



"It Just Belongs To Be"

It Just belongs to be!

Traditional Music and Cornish identity

London Cornish Association

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Merv Davey



"It Just Belongs To Be"

Abstract

This presentation first explores the early roots of Cornish Folk Music, what is the significance the Cornish Carol tradition and who were the musicians and dancers represented on the 16th Century bench ends at Altarnon Church. Following on from this the activities of the late early 20th century British Folk Revivalists in relation to Cornish tradition are considered together with the quite different approach taken by the Celtic revivalists in Cornwall. Lastly we will look at the ongoing traditions of today and how they reflect both the past and modern Cornish identity.



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Folk

A ***genre of music*** derived initially from a 19th C folkloric notion of a rural cultural idyll which embraced a broader “peoples music” mindset from the 1950s to include industrial songs and an increasing body of newly composed material in “folk Style”. In the past 40 years it has been increasingly driven by commercial and artistic interests so that it is useful to distinguish the term from “tradition



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Tradition

The ***active process*** by which a phenomena such as a tune, song or custom changes and evolves within community usage as it is transmitted from one person to the next and one generation to the next. Although influenced by popular, commercial and art culture, it is ultimately driven by the experiences, perceptions and values of a community or an individual reflecting that community



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Cornish Identity

Identity is a ***sense of being*** defined by an individual or groups perceptions and understanding of their relationship with other individuals or groups. Thus you are Cornish because you identify with perceptions and understanding of what it is to be Cornish. This is a very subjective position but for the purposes of identifying traditional music as Cornish, relationships and perceptions can be translated into practical elements which have precedent for broad consensus.



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Cornish Identity

Located in Cornwall geographically:

Cornish place names in title or song text

Narrative associated with Cornwall

Song Text or associated custom linked to Cornish history, legends, sport, industry

Linguistic markers

Use of Kernewek or Dialect

Located in a Cornish context

A custom or activity recognised as Cornish – e.g. celebrating St Piran’s Day or a Tea Treat

Selectivity

Adopted because it fits in with Cornish preferences and styles

Distinctivity

Unique to Cornwall – *very difficult to prove*



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Roots of Tradition: Early Music

St Austell 1480



Davidstow c 1600





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Roots of Tradition: Early Dance



Altarnon Church 1520



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Roots of Tradition: Mystery Plays

Gwreans an Bys : The "Creation of the World".

*A version of the miracle play signed by William Jordan 12th
August 1611*

**Mynstrells Grewgh theny peba,
May Hallan warbarthe downssya,
Del ew an vaner han geys**

***Minstrels pipe for us,
That we may together dance,
As is the custom and the fashion***



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Roots of Tradition: Medieval Europe



Braddock 1600



Medieval Pilgrims Badge



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Roots of Tradition: Carols for Dancing



"Nadelik" at Pendennis Castle



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Folk Revivalists and Celtic Revivalists

Folk song collectors active in Cornwall :

Folk Revivalists

Baring Gould:	1890s
Sharp:	1911 / 1913
Gardner	1905
Carpenter	1931 / 1932

Celtic / Cornish Revivalists

Morton Nance	1920s -1950s
OCS	1924 >
Dunstan	1929 / 1932
Gundry	1960
<i>Kennedy</i>	<i>1950 - 1975</i>



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Folk Revivalists and Celtic Revivalists

Interpretation: Celtic v English

Pencarrow Hunt

Baring Gould’s notes, Songs and Ballads of the West 1894:

“ Half the tune was introduced by D’Urfey into his Pills to Pruge Melancholy. . . . The air is much older than the age of D’Urfey; it probably belongs to an early stock common to the Celts of Wales and Cornwall”

**Under Sharp’s editorship notes for the same song
Songs of the West 1905:**

“Half of the tune was employed by D’Urfey, a Devonshire man, in his Pills to Purge Melancholy From England the same half tune was carried to Wales”



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Folk Revivalists and Celtic Revivalists



Robert Morton Nance: Tom Bawcock's Eve at Mousel



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Ralph Dunstan: Tea Treat Marches



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Traditional music and Cornish identity today



Guize Dancers at St Ives



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Padstow Mummings Day



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Penguizers



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Singing sessions

Typical repertoire will include:

Camborne Hill
Trelawney
Little Lize
Maggie May
Cadgewith Anthem
Lamorna
White Rose
Sweet Nightingale
Cornish Lads





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Furry Dances:

Faddy Dance: 18th C

Furry Dance: 19th C

Cornish Flora Dance: 1920s
(Post Cecil Sharp)

Cornish Floral Dance: 1975
(Post Terry Wogan)



Furry Dance at Boscastle



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Scot Dances



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Troyls / Nos Lowen / Barn Dances / Ceilidhs