reviewing the careers of the two artists, with a focus on emerging questions of national identity. This enables us to deal with the characterisation of both as 'Celtic'. The weaknesses of such characterisation are brought out, which leads to a broader discussion of the use of the term. The ways in which the term occludes differences in Scottish musical forms are reviewed with a particular focus on the rich traditions of areas such as the north-east and their relative neglect in many treatments. This recognition of difference then leads in turn to a consideration of the role of the Anglo-Scot. Consideration of this role, it is argued, acts as a powerful counterweight to more essentialist notions of national identity. It attests to the complex and contested process of identity formation and to the value that a consideration of popular music can play in such formation.

### **Two careers contrasted**

Ian Anderson was born in Dunfermline in 1947, son of a Scottish father and an English mother. His father ran the family firm, the RSA Boiler Fluid Company, until his retirement.<sup>17</sup> The family moved to Edinburgh, where Anderson attended primary school, and then, in 1958, to Blackpool. After studying at Blackpool Grammar School, Anderson attended art college, but his real interest was in music. As part of the Blades, which transformed into the John Evan Band and included some fellow former pupils of the grammar school, Anderson played a repertoire largely based on American blues. It was primarily as a blues

band that Jethro Tull, as the band now became, met with initial success in 1969. However, Anderson was increasingly discontented with the blues as a form of expression and was seeking to develop a form which drew upon more European sources.<sup>18</sup> This was to be part of his musical development over the next decade and was influenced in part by the 'folk revival' then taking place in London which featured a young Richard Thompson. As Anderson was to recall of Thompson and other leading lights of this movement, like Bert Jansch and John Renbourn, 'Although some of their techniques were traditional folk, they seemed to be doing something different: singing very personalized songs that, seemingly, did not have a great deal to do with the American tradition.'<sup>19</sup>

Thompson was born two years after Anderson in north London, to an English mother and a Scottish father. His father was a policeman who had moved south from Dumfriesshire in the 1930s. After school Thompson went to art school, but his heart was really in music. Together with some other residents of suburban north London he had formed Fairport Convention, which started playing songs from the American folk revival. However, Thompson began contributing his own songs and the band started to explore British traditional music in more depth, culminating in the extremely influential album *Leige and Lief*, which reached number 17 in the album charts and, arguably, launched the whole genre of 'folk rock'.<sup>20</sup> The group fragmented after this, with Ashley Hutchings leaving to pursue a much deeper exploration of traditional musical forms. Thompson stayed on for one more record before leaving himself to pursue a solo career. Like Anderson, this career was to be profoundly shaped by African-American forms, but was to take a particularly British form, the content of which remains to be explored. The two, therefore, have some parallels in their development of such British forms, but there are also some points of departure. For Anderson the influence of forms of classical music would be an important source, whereas for Thompson American country music was important. However, both would draw in some form or other on traditional forms of musical expression from the British Isles. For Thompson this was based on a deep knowledge of these musical forms and he would continue to employ some of these. Anderson was at a greater distance from such forms and their impact was a little more mediated.

In the early 1970s, however, it was Jethro Tull which enjoyed greater commercial success, with Anderson drawing on an eclectic range of material in his song writing. The full range was first deployed on the *Stand Up* album, which reached number 1 in the UK album charts.<sup>21</sup> However, it was the *Aqualung* album which began the major breakthrough. It also introduced a familiar device in Anderson's work of setting acoustic passages against electronic passages in the same song for contrast and emphasis. The albums that followed, *Thick as a Brick* and *A Passion Play*, both reached number 1 in the US charts, but also saw a reaction against what critics saw as Anderson's excessive pretentiousness.<sup>22</sup> This was the era of progressive rock and the 'concept album'.<sup>23</sup> Whilst Anderson was in truth on the fringes of this movement, the

band slipped from this peak of commercial success, although their albums continued to make the top ten on both sides of the Atlantic for the rest of the 1970s. For our purpose, what is interesting about this early material is its English emphasis. It was on *Aqualung* (1971) that the English feel becomes most apparent. As Moore argues, the songs

home in on the nature of then-contemporary English society, or perhaps just then-contemporary England, an England that is portrayed in both realistic and imaginary versions, and is strongly celebrated but even more strongly critiqued. Most importantly, perhaps, it is an England that is lived, and it is the experience of this life that finds its way into these songs.<sup>24</sup>

Now, we could argue that this is a conflation of ‘England’ with ‘Britain’ on Moore’s part, and this failure to be specific about such terms is a criticism we will return to. However, place names are always important in Anderson’s work and the English content here is reinforced by the naming of places such as Preston and Hampstead (something which continues with, for example, ‘the Fulham Road’ on *A Passion Play* – it is not until *Too Old to Rock and Roll* in 1976 that we get our first, marginal, mention of a Scottish place name).<sup>25</sup> It also comes from the very English whimsy of a song like ‘Mother Goose’, with its recorders summoning up an Elizabethan feel. But centrally it is from the lyrics, notably his reference to vicarage tea parties and the Church of England in his attack on organised religion in ‘My God’.<sup>26</sup> This very English motif, which might appear surprising for a boy whose early religious experiences were shaped by Scottish Presbyterianism, is continued with the references to tea drinking as an archetypal symbol of Englishness on *Warchild* (1974).<sup>27</sup> Of course, the very name of the group, derived as it was from an English agriculturalist<sup>28</sup> whose name appeared in standard school history texts, could only reinforce this image and, as late as 1990, a reviewer could refer to their music as ‘[i]nfluenced almost exclusively by the English folk tradition’.<sup>29</sup>

This English ‘feel’ could also be traced in Thompson’s output after his departure from Fairport Convention. Whilst there are nods to his Scottish roots on the eccentric *Henry the Human Fly* (notably the ‘sampling’ of the classic piece of tartanry ‘Mairi’s Wedding’ on ‘Nobody’s Wedding’)<sup>30</sup> the overall feel is best summed up by the anthemic ‘The New St George’ (also taken up by Ashley Hutchings’ newly formed Albion Country Band) which recalls Ruskin and Morris in its call to leave the factory and the forge; St George of course being an attempt to appropriate a very traditional English symbol.<sup>31</sup> However, whilst Thompson continued to draw upon traditional musical forms (and indeed, to work with musicians from the folk rock tradition) his exploration broadened to incorporate more urban forms. Thus his next records not only contained lyrical explorations of urban life but also saw him draw upon English urban musical traditions. For example, this saw the CWS (Manchester) Silver Band play on the next album *I Want to See the Bright Lights Tonight* in 1974.

This English feel was aptly symbolised by the cover art of the next album, *Hokey Pokey*, based as it was on a pastiche of trade union banner art and featuring an urban industrial street scene.<sup>32</sup> So whilst Thompson was still drawing on traditional music this was to a large measure to be seen in the context of the same drive to find English counterparts to the rich musical traditions of Ireland and Scotland that had provided much of the material for the folk rock revival. It was, for example, the dominance of such material in the repertoire of Steeleye Span, which Hutchings had founded after leaving Fairport Convention, that led to his departure from that band in search of English traditions of Morris music.<sup>33</sup> This broader movement also provided key personnel, such as the accordionist John Kirkpatrick, to Thompson's projects.

Whilst both Anderson and Thompson, therefore, were during the early 1970s exploring forms of music that would shape a distinctively British style, in response to the dominance of African-American forms, it would seem that this influence was largely English in form. However, one argument could be that the concerns expressed in their lyrics were also informed by their Anglo-Scots perspective, and that this is something that would develop in the later 1970s. This is particularly the case with Anderson, whose massive commercial success fuelled the purchase of the Strathaird estate on Skye in 1977.<sup>34</sup> He had previously moved out of London into the English countryside and these moves marked a considerable shift in his musical output, seeing the release of three albums which have been characterised (rather misleadingly) by some as 'folk-rock': *Songs from the Wood*, *Heavy Horses* and *Stormwatch*.<sup>35</sup> These records are a little more complex than that simple label, but they do mark the greater influence of more traditional musical forms, both English and Scottish, and it is these records that lead some people to apply the label 'Celtic'. Thompson, too, drew a little more on a wider range of forms, featuring the Scott Skinner composed pibroch 'Dargai' on his 1975 *Pour Down Like Silver* and releasing a whole album of traditional instrumentals, *Strict Tempo*, in 1981 which featured a number of Scottish tunes.<sup>36</sup> It is these developments that see both artists appear under the label of 'Celtic' music; we now turn to see how useful this is.

### 'Celtic' music

Both Thompson and Anderson feature in Sawyer's *The Complete Guide to Celtic Music*, albeit that the reference to Jethro Tull is in somewhat disparaging tones.<sup>37</sup> She is altogether more enthusiastic about Thompson, placing *Shoot Out the Lights* in her top 100 'essential Celtic recordings' and noting that '[w]ith Linda [Peters, later Thompson], a native of Glasgow, Thompson created some of the most satisfying recordings of the modern rock era. Yet much of their sensibility and emotional colouring derived from ancient Celtic roots'.<sup>38</sup> Our problem here is that we are given no clue as to the character of this 'sensibility', which, as we have seen, could be argued to owe more to English and Lowland Scots origins – unless we are to use 'Celtic' as a broad term for 'Scots'. That this is often the case can be seen in Sawyer's attempt to define Celtic music:

Quite frankly, *Celtic music* is a marketing term that I am using, for the purposes of this book, as a matter of convenience, knowing full well the cultural baggage that comes with it. In the present context, it includes both songs and music – traditional and contemporary – of the English-speaking Irish and Scots and their Celtic cousins as well as the Celtic-speaking Gaels and their Celtic cousins, whether in their native land or in the broader Celtic diaspora.<sup>39</sup>

This has the merit of honesty, if little else. It has the consequence of the inclusion of a wide range of unlikely artists under the banner of ‘Celtic’. A definition that can incorporate the white soul of the Average White Band and the blues-rock of Jack Bruce under the same banner seems to have little practical value as an analytical tool. Strikingly, it means that Sawyer can extend her discussion to English singers such as Martin Carthy, listing his recordings in her list of recommended listening – despite Hinton and Wall noting that ‘Martin hates the very sound of the “c” word. He says, more correctly, that “it was mostly *Irish* stuff that we did”’.<sup>40</sup> The problem that Carthy is alluding to here is that the portmanteau term of ‘Celtic’ tends to privilege the undoubted richness of the Irish music tradition over what he and others would perceive as the unexplored richness of the English music tradition. In the same way, the term ‘Celtic’ when applied in a blanket fashion to Scotland tends to gloss over differences in the social and cultural context which shape musical forms in different parts of the country. (It is worth noting at this point that the Irish musicians that Reiss surveyed shared similar concerns.)<sup>41</sup>

Of course, we might argue that this is a book aimed at a popular audience and that academic use of terminology is a separate issue – but here too we find a similar broad-brush approach. Alan Kent, for example, in arguing for the role of Celtic influences in contemporary British youth culture, draws on a range of evidence from body art to Cornish metal bands. In doing so he notes that, ‘[c]entrally, the English musical groups Led Zeppelin and Jethro Tull also embraced this interest in things Celtic in both their music and lyrics during the 1970s’.<sup>42</sup> A far more careful discussion of the band’s work, but one that also falls into the trap of the too easy use of the term ‘Celtic’, is provided by Alan Moore in his essay on ‘Jethro Tull and the case for modernism in mass culture’. He refers in passing to ‘pastiche Celtic jigs’ and cites four examples.<sup>43</sup> One of these overlaps with Kent’s examples and it is worth looking at this song as a means of illustrating my concerns. This song is ‘Broadford Bazaar’, which Kent suggests is concerned with ‘the dislocating effects of the North Sea oil industry on Gaelic speakers’.<sup>44</sup>

The first point to make about this song is that, whilst recorded in 1978, it was not released until 1993.<sup>45</sup> However, of more importance to our present concerns are the musical form and the content of the lyrics. In terms of form, it is a simple song, featuring none of the complex arrangements and shifts in time signature that are more typical of the band’s recorded output. In fact, the song is really a solo effort, featuring Anderson on guitar, vocal and whistle. The

song begins with a verse accompanied just by acoustic guitar, with the whistle coming in as a counterpoint on the first chorus. It would be very hard to characterise this slow acoustic ballad as a 'jig' in any sense that would bear any resemblance to the common use of that term and so difficult to assess the use of the term 'Celtic'. In terms of lyrical content, the song in fact has only one passing reference to swearing in Gaelic. The song is in fact a rather whimsical observation of a local market in a village on Skye bordering on Anderson's recently purchased Strathaird estate. Anderson observes the hucksters calling on people to spend in which he manages to rhyme 'home-dyed woollens' with 'Cuillins'. In this, the song is typical of Anderson's combination of clever word use and impressions drawn from observation.<sup>46</sup> These observations are set in the context of the decline of the short-lived oil-rig building industry, but the lines in the song that have the most impact because of their stress on continuity as against contemporary social change, and speak to Anderson's enduring concerns, are in the last verse, when he speaks of a range of participants, from crofters to 'white settlers', thus emphasising social change. This is set against the death of an old sheep on the hill but her succession by two new lambs. It is this sense of the continuity underlying change, of a deep attachment to the land, of a feeling that 'the land endures' that underpins much of Anderson's work. Whether this is 'Celtic' is open to question.

We can explore this a little further in musical terms if we consider some of the features which might characterise Scottish traditional music, especially when set against the Irish music which often seems to be taken as synonymous with 'Celtic' music.<sup>47</sup> Reiss's careful consideration of the distinctions between Celtic music and Irish traditional forms points to 'the predominantly instrumental common-practice dance music (jigs, slides, reels, polkas, hornpipes, highly ornamented free-rhythm slow airs and solo songs) performed in informal settings across the region'.<sup>48</sup> Here we would want to draw attention to the distinctively Scottish tunes of the strathspey and the march.<sup>49</sup> Styles of playing, especially on the fiddle, differ between and within the two countries. Reiss notes these regional differences within Ireland, and we could point to such continuing differences within Scotland.<sup>50</sup> Two of particular importance are the forms of playing in Shetland and north east Scotland. The former shows continuing Scandinavian influences which cast further doubt on the characterisation of the whole of Scotland as 'Celtic'.<sup>51</sup> The latter, concentrated in Moray and Aberdeenshire, whilst influenced by Highland forms, has its own distinctive style of playing, a style which is particularly suited to the strathspey.<sup>52</sup> Another distinction to which Cadden draws attention in the context of pipe music is the prevalence of named authors in Anglo-Scottish music as compared to the 'traditional' provenance of most Irish tunes.<sup>53</sup> We have already noted that another distinguishing feature of Scottish music as compared to other components of a 'Celtic' tradition is its focus on the ballad, whether this be the great ballads or the work ballads of the north east. We could take these literary traditions and relate them to a particular component of Scottishness. There is a

case, argues Turnbull, for locating Scottish identity in the traditions of the Enlightenment, traditions which in their turn might be related to certain elements in the Presbyterianism which came to dominate Lowland Scotland by the seventeenth century.<sup>54</sup> Such a tradition would lay an emphasis on a powerful individual work ethic, on a sceptical approach to the world, on a systematic approach to empirically gathered information. Such traditions have their dark side too, and it is no place of this article to make an argument for this as some form of exclusively Scottish identity. However, it is worth taking these ideas and pushing them a little further in the context of the work of our two artists.

One way of doing this is to explore one particular Jethro Tull piece, 'Warm Sporrán', one of two instrumentals on the album *Stormwatch*. The title is, of course, a fairly broad clue! The tune is clearly derived from pipe music, with synthesised bagpipes joining with mandolin and flute. However, what is also conspicuous is the snare drumming of Barrie Barlow, playing which features on other performances on the album.<sup>55</sup> This might remind us of two things. One is the importance of pipe bands in the British Army in preserving the tradition of piping following the defeat of Jacobitism in 1745 and in allying it to military drumming. This was music in the service of the British state, as generations of Highlanders fought in battles to secure the Empire.<sup>56</sup> What this suggests is the difficulty of conceiving of an unbroken tradition of 'Celtic' music. The pipes themselves are unlikely to have been introduced into Scotland before the mid-fifteenth century, with the pibroch as a musical form appearing at the turn of the seventeenth century.<sup>57</sup> So whilst there is no doubt that musical forms from the Highlands influenced Scottish music more broadly, it is more difficult to claim this as 'Celtic'. Further, Barlow's snare drumming, and the use elsewhere in Tull's output of the accordion, recalls another development of Scottish music, the Scottish country dance bands whose style is summarised in the 'strict tempo' of Jimmy Shand. Shand, a former coal miner from Fife, was the most famous of a generation of dance band leaders and composers whose records, characterised by the snare drum and the accordion, formed the musical background in many Scottish homes as in the case of Richard Thompson.<sup>58</sup> We have already noted the knowing reference to this country dance music in the title of *Strict Tempo* and the use of snatches from Mairi's Wedding, but the influence is fondly acknowledged in 1991's 'Don't Sit On My Jimmy Shands!'<sup>59</sup> However, such distinctions and influences are grossly underplayed, if they are considered at all, in the discussions of what it is that constitutes 'Celtic' music. Because of this, the Lowland component of Scottish music tends to become buried in a broad use of the term 'Celtic'. A lack of attention to definitions and to debates over the use of the term means that it becomes little more than a marketing term, devoid of any analytical or even descriptive power.

From this point, we might want to recognise a divergence in our two artists. The common thread is not only the influence of a range of musical traditions, including some which we might characterise as 'Celtic' if we really wanted to use that term to refer to the traditions of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands, but

many which are derived from Lowland Scotland and England, and also the tradition of the external observer, doggedly pursuing his own project against the tides of fashion. This is what contributes to their positioning as gloomy, cynical or realistic, according to taste, and which can plausibly be linked to the Presbyterian elements in their early formation. However this influence is instantiated in different forms. Thompson is known for his agonised accounts of emotional life, whereas Anderson takes a much more detached perspective. He rarely writes what might be termed 'love songs' and it could be argued that a form of detachment that might be tantamount to voyeurism characterises much of his writing on emotional life.<sup>60</sup> Another difference is the conscious attention to Scottish themes. Thompson is silent here<sup>61</sup>, but Anderson, following on the themes that we examined in 'Broadford Bazaar', has explored the questions of employment and emigration in the islands in a pair of powerful songs, 'Mountain Men' and 'Ears of Tin'.<sup>62</sup> What is of interest here is the different musical forms that the two songs take. 'Mountain Men' features the 'classic' Tull rock line up, with interplay between the flute and electric guitar being supported by the organ. Despite the clear references in the song to the memories of the emigrant that stress the continuing sound of the pipes, there is no attempt here to use the pipes. By comparison 'Ears of Tin' employs the contrast, often deployed in the band's songs, between the acoustic elements, characterised by the mandolin, which support the passages set on Skye, and the full blown use of the electric guitar to evoke the rain which lashes high rise blocks emblematic of life on the mainland. What this points to is a complex range of influences, which cannot be simply encapsulated in the term 'Celtic'. Whilst the two artists have pursued different projects with different musical outcomes, both share something in common that owes much to their Anglo-Scots background, common bonds which seem to be summed up in Burns' 'man o' independent mind'.

## Conclusion

Of course, it is perfectly possible to argue that the category of the 'Celtic' is still of value in exploring popular music whilst adhering to the socially constructed notion of the term. That is, given that the term is widely used for the marketing of particular forms of music, there is value in exploring the impact of the use of this label. This takes us on to the terrain of the reception of artistic artefacts by audiences, something which is poorly developed in the domain of popular music. That is, whatever the intentions of the artists or the 'objective' content of their efforts, audiences are still free to interpret them according to their own concerns and resources. So, in the case of Kent's youth, the objective status of the music of Jethro Tull or Led Zeppelin as 'Celtic' matters less than if it is taken to be such, for it is the performative impact of such interpretations that is of importance. Of course, this places a responsibility on the analyst to present some evidence that this is the case, rather simply inferring it from the musical form itself. In so doing, a realistic assessment of that musical form will be needed, in order to form a benchmark for analysis. In such assessment, it has

been argued, the term 'Celtic' proves to be less than useful. It lacks usefulness because of the way in which it blurs our attention to questions of difference. These differences exist not only between those areas and musical traditions held to constitute the 'Celtic' but also within those countries. For the purpose of the present discussion these differences have been those within Scotland. The continuing use of the term 'Celtic' prevents a balanced assessment of the different traditions that make up 'Scottish' musical form. In so doing they lead to the type of fuzzy analysis that Gardiner presents, in which Scottishness comes to be simply 'coming from Scotland'. This is not to argue for any essentialist form of Scottish identity, but rather to argue that we need to take account of the distinctiveness of such forms and its mark on music and other cultural forms. In this account I have argued that in the work of Richard Thompson and Ian Anderson, both Anglo-Scots from a Lowland Scots background, that influence can be seen to result in a detached, independent stance that can be related in turn to aspects of the Presbyterian traditions instantiated in the work of other Scots, such as Hugh Miller.<sup>63</sup>

However, this is not at all to argue that this tradition plays itself out in the same ways in the work of both, nor that it is the only influence. Rather, there is a complex range of influences in these Anglo-Scots that point to the construction of distinctively British forms of music. Debates about Scottish national identity have tended to neglect the category of Anglo-Scots, operating with a clear divide between the Scottish and the English. However, there has always been movement across the border, movement which having been largely one way for many years now seems to operate in both directions.<sup>64</sup> In the course of this, is it too much to argue that an identification of Britain only with Empire is to ignore the contradictions and complexities imposed by such movements? We know that to many who come to Britain the identification as British is easier than with narrower labels. In the course of time such groups can contribute to a new sense of what Britishness is through their cultural productions. Perhaps rather than operating with the type of dualistic analysis that terms like 'Celtic' tend to engender, it is time to pay more attention to hybrid cultural products. The success of the music of both Richard Thompson and Ian Anderson tends to suggest that such narrow categories are no longer sustainable.

#### Notes

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1. J. Porter, 'Introduction: Locating Celtic Music (and Song)', *Western Folklore*, 57(4), p.235.
2. M. Gardiner, *Modern Scottish Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005) has a brief discussion, but it is one which is almost list-like in form, misses significant artists and fails to address what is specifically Scottish about those discussed. The discussion of popular music in J. Purser, *Scotland's Music: A History of the Traditional and Classical Music of Scotland from Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1992) is also very sketchy.
3. P. Humphries, *Richard Thompson: Strange Affair*, (London: Virgin Books, 1996); S.A. Nollen, *Jethro Tull: A History of the Band, 1968-2001* (Jefferson, North Carolina: Macfarland & Company, 2002); D. Rees, *Minstrels in the Gallery: a History of Jethro Tull* (London: Firefly Publishing, 1998). Biographical details in the text are derived from these sources unless otherwise acknowledged.
4. I.G.C. Hutchison, 'Workshop of Empire: The Nineteenth Century' in Jenny Wormald ed., *Scotland: a History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005), p.229.
5. K.O. Morgan, *The People's Peace: British History 1945-1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1990), p.368.
6. K. Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), p.252.
7. Robbins, p.272.
8. Purser, p.11.
9. Purser, p.242; I. Carter, *Farmlife in Northeast Scotland, 1840-1914: The Poor Man's Country* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979). It is interesting to note that one of Thompson's rare live recordings of a traditional song is just one of these bothy ballads, 'Bogie's Bonnie Belle' (on *Watching the Dark*, Hannibal, HNCD-5303, 1993).
10. M. Chapman, *The Celts: The Construction of a Myth* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p.215.
11. M. Chapman, 'Thoughts on Celtic Music' in M. Stokes (ed.) *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: the Musical Construction of Place*, (Oxford: Berg,1994), 29-44; M. Stokes and P. Bohlman, *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe* (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003), p.2.
12. M. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
13. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
14. J.C.D. Clark, 'Protestantism, Nationalism and National Identity, 1660-1832, *The Historical Journal*, 43(1), 2000, 249-276.
15. D. McCrone, 'Cultural Capital in an Understated Nation: the Case of Scotland', *British Journal of Sociology*, 2005, 56(1), 65-82; cf. A. Mutch, 'Management Practice and Kirk Sessions: An Exploration of the Scottish Contribution to Management', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 24(1), 2004, 1-19.
16. B. Hinton and G. Wall, *Ashley Hutchings: The Guv'nor and the Rise of Folk-Rock 1945-1973* (London: Helter Skelter, 2002).
17. 'The Entertainers' *Dunfermline Press*, 19 October 1979 <http://www.tullpress.com/dp19oct79.htm> [accessed 19 March 2004].
18. As he later observed 'There's no point in me any longer pretending to sing the American blues, the black man's music, because that's not what I feel. I have great

- admiration for it; it's certainly the music of the past 50 years that's given the most in terms of influence to popular music today. But I think that there is a tremendously neglected area of music that stems basically from the pre-history of Europe.' A. Genheimer, 'Ian Anderson: Too Old To Rock 'N' Roll? Never!', *Creem*, June 1977 [[www.tullpress.com/crjun77.htm](http://www.tullpress.com/crjun77.htm), accessed 19 March 2004].
19. Nollen, p.65.
  20. Fairport Convention, *Liege and Lief*, Island Records IMCD-291, 1969, (2002).
  21. Jethro Tull, *Stand Up*, Chrysalis, 7243 5 35458 2, 1969 (2001).
  22. Jethro Tull, *Thick As A Brick*, Chrysalis, 7243 49540 0 2, 1972 (1998); *A Passion Play*, Chrysalis, 72435 81569 0, 1973 (2003).
  23. B. Martin, *Listening to the Future: The Time of Progressive Rock 1968-1978* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998); E. Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressiver Rock and the Counterculture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
  24. A. Moore, *Aqualung*, (New York: Continuum, 2004), xiv.
  25. Which is a reference to the Glasgow train arriving in Blackpool on 'Big Dipper', *Too Old to Rock and Roll*, 1976
  26. 'My God', on *Aqualung*; lyrics on <http://www.cupofwonder.com/> [accessed 20 December 2005].
  27. Jethro Tull, *Warchild*, Chrysalis, 7243 5 41571 2 7, 1974 (2002).
  28. And not a Scot, as Purser has him; Purser, p.266.
  29. Review of Liverpool concert cited in Nollen, p.217.
  30. 'It's a sendup of the stuff I grew up with – Scottish country dance music. I kind of enjoy it – I can't enjoy it! I hate it! Love/hate. It's like growing up with country music.' – Thompson in Mark Fleischmann, 'Free Richard Thompson Now!', *Trouser Press Collectors' Magazine*, May/June 1982, <http://home.nyc.rr.com/mfleischmann/tpcm.htm>, [accessed 8 December 2005].
  31. Richard Thompson, *Henry the Human Fly*, Fledg'ling Records, FLED-3045, 1972 (2004).
  32. Richard and Linda Thompson, *Hokey Pokey*, Island Records, IMCD-305, (1975) 2004.
  33. Hinton and Wall.
  34. Rees, p.79.
  35. Jethro Tull, *Songs from the Wood*, Chrysalis, 7243 5 81570 2 4, 1977 (2003); *Heavy Horses*, Chrysalis, 7243 5 81571 2, 1978 (2003); *Stormwatch*, Chrysalis, 7243 593399 2 4, 1979 (2004).
  36. Richard and Linda Thompson, *Pour Down Like Silver*, Island Records, IMCD-306, 1975 (2004); Richard Thompson, *Strict Tempo!*, Elixir Records, 1981.
  37. J.S. Sawyer, *The Complete Guide to Celtic Music: From the Highland Bagpipe and Riverdance to U2 and Enya* (London: Aurum Press, 2000), 221-2.
  38. Sawyer, p.231.
  39. Sawyer, pp.304.
  40. Hinton and Wall, p.166.
  41. S. Reiss, 'Tradition and Imaginary: Irish Traditional Music and the Celtic Phenomenon' in Stokes and Bohlman, p.145.
  42. A. Kent, 'Celtic Nirvanas: Constructions of Celtic in Contemporary British Youth Culture', in D. Harvey, R. Jones, N. McInroy and C. Milligan (eds) *Celtic Geographies: Old Culture, New Times* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.213.

43. A. Moore, 'Jethro Tull and the Case for Modernism in Mass Culture', in A. Moore ed., *Analyzing Popular Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.161.
44. Kent, p.213; the song is on the remastered release of *Heavy Horses*.
45. Nollen, p.264. Of Kent's other songs that he cites as examples of Celtic interest in the 1970s, only one, 'Dun Ringill', was released in that decade (1979) – of the others, 'In a Stone Circle' (an instrumental) was released in 1995, 'Mountain Men' in 1987.
46. As noted in Moore, *Aqualung*, and by Anderson himself in R. Benson, *Jethro Tull*, (Harpenden: Pocket Essentials, 2002), p.11.
47. Peter Symon, "'You cannae take your music stand into a pub": a conversation with Stan Reeves about traditional music education in Scotland', in Stokes and Bohlman, 257-274.
48. Reiss, p.167.
49. Purser. For an example of the influence of the march on Anderson's writing, see 'Slow Marching Band' on *The Broadsword and the Beast*, CCD1380, 1982.
50. Reiss, p.148.
51. Symon, p.269.
52. K. Campbell, 'The Fiddle Tradition Of North-East Scotland', <http://www.celtscot.ed.ac.uk/fiddle/2003> [accessed 22 January 2005].
53. J. Cadden, 'Policing Tradition: Scottish Pipe Band Competition and the Role of the Composer' in Stokes and Buhlman, pp.119-144.
54. R. Turnbull, 'Review of Pittock, *Scottish Nationality*', *Scottish Historical Review*, LXXXII, 2, 2003, pp.331-3; M. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); G. Rosie, 'What Knox Did For Us' in G. Rosie, *Curious Scotland* (London: Granta, 2004), pp.36-50.
55. Nollen, p.147; on the inventiveness of Barlow's drumming and its important contribution, see A. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).
56. Cadden.
57. Purser, pp.75, 135.
58. Humphries, p.277.
59. On *Rumour and Sigh*, Capitol Records, CDP-7-95713-2, 1991.
60. Moore, *Aqualung*, p.47.
61. Although songs like 'Devonside' (on *Hand of Kindness*, Hannibal Records, HNCD-1313, 1983), named after the river in Dumfriesshire, indicate the continuing influence of the Scottish ballad tradition.
62. 'Mountain Men' is on *Crest oif a Knave*, Chrysalis, CDP32 1590 2, 1987, 'Ears of Tin' on *Rock Island*, Chrysalis, CCD1708, 1989.
63. George Rosie, *Hugh Miller: Outrage and Order* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1981).
64. M. Watson, *Being English in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003).

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