

7. STEREOTYPES AND ICONS OF THE CELTIC NATIONS

An average American may be able to conjure some vague associations with Scotland and Ireland but will be more hard-pressed to say anything about Wales (unless it is something to do with the Prince(ss) of Wales or with the verb 'to welsh'). The much smaller countries of Cornwall and Mann do not really register, nor does the much larger Brittany because it has always lain in the French rather than in the English sphere of influence. Nevertheless English people have stereotypes of the Welsh as do French people concerning the Bretons. The first question one can ask is 'Are these stereotypes recognised?' and secondly 'What is the relation between the stereotype and the reality?'. Literature on such stereotypes is not always easily available, but the many stereotypes are instructive in enabling one to learn about the Celtic peoples. Below are a number of words and names which are redolent of aspects of each national culture.

7.1 THE ANCIENT CELTS – 'DRUIDS, MEAD AND TROUSERS'

The ideas which existed among the Greeks and Romans concerning the Celts are less subject to verification as stereotypes or as actual characteristics than later periods because of the distance in time and the lack of documentation. Rankin (1987) is a useful book looking at the view of the Celts held in Classical literature, and it might be worth pursuing the following: mead, trousers (Gallia Braccata), long hair (Gallia comata), druids, warriors, human sacrifices.

Select Bibliography (* recommended introductory works)

*RANKIN, H. David. 1987. *Celts and the Classical World*. (London: Croom Helm). (Chapters 4)

7.2 THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS – 'KILTS, HAGGIS AND BAGPIPES'

A list of Scottish Highland icons, stereotypes and reputed characteristics which you might want to investigate (to see if they are stereotypical or genuine): oats, porridge, haggis, whisky, heather, Highland cattle, clans, gillies, Highland regiments, kilts, tartans, shinty, Saint Andrew, Mòd, cèilidhs, second sight, Presbyterianism, Wee Frees, the Sabbath, bagpipes, dourness, mountains, lochs, Caledonia McBrayne, Saltire, Caledonia, Scotia.

Select Bibliography
(* recommended introductory works)

TREVOR-ROPER, Hugh 1983 'The invention of tradition: the Highland tradition of Scotland'.
In Terence Ranger & Eric Hobsbawm (eds). *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press), 15–41.

7.3 IRELAND – 'SHILLELAGHS, POTATOES AND LEPRECHAUNS'

A list of Irish icons, stereotypes and reputed characteristics which you might want to investigate (to see if they are stereotypical or genuine): potatoes, barm brack, shamrock, porter (guinness), Irish wolfhounds, donkeys, poteen (poitín), harps, shillelaghs, blarney, Irish-English (Hiberno-English), leprechauns, banshees, navvies, simian portrayals, hurling, Gaelic football, curraghs, Celtic crosses, round towers, crannogs, hermit cells, Saint Patrick, céilís, Oireachtas na Gaeilge, patterns (*pátrún*), Catholicism, green, the emerald isle, fiddle, bodhrán, uilleann pipes, sean nós, Irish rebel songs, 'Amhrán na bhFiann (The Soldiers' Song)', Irish national flag, capital of Ireland, TG4, Hibernia, Erin.

7.4 MANN – 'TAIL-LESS CATS'

A list of Manx stereotypes icons, stereotypes and reputed characteristics which you might want to investigate (to see if they are stereotypical or genuine): tail-less cats, loaghtan sheep, Tynwald, Yn Chruinnaght, TT Races, the Manx flag, Manx national day (5th of July).

7.5 WALES – 'DRUIDS, LEEKS AND EISTEDDFODS'

A list of Welsh icons, stereotypes and reputed characteristics which you might want to investigate (to see if they are stereotypical or genuine): Welsh Rarebit, Laver Bread, Bara Brith, Caerphilly Cheese, leeks, daffodils, dragon, sheep, Welsh Black cattle, corgis, shepherds, drovers, druids, Welsh costume, rugby, coracles, coal mines, slate quarries, Saint David, Eisteddfod, Gorsedd, Prince of Wales, Welsh Not, Nonconformism, Calvinism, Methodism, hymns, land of song, 'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau', quires, land of the white gloves, hwyl, volubility (eloquence), emotion, cerdd dant, mountains, Welsh national flag, capital of Wales, S4C, Welsh cousins, to welsh, Cambria, Wallia (Gwalia), Gomer.

Select Bibliography
(* recommended introductory works)

MORGAN, Prys. 1983. 'From death to a view: the hunt for the Welsh past in the Romantic period'. In Terence Ranger & Eric Hobsbawm (eds). *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 43–100.

7.6 WESTERN BRITTANY – 'CLOGS, PANCAKES AND BOMBARDS'

A list of Breton stereotypes and icons which you might want to investigate (to see if they are stereotypical or genuine, with French equivalent added between brackets for those who might be literate in French): potatoes (patates, pommes-de-terre), pancakes (crêpes), cider (cidre), chouchenn (hydromel), clogs, coiffes, ermine, korrigans, fishermen (pêcheurs), gourenn, Goursez, Saint Erwan (Saint Yves), Conan Meriadoc, Ar Veuc'h (La Symbole), bagpipes, bombards (bombardes), Gouel ar Brezhoneg, pardons, fest noz, Catholicism (Catholicisme), kan ha diskan, gwerz, 'Bro Goz ma Zadou', moors (landes), standing stones, Breton capital(s) of Brittany, drunkenness, the Breton Flag (Le Gwenn ha Du), TV Breizh, Breton cousins (cousins de Bretagne).

7.7 CORNWALL – 'PASTIES'

A list of Cornish stereotypes and icons which you might want to investigate (to see if they are stereotypical or genuine): pasties, clotted cream, chough, piskies, fishermen, smugglers, tin mines, Stannaries, Cornish wrestling, Gorseth, Saint Pyran, King Arthur, Duchy of Cornwall, Nonconformism, Wesleyanism, clannishness, Cornish wrestling, Cousin Jack, 'Trelawny' ('The Song of the Western Men'), 'Bro Goth agan Tasow', the Cornish banner (of Saint Pyran).