DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

INTRODUCTION

Within this folder is a discussion document produced as part of the process of putting together a national strategy for the arts and media. It does not form part of the strategy. Neither does it express any sort of 'official' view. It was written in order to focus discussion and stimulate ideas.

WHY?

> *The arts and media in Britain are in renaissance. Over the last decade, they have shown a confidence and diversity never seen before. In quality of work and audience demand, the arts and media have never looked healthier or more central to people's lives. More than ever before, the arts are a source of civic pride as well as personal enrichment.*

> *The arts and media in Britain are in crisis. Scarcely o day goes by without press stories of theatres facing closure, gronts being cut or audiences declining; of a lack of good innovative work in all art forms; of the absence of a sense of direction, purpose and adventure.*

These views may not be incompatible, and each has some truth. What is beyond doubt is that ideas of what is art have expanded; that demand has rightly grown for access to the arts, film and broadcasting to be the right of all rather than the privilege of the few; and that resources, both public and private, have struggled to keep up. Growth in the variety of the arts contains its own problems. So how can the stategic injection of public money, and the growth of partnership with the private sector, encourage new developments? What should the priorities be? How do we make sure that the opportunity to enjoy the arts is spread ever more widely throughout society?

This is where the national arts and media strategy comes in. In 1990, the Minister for the Arts asked the arts and media funding bodies (the Arts Council of Great Britain, the British Film Institute, the Crafts Council and the Regional Arts Associations/ Regional Arts Boards) to prepare a national strategy. One of its purposes is to provide the basic framework for their work. The Scottish and Welsh Arts Councils are conducting parallel exercises; and the local authorities and museums funding bodies are also associated with the strategy.

A further purpose is to consider whether the public money spent on the arts and media has been used to best effect, and how those responsible can do better in the future. It is important that all those with experience of and a passion for the arts and media provide support, assistance and advice to get the strategy right. Most important, it must be seen as a strategy for the arts and media, not for the bureaucrats.

HOW?

The paper in this folder is part of this process. It is one of a series of discussion documents; each is available free on request. Responses to them will be collated by the National Arts and Media Strategy Unit. Arising from this, a draft of the strategy will be prepared by Spring 1992. This too will be available for comment. The final version of the national arts and media strategy will be completed by Summer 1992. The hope is that the resulting document will be slim, challenging and readable - and that it will provide a mission statement for the arts and media over the next decade, as well as setting out clear goals and targets.

The national arts and media strategy will not write a single novel, put on a single play or make a single film. What it can help bring about , if the funding bodies receive the help of those who care about the arts and media, is the maximum opportunity for such creativity to flourish and for it to enrich the lives of ever more people. Your contribution to this process will be valuable and valued. Please send your views on this discussion document to the address below, to arrive by 30 November 1991.

For further information on the national arts and media strategy, please contact:

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FOLK ARTS

Ros Rigby

NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY: DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON FOLK ARTS

This paper has been written in order to generate discussion and debate. It is not a chapter of the national arts and media strategy or a definitive statement. The views it expresses are those of its author.

We should like to hear what you believe may be the key issues throughout the folk arts over the next few years. With the paper as background, we should welcome views on all or any of the following questions, as well as on any other matters connected with folk arts on which you wish to comment. (Throughout these questions, 'folk art' is used in a general sense, covering work of all traditions and in all media. But readers should feel free to comment on particular forms of folk art.)

The paper

1. Does the paper raise and deal adequately with the key issues? If not, where and how could it do better?

Developments in the art form

2. What are the folk arts? What distinguishes them from other types of art?

3. What have been the most exciting developments in the folk arts over the past five years, in Great Britain or elsewhere? What may be possible exciting areas for development over the next five?

4. Where, how and with what effect are the edges blurring between the folk arts and other art forms, and between different forms of folk art?

Public funding

5. Is the current public funding of the folk arts (including funding by the local authorities) spent to best effect? If not, how could it be improved?

6. If there were a significant increase (say, 30% in real terms) in the public funding of folk arts what should be the priority areas for these additional resources? What effects might this have?

Folk arts and society

7. What is the relationship like between professional and non-professional folk arts practitioners? How would you like to see it develop over the next ten years?

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8. What is the relationship like between folk arts and the published and broadcast media? How would you like to see it develop over the next ten years?

9. What are likely to be the key effects on folk arts in this country of international developments within Europe and elsewhere?

10. Is enjoyment of, or participation in, folk arts related to levels of education, social class or regional background? If so, how might the adverse effects of this be countered?

11. What will be the main issues over the next ten years in relation to folk arts and the amateur, cultural diversity, women, and disability?

12. What is the relationship like between folk arts and the education sector (including schools, further and higher education, and informal education)? How would you like to see it develop over the next ten years?

13. Are the folk arts in essence regionally or locally based? If so, what is the role of national organisations or national funding?

Management, training and resources

14. What are the major needs in terms of physical infrastructure (such as buildings and equipment) if folk arts are to achieve their full potential? How are these needs likely to change over the next ten years?

15. What will be the major issues in the areas of training and management for the folk arts over the next ten years?

NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY UNIT
AUGUST 1991

NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON FOLK ARTS

ROS RIGBY

Summary

1. The folk arts - traditional music, song, dance, songwriting, storytelling and other forms - are amateur arts in the true sense. Done for the love of the activity, they can be pursued for enjoyment, and there are examples of many great practitioners who have not chosen to make a living from their skill. There are however, a wide range of very fine artists in England today performing on a full-time basis. Opportunities to perform exist at folk clubs, folk festivals, and in arts centres, and for some on television, in films, and the theatre. A number of talented young performers are gaining reputations.

2. Looking to the future, new types of gathering need to be developed in addition to folk clubs, to attract young performers and audiences. Opportunities for people to learn the skills of instrumental playing, traditional song and dance exist but more need to be developed. Archive material collected from fine performers (some now dead) in the form of sound and video tapes, manuscripts, film etc. needs to be more accessible. The question of the role of national and regional organisations must also be addressed.

3. Public subsidy for this field has been limited to date compared to support in other parts of the UK (Scotland, Wales, N.Ireland) and elsewhere in Europe (Ireland, France). Particular areas could benefit greatly from support including:

Touring: i) Assistance to tour promoters to allow them to organise more adventurous tours, and to pay for rehearsal time ii) possibility of establishing a National Traditional Music Network.

Broadcasting: Investment in film and television projects to help film-makers give more of a profile to English folk arts.

Archive work: i) Assistance for existing archives ii) discussion as to the creation of new collections and iii) investigation of ways of making archive material truly accessible.

Recording: Assistance for significant recording projects.

Training: Assistance for the wide variety of ways in which people (especially young people) can learn skills, through workshops and publications - this support to be available to the variety of organisations involved in this work, channelled through a national network of Folk Development Projects, co-ordinating activities in their respective areas.

4. Folk arts have an important contribution to make to the arts in England today. Funders should help to evolve policies for support, and be prepared to learn more about the different forms and the artists involved. If more subsidy becomes available, the main priority must be the passing on of skills, particularly to younger people.

The various forms of traditional music, song and dance are powerful contemporary modes of expression - vital to the health of our culture they rely constantly on an influx of new blood.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional music, song and dance are amateur arts in the true sense of the word. They have as their mainspring involvement at an unpaid, community level, for the love of the activity. However, they are also art forms which can be developed to levels of great subtlety and skill and in which there have always been acknowledged virtuosi performers.

This unique combination of accessibility and virtuosity gives them a central role to play within the arts in this country, a role which is only just beginning to be realised by bodies responsible for subsidy. If this develops, as it should, the next decade could see a huge growth in the appreciation of these forms, and in the active involvement of thousands of people in this country. Some of the ways this could happen are explored here.

1. Terms of reference

1.1. This paper aims to describe the current situation regarding folk arts, particularly in England, but with some reference to the position in Scotland, Wales and N.Ireland. Some attention will also be given to structures and activities in countries outside the UK, such as The Republic of Ireland and France. The paper is an expression of personal views, but note has been taken of points raised by a range of people involved in this field, who have kindly given their time to discuss the issues below. They are listed at the end of the document.

1.2. "Folk arts" as a term can include traditional and folk music, song and dance, as well as storytelling, traditional games and crafts. The first three will, however, be the main focus here. The activities referred to will be those aspects of song, dance and music which can be seen broadly to have developed from an English traditional source, whilst taking account of the inextricable links between English, Scots and Irish forms, and of other influences from further afield. In addition, some of the cultural expressions of the varied ethnic communities in England are also 'folk arts', and ultimately these should be considered, and funded, under the same heads as the traditions above, particularly as they start to influence and be influenced by those traditions.

1.3. This paper looks first at the folk arts field in general, considering its history, the last ten years in more detail, and then the coming decade with both its problems and opportunities. The question of public funding for this area of the arts is then considered, looking at past and present developments, and then again at the future and the particular areas appropriate for subsidy. Examples of approaches from other countries are also examined.

2. Folk music, song and dance in England - a brief history

2.1. Clearly, folk music song and dance have existed for centuries, and continue to exist, outside their classification as 'folk arts'. Saturday night dances in North Northumberland and Devon are still just 'dances', although folk enthusiasts may call them 'country dances' or 'ceilidhs'. The fiddler/storyteller Jim Eldon from Hull plays every summer on the boats off Bridlington, and is seen by the passengers as an entertainer, not particularly as a 'folk musician'.

2.2. An interest in these forms as something called 'folk' can be traced to the late 19th Century, when the Folk Song Society was formed in England in 1898, followed by the English Folk Dance Society, founded by the collector Cecil Sharp in 1911. These two organisations merged in 1932 to become the English Folk Dance and Song Society. The emphasis in the early part of this century was on the great importance of collecting and preserving traditional material, and Sharp's own huge manuscript collection formed the basis of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, bequeathed to the EFDSS on his death in 1924. Ralph Vaughan Williams' own interest in English folk music is well-known, and he was President of the EFDSS at the time of his death in 1958. His wife Ursula has a continued involvement, particularly in the Library. The Society, working through its district comittees, also encouraged a great deal of activity, particularly in the field of folk dance, although some now feel that this was too prescriptive, with an emphasis on 'right' ways of performing dances, sometimes even involving examinations. Some of those involved in folk dance today feel they have had to reclaim it from the influence of this period. There is, however, no doubt that the creation of the Library was a major achievement, and it is the major national resource of its kind today.

2.3. From the late 1950s there began a great expansion of interest in folk music, and particularly in folk song, growing to some extent out of the interest in blues and jazz, and the folk musics of the USA. This is now described as the 'Folk Revival', and key figures in this country were the singer/writer Ewan McColl, the collector/singer A L Lloyd, plus northern musicians such as Johnny Handle and Louis Killen, and southern singer Shirley Collins. Folk Clubs were formed all over Britain, offering young people the chance to hear performers from all over the world. In a recent edition of BBC's FOLK ON TWO, the singer Martin Carthy described the impact on him, as a young chorister, of seeing the Irish musician Seamus Ennis in a London folk club in this period.

The clubs offered opportunities for guest performers to be paid, and certain musicians started to develop careers in this field. The sixties and seventies also saw the appearance of singer/songwriters influenced by traditional music, particularly in America, who took political stands, and some of these became household names (Bob Dylan, Joan Baez). These became described as 'contemporary folk artists', as

opposed to 'traditional folk', because of the emphasis on original and topical material.

Also during the late sixties, a number of bands made up of folk musicians, but incorporating electric instruments, were formed, the best known of which were Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span. There was debate about the appropriateness of these instruments, in the same way that the introduction of synthesisers raised eyebrows in the seventies and early eighties, and indeed the introduction of the fiddle in traditional music in the 18th century!

2.4. The growth of opportunities for folk musicians to develop full-time careers is something that does not always follow from public interest in folk music. In Ireland, for example, there is support for traditional Irish music, but it is very difficult for many musicians to make a living there, partly because music is so widespread in pubs where the public get it for free. From the sixties, folk clubs, folk festivals, and arts venues have provided work in England, and therefore the 'folk scene' can be looked at from two points of views - both as a world of professional performers, and then also as an amateur-based field with hundreds of volunteer organisers as well as performers who are involved for the love of the form, at all levels of ability.

3. The more recent past - the last ten years

3.1. Ten years ago, folk music was still associated in many people's minds with folk clubs. The hundreds of clubs across the country offered the opportunity to thousands of people to enjoy the music and, for some, to develop as performers in a sympathetic environment. The importance of the clubs in this way becomes clear when one visits a country such as France, where, although there have been a few folk clubs, the club movement never really took hold. There are few opportunities there for young or new singers or musicians to develop prior to trying to find work on the concert stage.

3.2. There are still many folk clubs in England that serve this nurturing function, and there are some who are getting audiences along for events that many an arts centre would envy, and often on little (or no) subsidy. In the main, however, folk clubs are not today the force that they were in the seventies. In part, this is because the huge effort of running a club week in, week out, for a decade or more has sapped the energy of some of the original organisers, and replacements have not always come forward. However, the impact that the folk club network has had, and the number of people who have been introduced to folk music through it, should not be underestimated.

3.3. The folk festival movement has grown over the last decade. The number of festivals has increased (78 are listed in England in the festival supplement in the

April 1991 issue of FOLKROOTS), and whereas a few of these exist for a particular group of enthusiasts, and make little effort to develop their audiences, there are a considerable number whose organisers deliver a professionally administered product to growing numbers of people.

3.4. The situation for full-time performers has altered. The reduction in the number of folk clubs, particularly those run on days early in the week (Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays), has meant that some of that 'bread and butter' work has diminished. On the other hand, more festival work, and notably more opportunities through arts centres and local arts officers are available.

In the main, however, this work will tend to go to performers with a reputation already established, and those who have a particular talent for marketing themselves. New performers have always had to struggle to make a mark, but the situation now is probably more difficult than ten years ago. A considerable number of professional artists also work regularly in other parts of Europe and/or North America, partly to survive, but also because support for English folk music abroad is considerable, and audiences very appreciative.

3.5. The playing of music for dancing - for 'barn dances' or 'ceilidhs', continues to offer regular, if not highly paid work for traditional musicians, and for dance 'callers', and this is one of the ways in which folk music reaches beyond folk enthusiasts to a wider public.

3.6. Opportunities for folk musicians working in other art forms have been relatively few, but certain theatre directors have used folk musicians as composers/arrangers/performers on a regular basis - Peter Cheeseman and Bill Bryden in particular - working with musicians such as John Tams, John Kirkpatrick, Sue Harris and others.

3.7. Recording of folk and traditional music is almost totally the province of small specialist record labels (TOPIC records is probably the best known), operating on tight budgets and often facing problems with distribution. Many artists produce their own recordings, in the knowledge that a reasonable market for cassettes, albums and CDs exists at performances and festivals. Mail order is also used extensively, and indeed some performers (Mike Harding for example) have opted for this as their main method of selling.

3.8. Publishing (books of tunes, instruction manuals, directories of festivals etc.) is similarly undertaken by small organisations, or often by individuals. Much valuable material has been produced, which would benefit from access to better distribution. There are many small scale magazines, usually dealing with the folk club and festival scene in one particular area. There is one national magazine dealing with this field available on news stands, Folk Roots.

3.9. Broadcasting has offered certain opportunities to folk musicians in terms of incidental music for drama or documentary productions, but there have been few programmes dealing with this field itself. Notable exceptions during the last ten years have included the Channel 4 series 'Down Home' featuring Shetland fiddler Aly Bain, and the recently broadcast one-off programme, also for Channel 4, 'Beyond the Maypole'. Some of the BBC2 'Rhythms of the World' programmes have included English folk performers, though the main emphasis has been on artists from other countries. BBC Radio 2 continues to offer a weekly specialist programme (Jim Lloyd's FOLK ON TWO).

3.10. Some folk festivals, such as Sidmouth, have included performers from many foreign countries for decades. However, 'World Music' Festivals such as WOMAD have opened folk festival organisers eyes in general to the range of music and performance available, and also to the wider, and younger, audience interested in this field. The influence can now be seen within folk festival programmes throughout the country.

Radio broadcasters such as Andy Kershaw have introduced listeners to English folk performers such as Kathryn Tickell, Alistair Anderson and Jim Eldon, played alongside African and Latin American musicians. However, some would argue (including FOLKROOTS editor Ian Anderson, who himself contributed to the 'World Music' boom, as well as to the coining of the phrase itself), that whereas it has become fashionable to appreciate the traditional culture of Africa, of Eastern Europe, or of Latin America, equal attention is regrettably not yet given by the media, or funders, to traditional culture from England. In the long term, though, the World Music movement can only have a positive effect on the appreciation of English folk arts - the building of audiences for traditional music of any kind - whether for a kora player or a Northumbrian Piper - is beneficial.

3.11. The eighties have also seen a range of attempts to increase participation in this field, particularly by young people. Peter Dashwood, then employed by the English Folk Dance and Song Society as a fieldworker, organised two major events in Derby in 1985 and 1986, with workshops, concerts and dances all aimed at young people.The FOLK CAMP movement introduced many young people to this field for the first time. The EFDSS 'Hobby Horse Club' made a contribution, as did those long-established folk festivals, like Bromyard, which through an enlightened and careful approach to ticket-pricing for young people started to attract a new generation of supporters, some of whom had first gone along with their parents. The Northumbrian Pipers Society, with its nationwide (even worldwide) membership also played its part in encouraging young players. In the second half of the decade a number of Folk Development Projects, and Folk Residencies were established, where individual performers had the opportunity to develop activities both with young people and adults over a number of years in one particular area.

3.12. The position today, then, is relatively healthy. In England today there are a wide range of performers under the broad heading of 'folk'. Full-time performers currently find work in a mix of folk clubs, festivals, arts centres and similar venues, taking opportunities, where they present themselves, in film, radio and television. A few work also in the theatre, composing, taking on musical direction and, in some cases, performing within productions.

Some, like The Oyster Band, have chosen to move from being a popular barn dance band to being a rock band with folk roots. Others, like the Kathryn Tickell Band, maintain a strong allegiance to instrumental traditional music (in their case from the north-east of England), and are attracting audiences throughout the UK and beyond. Storytelling is enjoying a particular boom, and storyteller Taffy Thomas has recently started a residency spanning the north pennine area.

Fine solo singers such as Roy Bailey, Martin Carthy and June Tabor offer superb performances of both English traditional songs, and newly written ones by such English songwriters as Richard Thompson, Jim Woodland, Leon Rosselson and others. The world of folk dance has seen over the last ten years the emergence of Morris teams aiming to bring a new, or perhaps the original energy to this much maligned form (John Kirkpatrick's Shropshire Bedlams are one example). Some solo step dancers are now working as full-time performers (Lynette Eldon and Jane Vipond, for example).

There are a number of young performers working full-time - Kathryn Tickell, Andy Cutting, Heather Joyce, Lynn Tocker, Roger Wilson, Lee Collinson - some of whom have benefited from Jim Lloyd's annual YOUNG TRADITION AWARD, run in conjunction with BBC Radio 2. It is extremely encouraging to see young women performers at the forefront of English folk music today, both as singers and instrumentalists. A whole range of opportunities for young people, and others, to learn the skills of traditional English, amd other, music, song and dance are becoming available through folk development projects like FOLKWORKS, in the North, The Wren Trust in Exeter, TAPS based in Bracknell, Gill Burns in the West Midlands, plus organisations such as Glebe House in Truro and others.

3.13. Terminology in this field has always been somewhat problematic. The distinction in the sixties and seventies between 'traditional' and 'contemporary' folk music is no longer drawn. During the last decade some have differentiated between 'traditional music' and 'folk music', with the first referring to music developing directly from sources pre-dating the folk revival and maintaining close links with these sources. Interestingly one is also now seeing bands described as 'contemporary traditional', meaning playing traditional music with a full respect for its roots but in a fresh and direct style that will appeal to a broad audience.

The young Scottish band CAPERCAILLIE and the Irish band ALTAN both describe themselves in this way. Indeed one could argue that traditional music is always contemporary. Because it is a form that has evolved through the many thousands of person hours of performance of songs and tunes over the years and centuries, with all the changes, however subtle, that this has involved, each individual performance is 'of the moment' and therefore quite as contemporary as music with more superficially 'modern' features.The use of the term 'roots' music has also now become current in some circles, usually implying a range of music taking in aspects of 'world music' as well as English folk.

4. The next ten years - problems and opportunities

4.1. One of the problems facing the field is the need for a wider range of opportunities for new performers and audiences to become involved. A young singer, speaking recently on FOLK ON TWO explained how she found folk clubs 'cliquey'; as in any field, new types of gathering need to evolve to suit younger people. This has happened to some extent with the increase in the number of informal instrumental 'sessions' in pubs, but these offer few opportunities for singers and often operate at the level of the most experienced players there. In other art forms such as cabaret, alternative comedy, jazz, and poetry one finds new informal venues springing up in pubs, cafes and clubs; one hopes for something similar in the folk field. Otherwise as folk clubs disappear nothing will be there to replace them, causing real problems in terms of involvement of new people, and for promoters trying to contact their audiences.

4.2. Linked to this is a general need for opportunities to be made available for young people to learn so that the pool of skill and enthusiasm continues to grow. These can cover a range from the most formal methods of teaching to one-off workshops, publications, schools projects etc. Formal teaching should not be ignored; many fine Scottish and Irish young musicians have developed through this. Some of these opportunities are now becoming available, but currently only in certain parts of the country.

4.3. Some of the now well-established figures of the 'revival' drew inspiration from seeing traditional performers (as with Martin Carthy and Seamus Ennis mentioned above). This is not as easy now, and this makes the accessibility of archive material extremely important ,both within collections and via commercially available recordings, radio and television. Continued collecting also needs encouragement; the assumption that 'it has all now been collected' is fallacious. This is what Cecil Sharp said earlier this century, and many fine singers and musicians have been found since then! In addition, particular events, such as the Miners' Strike in 1984, generated a whole new wealth of industrial folk song.

4.4. The past decade has seen serious problems within the main national organisation for folk music, song and dance (The EFDSS) arising from differences within the membership as to the priorities of the Society. This raises two important questions. First, whether or not a national body can attempt to speak for the folk arts field when it is 'membership' based, and therefore answerable ultimately to the demands of its membership and their particular interests.

The second question is whether it is appropriate to attempt to have a national body for folk arts in general at all, even if not membership-based. It could be argued that the regionality of the different forms involved means that regionally administered organisations are more appropriate. This would not be to deny, though, the value of a whole range of national specialist organisations for particular groups, such as The Morris Ring, The Morris Federation, The Bagpipe Society, the Northumbrian Pipers' Society etc.

4.5. Some of the above problems are not easily solved, and some of the solutions will not be directly related to availability of funding. However, there are areas where subsidy could be of great benefit. First, it may be interesting to look at how much support has been available for the folk arts in England in the past.

5. Subsidy available to date

5.1. The folk field is largely unsubsidised. A quick look at the most recently published accounts of the English RAAs and the Arts Council reveals that folk music, song and dance receive very little subsidy compared not only with the 'high arts' areas of classical music, drama and dance, but also with jazz, world music, early music etc.

To take just one example, in 1989/90 Yorkshire Arts, who incidentally operate an excellent 'Yorkshire Musicians in Residence' scheme to the benefit of several folk musicians in the area, spent roughly £5,500 on folk music (including the subsidy under the above scheme) in 89/90, compared to roughly £22,000 on jazz. In the same year the only grant given by The Arts Council that is identifiable as for folk arts is the first instalment of an Incentive Funding Award to Folkworks of £5,000. Some funding was made available to Folk Animateurs through a general Arts Council music animateur scheme, probably not totalling more than £15,000. One could compare this with £117,295 to Early Music, £124,735 to African Caribbean/South Asian Music, £50,037 to Carnival Bands, £20,145 to Improvised Music Touring, and over £160,000 on Jazz. Also, in that year, none of the Music for Small Groups awards, or Music Bursaries went to traditional or folk musicians. One should say immediately that one is not arguing that the other areas should not be in receipt of these levels of funding, which after all still represent a very small proportion of the Arts Council's annual budget, rather that it is interesting that arts

subsidy for English traditional, music, song and dance is so low, and that the reasons for this should be explored.

5.2. One reason that could be offered is that the folk revival happened at a time when bodies responsible for arts subsidy did not, as a rule, support 'amateur arts', and that therefore early attempts to win support were fruitless. It is also interesting that the English Folk Dance and Song Society did receive some early support from CEMA (the precursor of the Arts Council) immediately after the Second World War, but that when CEMA disbanded, the folk enthusiasts within its ranks ended up in the Sports Council rather than the newly formed Arts Council. The revenue funding that the EFDSS received, came, therefore, from the Sports Council. This was probably, in part, because of the Society's emphasis on folk dance. This funding eventually diminished to project based support (for example for the Education Officer now in post with the EFDSS), but the Society has never been able to secure anything more than small grants from the Arts Council.

5.3. Another reason for the lack of subsidy is that it has not been sought. The folk field relies on hundreds, probably thousands, of volunteers - running folk clubs, on festival committees, organising dance teams - nearly always working on the basis that activities should break even. There are many folk festivals with large turnovers and audiences of thousands who receive either no subsidy, or perhaps a small guarantee against loss from their Regional Arts Association and/or local authority. Those individual performers and groups, who have managed to make a full-time living in this field have, almost without exception, done so without access to subsidy in the form of bursaries or support for tours. Many of them do, however, rely partly on bookings from subsidised venues.

5.4. Another reason that some people in this field do not apply for subsidy is that they have been turned down too many times in the past, and they have become dispirited, and not prepared to spend time in the future on what they see as a fruitless exercise.

5.5. The most deep-seated reason for lack of support, though, is probably the fundamental lack of confidence in traditional English music, song and dance as art forms, worthy of as serious consideration as the many other varied areas of the arts that do receive assistance. Some feel that because there is not one identifiably English folk music (as there are identifiably Scottish or Irish forms) that English folk music does not exist. As in France, however, there are a variety of regional forms - from the North East, East Anglia, Shropshire, the South West etc. In some people's minds the cliched images of folk music persist, yet they only have to visit their local arts centre to see that traditional musics of all kinds are being enjoyed by musically sophisticated audiences in properly equipped venues. In the seventies the jazz fraternity fought a battle to create a new image for jazz - to show that this form was something to be taken seriously, and presented professionally.

This battle resulted, rightly, in increased subsidy for the field, which was made possible partly by the increases in funds available at that time. The funding situation is more difficult now, but the same battle is being fought for folk music.

5.6. It should be noted that, despite what is still a relatively low level of subsidy overall, there have though been some encouraging developments in recent years. First, a form of hidden subsidy has been available via bookings for artists from subsidised venues, particularly arts centres. These are now providing an increasing amount of work for some full-time performers, and many arts centres are finding that audiences figures for these events are very healthy. The folk development projects referred to above have also meant that certain Regional Arts Associations (Northern Arts, South West Arts, Lincolnshire and Humberside Arts, South East Arts, Southern Arts, West Midlands Arts), sometimes in conjunction with the Arts Council, have, for the first time made a more serious commitment to this field, even if the financial commitment is not huge compared to some other areas. Some of these have suffered from the inevitable problems associated with 'one-person' projects, and Northern Arts' commitment to funding a full-time folk development agency, FOLKWORKS, shows that a more substantial level of support can result in a scale of activity that justifies the investment.

However, all these projects, of whatever size, have served to extend the range of folk activity in their areas and involved new groups of people. In some cases they have also been able to release new funds for this field, by persuading local authorities and others to involve traditional music, song and dance in their festivals and other events. An additional benefit has been the opening up of links with other areas of arts work, such as the use of folk dance with special needs groups developed by Rosie Cross during her time as Folk Development Worker for Lincolnshire and Humberside.

5.7. Another area in which some support has been gained is in film/television production. Pelicula Films, based in Edinburgh, recently received an investment of £30,000 from the Arts Council towards the production costs of the programme on English folk music 'Beyond the Maypole', broadcast on Channel 4 on May 25 1991.

5.8. In addition to subsidy from The Arts Council and RAA's, there have been other sources of financial help for folk music, song and dance. Local authorities have given, and continue to give regular small grants for festivals and sometimes for educational work. In the eighties Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council funded a three year Folk Residency held by Eddie Upton, out of its arts budget. Small amounts of business sponsorship have been gained for festivals (Beverley Folk festival, for example). Trusts and foundations have provided help: the Carnegie UK Trust has supported some FOLKWORKS projects with adults and PRS (The Performing Rights Society) recently made its first award in this area,

under their Composers in Education scheme. The British Council also regularly support English folk artists working abroad. The European Commission is starting to look at folk music projects, and recently offered a small grant to help with FOLKWORKS' European Project.

6. Subsidy for folk arts in other countries

6.1. Attention is given first to the other countries in the UK: Scotland, Wales, and N.Ireland. The Scottish Arts Council has addressed the question of support for traditional music over a number of years, with two excellent reports produced on this topic ('The Traditional Arts of Scotland' in 1984; and 'Gaelic Arts: A Way Ahead' in 1986).

In the published accounts for 1989/90, over £50,000 is identifiable as being spent on traditional music, song and dance. In addition, the Council awarded grants of over £20,000 each to two organisations concerned with the preservation and encouragement of Gaelic, and Gaelic Arts - An Comunn Gaidhealach and the newly formed Gaelic Arts Project. This pioneering initiative includes support for activities connected with Gaelic Song, Hebridean stepdance traditions, and instrumental playing, encouraged partly through the annual 'feisdean' or festivals run on some of the Western islands.

Other support for folk and traditional music activities in Scotland has been forthcoming from local authorities, the Scottish Tourist Board, and the Highlands and Islands Development Board. The latter two bodies have recently produced a comprehensive 'Survey of Scottish Folk Festivals' which shows that folk festivals in Scotland have a significantly beneficial impact on the tourist economies of the towns and villages in which they take place. Shetland Islands Council, as well as supporting the Shetland Folk Festival, made a substantial contribution to the production costs of the six part series, made for the BBC, at this year's Folk Festival, by Pelicula Films.

6.2. Arts subsidy for traditional music in Wales is handled both by the Welsh Arts Council, based in Cardiff, and by the three Regional Arts Associations in Wales, who fund local activities and festivals. The Arts Council's major contributions go to the annual Eisteddfod in Llangollen (c. £30,000 in 89/90) and to the Welsh Amateur Music Federation, who award some of their £90,000+ grant to local folk clubs etc. One particularly interesting initiative by the Council has been the setting up of a Chair of Traditional Studies at University College, Bangor, initially funded at 50% by the Arts Council.

6.3. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the only Arts Council in the UK (or Regional Arts Association) to employ a Traditional Arts Officer, and it is, therefore, not surprising that this body is more pro-active in its use of the c.

£60,000 spent annually in this area. A three-stranded approach, covering performance, recording and education involves an annual subsidised traditional music tour, plus schools performances and workshops in collaboration with local authorities. A substantial part of the budget is also spent on recording projects. A range of small grants are given to festivals, classes in instrumental playing, dance and song, music competitions ('fleadhs') and folk clubs.

6.4. Moving out of the UK the Arts Council of Ireland will spend c. £180,000 on traditional music in the coming calendar year (1991). Again, the approach is proactive with particular schemes for touring and masterclasses set up by the Arts Council themselves. A particular priority is given to support for solo performance by traditional musicians, something not often otherwise encouraged in a country where group playing, largely in pubs, is the norm. A particularly interesting aspect of the funding made available for this field by the Arts Council of Ireland is the substantial sum awarded annually to the Irish Traditional Music Archive, which was set up by the Council in July 1987 in recognition of the great importance of the collecting and accessibility of traditional material to musicians and others in generations to come.

6.5. The position regarding the funding of traditional and folk music, song and dance in France has developed considerably in recent years. This bears interesting comparison with the position in England, as twenty years ago France in fact appeared to have less identifiable folk culture than in this country, apart from perhaps in Brittany. However, over the last decade a number of full-time organisations devoted to promoting traditional music have been set up in various parts of France. One of the best known is AMTA (Agence des Musiques Traditionelles en Auvergne) in Central France which has done a great deal of work on archive and recording projects, as well as teaching, promoting performances etc. In 1990, these different organisations were formed into a Network, which has a three year funding agreement with the Ministry of Culture, enabling these organisations to obtain matching funding locally. The formal agreement with the Ministry of Culture charges these organisations jointly with a responsibility to work in three areas - Training, or the passing on of skills; Research, meaning collecting and the making available of an archive, both in terms of personal access and through recordings made using the archive material; and Distribution, meaning the promotion of tours and events, and the distribution of publications and recordings. Although these 9 or 10 bodies have been formed at different times, and vary considerably, they do now have a commonality of purpose and a security of funding.

7. Subsidy for folk arts in England - the future

7.1. First, what could be done in terms of subsidy for this field **within existing resources?** Looking at the Regional Arts Associations, and their varying schemes

and allocations of funds, there are many ways in which folk performers could benefit from support. Particular examples of appropriate 'heads' include:

* **Schemes:** such as the excellent 'Artists at Your Service' (EMA) and 'Yorkshire Musicians in Residence'(YA) whereby an RAA offers subsidy for performances by these particular performers.

* **Artists Residencies:** Gateshead MBC and Wansbeck Council in Northumberland have co-funded (with NA) Folk Residencies; every other RAA funds artists residencies, but no others to date have been for folk performers.

* **Commissions:** composers and choreographers regularly receive commissions for new work. These have only very occasionally included folk artists, who would greatly benefit from the availability of paid time to create a new piece. Composers and choreographers from a folk background could also benefit hugely from opportunities to work on 'cross-arts' projects, involving theatre, contemporary dance, classical music, film etc, as long as they are treated as equal artistic partners.

* **Travel and Training Bursaries:** more traditional performers should be encouraged to apply.

* **Folk Development Work:** the support already given by by certain RAA's should be maintained and increased. Most RAAs already support local folk festivals, folk clubs, (sometimes for special events), and offer other small-scale grants. These often modest sums are nevertheless extremely important and should continue.

7.2. There are similarly many schemes operated by the Arts Council, which could include support for folk and traditional artists. These include:

* **Cultural Diversity Dance Projects;**

* **Composers for Dance Awards;**

* **Dance and Education Outreach Projects;**

* **The International Initiatives Fund** (FOLKWORKS has in fact recently received an award under this head; others could follow);

* **Music for Small Groups** (SYNCOPACE have recently received an award under this head, which helps small musical ensembles with the costs of development and marketing);

* **Recordings Fund** (A few folk artists have received help from this fund, e.g. Pete Coe for 'Red Shift' and the EFDSS for The Copper Family record; again more folk artists/record companies should be encouraged to apply);

* **Grants and Commissions to Individual Artists**

* **Individual Training Bursaries;**

* **Education Projects** (via RAAs);

* **Touring Schemes** (eg The Contemporary Music Network, and other forms of support for touring).

Clearly these artists have to **apply** for these funds, and there have to be other funding partners involved. However an openness of attitude on the part of Arts Council and RAA officers will be an essential ingredient.

7.3. Discussion above has highlighted particular areas of work where future subsidy from The Arts Council and/or the RAAs, beyond the kind of support available through existing schemes, could be extremely useful,and could perhaps contribute to a breakthrough in terms of public (and media) perception of this field. Other funding partners could also be investigated. These areas include:

* **Support for touring:** at present, any national touring of Traditional Music (other than that which falls under a World Music' head) is organised by agents working completely unsubsidised. One could argue that this leads to a situation where it is very difficult to present anything but single artists (or bands), perhaps with a support act. More adventurous touring combinations for example the 'Three Giants of the Accordion' tour, with John Kirkpatrick (from England), Riccardo Tesi (Italy) and Marc Perrone (France), are occasionally promoted (in that case by ADASTRA), but with little or no funds available for rehearsal, and low performance fees. Subsidy for existing tour organisers, and/or the setting up of a Traditional Music Network could result in the availability to promoters in this country of some extremely interesting product. In addition to this, it is difficult to see why the Contemporary Music Network should not include some English-based, traditional music in its touring packages, particularly where the artists are developing new approaches to their music, or working in conjunction either with traditional musicians of another culture or, say, with jazz.

* **Support for broadcasting projects**: over the last 5 years there have been a range of television programmes and series dealing with 'World Music', but relatively little attention has been given to English traditional music, apart from the examples referred to earlier. Part of the reason for this is financial; without investment from other partners (e.g. record/video companies), many music-based

programmes do not appear viable to the BBC/Channel 4 etc.. This situation has obvious dangers if only performers with the backing of record companies or similar may obtain coverage. The Arts Councils can provide a less financially biased form of support. As mentioned above, Pelicula Films would not have been able to make either of their most recent productions without support from the Arts Council of Great Britain/Scottish Arts Council. This form of support should be continued and expanded, with investigations into other possible partners.

* **Support for archive work**: funding agencies outside the U.K. have realised that support for collecting and the setting up of archives is a key element in the development of traditional music. Without access to source material, performers are cut off from a mainspring of inspiration. Broadcasters, filmmakers and dramatists need to be able to access authentic material in the development of their projects. Students of traditional music from around the world should be able to locate and use collections. Currently the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library struggles for funds; the National Sound Archive is missing the opportunity to include English-based traditional material; small collections exist at various points around the country. English funding bodies should be prepared to involve themselves in a serious examination of the best way forward, taking advice from bodies in other countries, such as The Library of Congress in the U.S.A.. The emphasis should be on accessibility, and whatever archive(s) are established (or existing ones supported), the definition of folk culture should be broad, and take in the cultures of the range of ethnic groups based in this country.

* **Support for recording projects:** as mentioned above, subsidy for recording and distribution of folk and traditional music has been very limited to date. Increased subsidy could be extremely useful for certain projects. For example, TOPIC records, the major record company dealing with English traditional music for the last twenty years, has a large back catalogue of records of material from all over England, produced in collaboration with collectors such as A.L.Lloyd. These recordings are now not readily available on vinyl, and there are no funds to release them on CD. The right level of financial support would enable TOPIC to release them, on CD, as a unique series, and an appropriate level of promotion could introduce a new public to this wealth of music and song.

* **Support for an investigation** of the place of traditional music, song and dance within Higher Education, and vocational music, song and dance training.

* **Support for a network of folk development projects:** it has been shown through the work already done, that a great deal can be achieved by individuals or organisations, supported to develop public involvement in folk arts and working in a particular region or locality. Traditional culture is regional by its very nature, and projects will develop in accordance with particular local styles and strengths. However, whether it is Rosie Cross working in Lincolnshire on Plough Plays,

Roger Watson offering songwriting workshops in Bracknell, or a FOLKWORKS One Day Workout in Darlington with a whole range of different workshops on offer, the aim is the same. All these projects aim to break down the preconception that folk and traditional arts are for a limited group of folk enthusiasts; they aim to show (and succeed in showing) that many of these forms are accessible, can be enjoyed at any level of expertise, but that in the hands of a skilled practitioner, they can be as impressive as any other art form at its best. Some of these projects have also addressed the introduction of folk arts into schools, not just as performance, but as long term participatory projects. Some Music Advisers have now begun to realise that traditional music has a unique contribution to make to music teaching. The emphasis on learning by ear, on social music-making, and on the composing of tunes are all highly appropriate in terms of National Curriculum guidelines on Music Teaching. Experiences gained regionally should be documented and made available for the benefit of educationalists nation-wide.

The investment that some of the RAAs, working in partnership with local authorities, education authorities and others, have started to make should be encouraged. One way to do this would be if the Arts Council followed the lead of the Ministry of Culture in France, and offered 'challenge' funding to be matched regionally for folk development work throughout the country. This work could be carried out by different agencies - some already in existence, some still be to set up. Discussion suggests that the idea of a set 'model' for a folk development project repeated throughout the country would not be the best way forward. What has worked well in one area may be the result of particular conditions in that region, and the personalities of the individuals involved. Experience does suggest that 'one-person' projects can be problematic, unless that person is based within an existing, and sympathetic structure. A mix of experience as a professional performer coupled with a knowledge of arts administration can also be useful. Some existing full-time organisations involved in running festivals or tour management may also have a role to play. Whatever structure is evolved, it is also extremely important that those involved work closely with the voluntary sector.

Subsidy is often tied up with matters of priorities, and if one was forced to prioritise from the above list, the educational work, operating through folk development projects, voluntary organisations, and within mainstream education itself, would, in many people's minds, come first. Without a pool of skilled performers, whether those skills have been obtained in a formal or informal setting, the field will fail to develop and evolve.

Conclusion

English folk arts have a serious role to play within the arts in Britain today. The field is diverse and energetic, containing both superb professional performers and a huge number of committed amateurs and volunteer organisers. With a great

tradition of self-sufficiency, this field is appropriate for investment, particularly in certain areas such as archive work, educational projects and touring. The Regional Arts Associations have started to address this area, but a lead from the centre is also needed in order to establish a national network of support. The funding agencies need to acquaint themselves with current developments, and to take advice regarding quality. Models of support from other countries can be investigated, and fruitful links established. Subsidy should not act to diminish this field's admirable abilities to raise funds and cover costs. It should, though, be available to assist in moves to guarantee the passing on of skills, to give already experienced artists the chance to perform to as wide a public as possible, and to help make accessible to all the material gathered from fine performers no longer with us. This document suggests particular ways in which subsidy could be usefully applied. It is intended to provoke response, and it is hoped that the discussions planned as a follow-up to the paper will assist the Arts Council in developing their policy on Folk Arts In England.

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Jim Lloyd.	FOLK ON TWO Presenter; organiser of YOUNG TRADITION Award.
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All the English Regional Arts Associations kindly supplied me with their most recently published accounts, as did the Scottish and Welsh Arts Councils, The Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and The Arts Council of Ireland.

NOTES

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