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Craft, Souvenirs and the Commodification of National Identity in 1970s Scotland

Andrea Peach

Introduction

The 1970s heralded a revival, as well as a reinvention, of what was considered to be the crafts in Britain. With the creation in 1971 of the Crafts Advisory Committee (CAC), a body to promote and support the concerns of British ‘artist craftsmen’, attempts were made to more clearly articulate what was meant by the crafts, as well as carve out a more distinct identity and position of prominence for them.ⁱ However despite the efforts to engender a greater understanding and appreciation of the term, it remained a slippery one, which was subject to considerable debate and differing regional interpretation.ⁱⁱ This paper argues that what was understood to be British ‘craft’, in the eyes of organizations such as the CAC, and the discourse it promoted at this time, was not uniformly embraced across Britain. It will examine the commodification of Scottish craft to satisfy the demands of tourism, and ultimately the problematic outcome of the consumption of craft objects as souvenirs.

This area of research is of significance to the field of design history, as not only is the subject of Scottish craft in the 1970s currently under-researched, but it also sits outside of recent craft histories.ⁱⁱⁱ Using as primary source material the magazine *Craftwork: Scotland's Crafts Magazine (Craftwork)*, a periodical dedicated to the crafts in Scotland, as well as contemporary reports from Scottish organisations such the Highlands and Islands Development Board,^{iv} this paper will argue that what was happening in Scotland, with respect to craft economy and types of craft practice, was in many ways distinct from concurrent developments in England and Wales.

Craft and the Scottish Myth

The launch of the first Scottish magazine dedicated to the crafts in 1972 coincided with the nascent British craft revival. The aim of the magazine was to bring together

craftspeople throughout Scotland, disseminate craft information to the general public, and provide critical commentary on the general Scottish ‘craft scene’.^v [Fig 1] Jointly funded by the Scottish Craft Centre (SCC), the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB) and the Small Industries Council for Rural Areas of Scotland (SICRAS), *Craftwork* preceded the launch of the CAC’s more widely circulated British publication, *Crafts*, by one year, a prescience that is indicative of Scotland’s desire to establish its own forum for the crafts in the latter part of the twentieth century.

In comparison with its more affluent counterpart, *Crafts*, *Craftwork* was a modest publication, its subscribers numbering only 1,053 at the time of its demise in 1988 (circulation for *Crafts* in 1988 was 13,162).^{vi} However its significance to this paper lies in its specific attempts to position contemporary Scottish craft against what it perceived as the more problematic notions of ‘Scottishness’ associated with commercial Scottish craft production at this time. [Fig 2] Commercial craft production in Scotland was considered in a 1969 report by the HIDB to consist of indigenous craft in traditional forms, or adaptations thereof.^{vii} It can be argued that indigenous Scottish craft and its associated iconography had been adopted in Scotland since the eighteenth century, and continued to be employed as a vehicle for the promulgation of Scottish national identity at home and abroad. However the use of traditional iconography as an emblem of national identity was curiously at odds with Scotland’s concurrent rise as a modern industrial nation and the demise of its more traditional rural economies. T.M. Devine writes:

To the rest of the world in the late twentieth century Scotland seems a Highland country. The ‘land of the mountain and the flood’ adorns countless tourist posters and those familiar and distinctive symbols of Scottish identity, the kilt, the tartan and the bagpipes, are all of Highland origin. Yet this curious image is bizarre and puzzling at several levels. For one thing it hardly reflects the modern pattern of life in Scotland as one of the most urbanized societies in the world and the fact that by the later nineteenth century, Scotland had become an industrial pioneer with the vast majority of its people engaged in manufacturing and commercial activities and living in the central Lowlands.^{viii}

Devine argues that although seeming paradoxical, the adoption of traditional Highland iconography by a modernizing Scotland was done in order to unify Highlander and Lowlander and present a cohesive national identity that could be readily distinguished.^{ix} Although the linking of indigenous artefacts with constructs of national identity and tradition was by no means unique to Scotland,^x this romanticised depiction of national character, and appropriation of symbols which were not an accurate reflection of modern Scottish life, was particularly employed in Scotland to assert its own unique cultural identity. In *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm argues that it can be expedient for a society to adopt certain values and norms of behaviour which assume a factitious continuity to the past; a version of the past bearing little resemblance to reality.^{xi} This, it can be argued, is particularly the case in post-industrial societies, such as Scotland, where rapid economic growth contributed to the erosion and fragmentation of 'old' traditions and ironically gave way to the necessity of inventing 'new' traditions, which it was hoped would encourage greater social cohesion and promote global recognition.

The 1970s in Scotland were characterized by a marked rise in membership of the Scottish National Party (SNP), championing devolution and ultimately independence for Scotland. The SNP, with its emblem of a looped thistle, was at its peak in the two general elections of 1974.^{xii} Similarly, newly founded cultural organisations, such as the Scottish Craft Centre,^{xiii} also promoted Highland symbols and cultural artefacts in the form of traditional Scottish crafts, such as kilts, sporrans and knitwear, perpetuating what can be described as 'the Scottish myth'.^{xiv} John Morrison in *Painting the Nation – Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800-1920*, writes of the persistence of 'Highlandism', as a signifier embraced by the entire Scottish nation, regardless of whether it bore any association to the reality of life in Scotland, particularly that of the southern inhabitants of the country.^{xv} Indeed, it can be argued that much of what we continue to associate with Scottish heritage has its origins in the eighteenth and nineteenth century revolution in romantic historical writing, depicting idealized images of heroic Highlanders, championed by John Macpherson's Ossian 'translations' (1760) and Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley Novels* (1814). This invention of tradition was manifestly displayed through the enthusiastic adoption of kilts and 'tartanry'.^{xvi} Such arguably spurious notions of identity

could also be viewed as being at odds with the development of a contemporary Scottish craft movement, promulgating instead a hackneyed version of ‘scottishness’ in the form of ‘tartan gifte shoppes.’^{xvii} [Fig 3]

Tourism, which had increasingly become an important part of Scotland’s exchange economy of the 1970s, created a market that would continue to differentiate the direction of Scottish craft from elsewhere in Britain. [6] As argued in David McCrone’s *Scotland the Brand*, Scotland has been the subject of an intense ‘tourist gaze’ for at least the last 200 years, but whereas in the first half of the nineteenth century the Highlands had at most 100 visitors (comprised largely of the middle and upper classes), by the end of the century, due to the spreading influence of Romanticism, Scotland had become a mass destination for all levels of society.^{xviii} The promotion of Scottish heritage, McCrone argues, has been linked to the development of a cultural nationalism, despite being at odds with modernity. John Urry, in *The Tourist Gaze*, discusses the contemporary fascination with ‘with gazing upon the historical’, arguing that heritage has played a particularly important role in British tourism generally, with overseas visitors seeking evidence of the quaint and historical rather than the modernity associated with post-war development.^{xix}

Craftwork Magazine

Magazines have increasingly become the focus of the design historian as artefacts of representation through the examination of their influence in shaping attitudes and responding to mass-mediated constructs of identity.^{xx} The craft revival of the 1970s produced an ideological schism with respect to how the crafts were perceived, between England and Wales on the one hand, and Scotland on the other. Seen in this context, *Craftwork* provides evidence of the disparity between support for craft across Britain, with England and Wales witnessing the promotion of the ‘craftsperson as artist’, and Scotland, as ‘small business activity.’^{xxi} This was largely due to disparate funding structures of the time: the CAC, which was responsible for the publication of *Crafts* as well as the funding of crafts in England and Wales, received its backing not from the Department of Trade and Industry (as in Scotland), but from the Arts Branch of the

Department of Education and Science.^{xxii} This encouraged the CAC to establish a new image for the crafts, which was much closer to fine art practice than to design.^{xxiii} Lord Eccles, the Paymaster General (a treasury post with responsibility for the arts), and founder of the CAC, referred specifically to the ‘*artist craftsman*’ in his address to the House of Lords in 1971, as opposed to the ‘*designer craftsman*’,^{xxiv} a term which was instead employed by the HIBD in their proposals for the development of what they described as ‘the craft industry’ in Scotland.

Funding for *Craftwork*, and the crafts in Scotland, came not from the CAC, but from the Joint Crafts Committee for Scotland, which included the Highlands and Islands Development Board, and the Small Industries Council for Rural Areas of Scotland. These organisations were, as the names suggest, interested specifically in the economics of rural regeneration and the promotion of local industry, and in ensuring that issues such as ‘business’, and ‘sustainability’ stayed at the top of the Scottish craft agenda. This difference in funding bodies, and subsequent divergence in philosophic underpinning, is articulated by Victor Margrie, then secretary to the CAC, who reported in *Craftwork*:

I would suggest that the greatest difference between Scotland and our own operation, is that Scotland places greater emphasis on employment and craft industries rather than on the individual artist-craftsman and this is quite a natural thing for them to do considering that crafts play a very important part in Scotland’s economy.^{xxv}

Scotland’s emphasis on craft as small business activity as opposed to fine art practice was debated within the pages of *Craftwork*, as its editors and readership questioned what it meant to be a craft practitioner in 1970s Scotland. The HIBD also considered such matters, and in their 1974 *Proposal for Development* attempted to make a distinction between what it described as ‘the folk artist/craftsman’ and the ‘contemporary designer craftsman’. The former being described as using materials accessible to the maker and drawing largely upon the environment in which they lived and worked, and the latter as working with imported materials, and basing their designs on ideas often far removed from the traditions of the area in which they practiced.^{xxvi} Whereas it was felt that indigenous folk art evolved from the traditions of a culturally distinct group and therefore

was beyond the scrutiny of the HIBD, the work of the contemporary designer craftsman, acknowledging local traditions but drawing upon a wider range of cultural influences, was open to variation in standard and quality and therefore to value judgment and criticism. In this context, the HIBD hoped that the growing number of art school graduates arriving in the Highlands, or returning to set up business, would be a positive influence on standards of craft production in the area.^{xxvii}

Craftwork's often defensive editorial stance, and its heated debates surrounding craft and commerce, were in contrast to the more sanguine *Craft* magazine, and suggest unrest amongst the craft community in 1970s Scotland. *Craftwork's* loyalties were multifarious: on one hand it actively supported and promoted developments within contemporary Scottish craft, but it was equally dedicated to preserving cherished notions of indigenous craft, as well as advising on the more commonplace practicalities of how to earn a living as a 'bread and butter' craftsman. As its editor in 1973, Bill Williams, points out:

It is not part of our editorial policy to believe that craftsmen can exist on thin air and fine sentiments. For the great majority of craftsmen in Scotland a living has to be made by the simple process of selling a product.^{xxviii}

In contrast, *Crafts* was more interested in celebrating all that was contemporary and 'artistic' about craft, reflecting the CAC's philosophy, and at this time was reluctant to feature articles on, or be associated with, anything that could be considered in any way prosaic or historicist. This modernist bias towards the crafts can be seen in *The Work of the Crafts Advisory Committee 1974-77*, a manifesto stating:

Whilst tradition and the sense of continuity have a part to play, they should not be allowed to take precedence over individual creativity, nor should they divert the artist craftsman from making a response to the modern world.^{xxix}

Keen to champion what Tanya Harrod describes as the newness of the 'new' crafts,^{xxx} *Crafts* magazine had little interest in craft history. This partiality can be seen in the image chosen for the front cover of the first issue of the magazine, featuring a colourful abstract quilted embroidery by Judith Lewis, which was in keeping with the CAC's emphasis on

the ‘artist craftsman’ and the promotion of ‘contemporary’ practice. [Fig 4] Whereas the Crafts Council and *Crafts* in its early inception acted as an ideological platform for avant-garde contemporary craft in England and Wales, *Craftwork* operated more as a sounding board for views on craft in Scotland, and in particular, dealt with issues surrounding how to make craft practice economically viable for the maker and accessible to the consumer. *Craftwork*’s attempt to accommodate both the old and new, the mundane and the monumental, directly mirrors the paradoxical status of craft in Scotland in the 1970s. This is tellingly evidenced in the choice of graphic imagery for the cover of its inaugural edition. The usage of a ‘modern’ bespoke typeface for the title *Craftwork*, offset by the more conservative ‘trajan’ lettering of *Scotland’s Crafts Magazine*, is an indication of this dual identity, as is the editor’s choice of cover image: a contemporary form of iron fire poker, wrought in the shape of a rural Scottish image - a ram’s head. [Fig 5]

Craftwork provides proof as to the increasingly uncomfortable, but nevertheless expedient, relationship between crafts and tourism that was being experienced in 1970s Scotland. The first issue editorial, for example, laments what it describes as the debased status of crafts and craftspeople in Scotland, directly linking the perceived demise in craft standards with Scotland’s burgeoning tourist industry and attendant craft shops and centres:

And of course the tartan thistles sell (God how they sell!) But where’s the real thing – where’s true craft?^{xxxii}

The relationship between craft, commerce and tourism was also a subject of much debate within the ranks of the HIBD, as is reflected in their 1974 *Proposal for Development* which argues that the primary objective of a Scottish craftsman should be to achieve economic sustainability:

In recognizing the value of this work in social and aesthetic terms, we should not be misled into believing that uniqueness alone necessarily qualifies the object as a viable commodity. Philosophical and personal issues apart, the only real answer to the question – *what is the purpose of a designer craftsman’s activity* – must be – *to make objects that sell.*^{xxxii}

Craftwork equally endorsed this perspective, but was keen to distinguish what it described as ‘true craft’ as opposed to what it considered the ‘false promise of objects claiming to be lovingly fashioned from the finest materials available’.^{xxxiii} In its first edition, editor Bill Williams went as far as proposing the adoption of a newer, ‘cleaner’ word with which Scottish craft could be associated; one that would imply both high standards and quality, and be more representative of true Scottish craftsmanship:

There ARE people with standards – quite a large number of them in fact. And for the purposes of this magazine we could certainly do with a new ‘clean’ word to describe them. Something which indicated a high level of skill and application; an obsession with quality and, put simply, devotion.^{xxxiv}

The word “craft” has, for some time, been one of the most foully abused in the English language. Linked with the word ‘Scottish’ it frequently covers a multitude of thistles, crudely mass-produced Celtic design and tartan tat.^{xxxv}

Scottish Craft and Souvenirs

With the growth of Scottish tourism came the demand for objects that could enhance as well as authenticate the tourist experience. Susan Stewart, in her work *On Longing - Narratives on the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, discusses this search for authenticity as being corollorative with the search for ‘the authentic object’,^{xxxvi} as does Jonathan Culler in ‘The Semiotics of Tourism’, *Framing the Sign*. Culler argues that tourism is ultimately a quest for signs and evidence of ‘the real thing’.^{xxxvii} Souvenirs in this instance become semiotic reproductions of tourist experiences. Similarly, in Scotland craft and souvenirs became increasingly synonymous, as visitors searched for their own ‘little piece of Scotland.’^{xxxviii}

It was estimated that total sales of Highland craft products (excluding Shetland knitwear and Harris tweed) rose from about £350,000 in 1968 to £3.5M in 1975, an increase attributed to the influx of tourism.^{xxxix} This economic mediation between craft and tourism was viewed positively by policy makers and craftspeople, and seen as a practical way of sustaining rural economies, as well as an opportunity to promote a positive sense

of Scottish national identity abroad. It had been feared that indigenous craft in Scotland was at risk of dying out, and the emergence of a new market for craft goods, largely in the form of the souvenir, was one that was accepted and encouraged, as was acknowledged by Philippe Taylor, Chief Executive of the Scottish Tourist Board in *Craftwork* Spring 1975:

There is a great potential for people who can express the artistic character of a country. Craft made articles are very important to tourists who make it possible and profitable for many craftsmen to exist in remote parts of the country.^{xl}

However welcome the burgeoning influx of tourists, there was a fear amongst the Scottish craft community that tourism was not making a positive impact on the *quality* of craft souvenir being produced and subsequently consumed, and that the standard and design of such goods produced by some craftworkers, fell short of desirable levels. [Fig 7] The 1969 HIBD *Survey of Craftworkers* concluded that many visitors to Scotland must be surprised and disappointed with some of the craft goods offered for sale, arguing that the fact that medium or low quality articles may sell well was not a reason for denying a need for further training or an imposition of quality standards:

The demand for craft goods by visitors is considerable and if there is nothing better the purchaser will often take what he can get rather than leave the area without a memento of his visit.^{xli}

The HIBD, whose primary function was to provide financial, marketing and promotional resources to support industries and enterprises in the Highlands and Islands, of which craft formed a major part, was particularly interested in the relationship between Scottish craft and the souvenir trade, as is reflected in the 1974 HIBD *Retailers Survey*.^{xlii} The survey tried to differentiate between mass-produced souvenirs and craft objects and determine the market for each, concluding that:

The main features distinguishing craft goods from mass-produced goods are the origin, method of production and quantity. The general opinion is that the craft good is produced locally, made by hand and sells at a higher price in relation to the mass-produced 'souvenir' good. The quality of mass-produced goods was

considered to be low, tartan packaging being associated with the sales presentation.^{xliii}

There were government attempts to regulate the quality of Scottish souvenirs dating back to 1946, and exhibitions such as 'Living Traditions of Scotland' (part of the 1951 Festival of Britain), mounted by the Scottish Committee of the Council of Industrial Design at the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh, sought to promote examples of contemporary craft production alongside indigenous Scottish craft.^{xliiv} By the 1970s, initiatives to improve the standards of craft articles in the retail sector were largely taken on by the HIBD as part of their marketing strategy for Scottish crafts. The HIBD opened a display centre in 1972 at its premises in Inverness, which shared accommodation with the local tourist information centre, containing a collection of the area's craft products (including both contemporary and traditional types of craft production), and directing visitors to local shops where they could buy the articles on display. [Fig 8]

In response to the retailers survey conducted in 1970, the HIBD found that visitors to the Highlands and Islands 'had a preference for products made in the area'^{xlv} and launched the 'Craftmade' mark in 1971 as a means of identifying to the consumer, quality products from the Highlands. The intention of this scheme was to regulate the standard and type of object that was being exported as a piece of Scotland. The intention of the brand was to link *authenticity* with *quality*, implying that without the Craftmade mark, the consumer was at risk of purchasing an ersatz, and by inference inferior, Scottish souvenir. [Fig 9] It was hoped that discerning tourists could now be sure that they were obtaining a piece of the 'real thing' by verifying that their object had the Craftmade label.

The 1973 HIBD advertisement for Craftmade products exemplifies the direct promotion of the Scottish craft object as souvenir. [Fig 10] The title of the advert: *Memories are Made of This*, clearly links the consumption of the Scottish craft object with the added value of providing a lasting memory of Scotland. The advertisement also shows the multifarious identity of Scottish craft in the 1970s, illustrating craft products ranging from the indigenous, (Fair Isle sweaters and Orkney chair), to contemporary adaptations of the indigenous, (1970s interpretation of a knitted Fair Isle pattern hat and handmade

ceramic tableware using 1970s patterns) and souvenir objects with ‘Scottish’ decoration (pewter pendants with Celtic patterns and the Cairngorm letter openers and key fobs). Despite the HIBD’s aim of regulating the standard of Scottish craft objects through the Craftmade label, attempts to link authenticity and quality were not always successful. While some objects bearing the Craftmade label were deemed of a high standard by the HIBD, both technically and from an aesthetic standpoint, some work was also found to be inferior in both respects.^{xlvi}

Scottish Craft Fairs

The introduction of annual craft fairs in Aviemore and Ingliston sponsored by the HIBD and the SICRAS in the early 1970s, both confirmed and satisfied the demand for commodifying the craft object as souvenir. The fairs provided for the first time an opportunity for craftspeople across Scotland to collectively display and sell their work, largely destined for the tourist market [Fig 11]. David Ogilvie, then General Manager of the SICRAS, championed the fairs as a means of addressing the problem of marketing craft goods in Scotland, given the remoteness and small scale production of many of the makers, and hailed them as an opportunity to bring together the best of Scottish craftsmanship and ‘those who are seeking to meet the growing world market for craft goods’.^{xlvii}

As with the Craftmade branding scheme, the quality of the objects on display at these well-attended fairs was questioned. *Craftwork* was particularly critical of the craft trade fairs and what it saw as the increasingly problematic association between mass-produced souvenirs and craft, arguing that the objects displayed were neither contemporary nor, representative of what the Scottish craft market was capable of producing:

The majority of hand-made goods at the Trade Fair were neither well made, nor showed much imagination. I know there are better craftsmen in Scotland. The Trade Fair should try to be more discriminating. It is only by seeing well made goods that the public will learn to be more discriminating. As for the mass produced souvenirs, I simply don’t know what they were doing at a ‘craft fair’.^{xlviii}

The Aviemore and Ingliston trade fairs confirmed the existence of a hierarchical craft system operating within Scotland in the 1970s: on one level dedicated to serving higher personal ideals and satisfying a more discerning and limited public, on the other, addressing the demands of the tourist industry; a growing and lucrative market, but one which appeared to be compromising quality and standards. This was a situation that *Craftwork* and its readership disapproved of, but the demands and subsequent rewards of tourist industry were hard to resist, as one reader pointed out:

It is unrealistic to assume that the craft industries automatically provide work with a high degree of job satisfaction and creative opportunity when, at the same time, the demand for a constant supply of inexpensive ‘worthy souvenirs’ is positively encouraged.^{xlix}

That the craft trade shows were masquerading cheap mass-produced souvenirs as authentic hand-crafted objects, and in the eyes of some, debasing the reputation of true Scottish craft, was clear, but the fairs represented an economic opportunity to Scottish makers that was increasingly attractive at this time and often operated at the expense of maintaining standards and integrity. This point is acknowledged in the 1974 HIBD *Proposal for Development*:

Whether due to the unaccustomed pressure of commercial production, the abandonment of design integrity in a desperate or at least urgent attempt to sell, inadequately formed notions of the characteristics of good design and design methodology, or simply limited visual ability ... design standards in craft areas are sometimes significantly weak.¹

The HIBD felt that the assumption that the tourist would *buy anything* was misguided and simplistic, and believed that what was called for was a re-evaluation of design standards ‘if work in this field is to achieve and develop credibility and recognition.’^{li} *Craftwork* also supported the argument that if ‘quality’ could be achieved while still satisfying the thriving tourist market, the production of craft objects as souvenirs was a viable and practical option for craftspeople. For Bill Williams, the editor of *Craftwork*, the answer to the trade show dilemma was to propose a traveling exhibition of contemporary craft object exemplars, to be displayed at the trade fairs, as a means of educating and inspiring

both makers and buyers at the fairs, an idea that was never unfortunately brought to fruition.

Where might a remedy lie? One ... might be to arrange a truly representative exhibition of some of Scotland's outstanding craft work and arrange for it to be mounted in close proximity of the trade exhibitions. Besides giving visitors a more representative 'national' picture it might also act as a stimulus to those involved in craft work to raise their standards further.^{lii}

Scottish Souvenir Competitions

Central to these debates of quality were the ongoing 'Souvenirs of Scotland' competitions, which were initially launched in 1946 by the Council of Industrial Design (CoID) in an effort to improve the quality of souvenirs nationwide.^{liii} By the 1970s these competitions had become increasingly commercial, largely due to a shift in sponsoring bodies. The original Scottish souvenir sponsors: the CoID, The Design Council Scottish Committee, the Scottish Crafts Centre and SICRAS, were joined in the 1970s by the Scotch House Ltd. and The Scotsman newspaper. The Scotch House (ironically, an English retailer) took an active role in the competitions, not only by offering a large cash prize, but also by hosting a display of the winning entries in their flagship store on Princes Street in Edinburgh.^{liv} For both the Scotch House and The Scotsman, the souvenir competitions represented a marketing opportunity that enabled them to draw attention to their business, as well as be seen to support Scottish craft, as described in a Scotch House advertisement in The Scotsman, January 1973:

We at The Scotch House know that Scottish souvenirs are not just gifts that tourists take home to friends. They are genuine pieces of Scottish craftsmanship of great importance to Scottish trade.^{lv}

There were five Scotch House sponsored souvenir competitions in total, occurring biennially from 1970 to 1980.^{lvi} The aim of these commercially sponsored competitions is clearly stated in a press release from the 1974 Souvenirs of Scotland competition, claiming that:

The object of the competition is to encourage the production of better designs for souvenirs of Scotland, made in Scotland. The availability of better designs in the shops will give the increasing number of visitors to Scotland, whether from overseas or from other parts of Britain, the opportunity to buy souvenirs that do credit to Scotland.^{lvii}

The souvenir competitions had three clearly defined sections for which entries were invited: souvenirs for mass production, souvenirs of small-scale batch production (designated for what it described as ‘craftsmen/manufacturers), and prototypes or ideas for souvenirs. It was hoped that the latter section would invite designer-makers and recent art school graduates. It is clear from the press release that entries from the latter two sections were being actively encouraged; by placing emphasis on craft skills and good design, it was hoped they might improve the problematic craft/souvenir alliance.

Craftwork featured a report on the winning entries from the Scottish Souvenir competition in Spring 1973. It is clear from those entries chosen that judges favoured objects that were both functional and practical, with an emphasis on contemporary adaptations of traditional forms or techniques. This can be seen in the joint first prize which was awarded to David Harkison, for his range of six pewter pendants, commended for being ‘well finished’ with ‘clever use being made of traditional Scottish emblems and symbols...which reflected the true character and fine craftsmanship long associated with Scotland’.^{lviii} Donald McGarva’s Scots Tower Houses were also commended, for the material used and the packaging, as were Margaret Stuart’s range of Fair Isle bordered scarves, for representing an industry the judges ‘would like to see revived’ with an ‘exciting use of colour’.^{lix} [Figs 12-13]

Although *Craftwork*’s initial interest in the early souvenir competitions was mildly supportive, it became increasingly clear that the competitions were achieving neither the impact, nor the changes, originally hoped for. Robert Clark, Chief Executive of the Scottish Design Centre, complained in *Craftwork* Spring 1975 that ‘it was unfortunate that the overall standard of submissions was not higher’, taking the view that ‘it might have been supposed that producers would have taken greater care with their designs so that standards would have risen’.^{lx} It was becoming apparent that there was no correlation between the number of competitions held and any perceptible increase in the quality of

entries. The demise of the souvenir competitions came in 1977 when it was announced that the Souvenirs of Scotland competitions were to be re-named, 'The Scotch House Souvenirs of Scotland Competition'. The obvious commercial interests of the Scotch House acting as both sponsor and judge were considered to be of minimal benefit in raising the standards of souvenirs. [Fig 14] The Spring 1977 issue of *Craftwork* carried two examples of items which had been seen on display at the Princes Street Scotch House: a ceramic piper and tile depicting Balmoral Castle, reporting acerbically: 'not presumably the stuff of which award winners are made.'^{lxi} This was followed by a series of irate letters from readers, complaining about the competition and its motives:

...what self respecting Scottish craftsman is seeking a patronizing pat on the back from an English based purveyor of souvenirs such as those illustrated in the last issue of *Craftwork*.^{lxii}

...death to the Souvenirs of Scotland competitions. The idea of making worthless souvenirs is patronizing and mercenary. Let our craftsmen make beautiful useful articles and let our visitors remember us for their quality, whether they be tweed, toy, goblet or gold ring.^{lxiii}

By 1977, *Craftwork* conceded that although commercial ventures such as the souvenir competitions and the craft trade fairs had heightened the awareness of the possibilities of the craft object as souvenir, creating an 'alternative to the chromium plating and spray-on Hong Kong tartaning',^{lxiv} there remained a disparity between the higher end of the craft market, for which there was a limited customer base, and the lower souvenir end, which was now being hit by a decline in Scottish tourism due late 1970s inflation.^{lxv} Craft workers appealing to the lower end of the market would have found it difficult to cover production costs and maintain any degree of acceptable quality, and tourists hard-pressed by the devalued pound, may have had trouble justifying the expense of a holiday souvenir. As Robert Clarke points out in his Letter to the Editor, *Craftwork* Spring 1975:

Tourism in Scotland is entering an even more usually uncertain period ... Will there be a reluctance among tourists to venture to the more remote parts of the country? And more important as far as craftsmen are concerned, will the tourists who come to Scotland have anything left to spend when they have paid the costs of getting here and feeding themselves.^{lxvi}

It was ultimately recognized that the future of the Scottish crafts industry depended on more than simply satisfying the demands of the tourist trade. The continued reliance on traditional iconography, considered problematic by many makers, was perceived as a reactionary step in terms of promoting a vision of contemporary Scottishness, and allowing makers to be experimental and innovative. A sentiment reflected by D. Pirnie in his report for the HIBD in 1974, *Designer Craftsmen in the Highlands and Islands – Proposal for Development*, concluding that if development of the crafts in Scotland was to be sustainable and meaningful for the craftsperson and patrons alike, it was essential that through education, exhibition and promotion, a more informed market for craft, and craftsmanship, was created.^{lxvii}

Conclusion

This article has examined the commodification and consumption of craft in Scotland, providing evidence that prevailing ideologies and representations differed from those in the rest of Britain in the 1970s partly as a result of disparate funding bodies and divergent consumer demand. In Scotland, tourism and heritage had become inextricably linked, with the potential for tourism as a creator of jobs and opportunity for craft workers, augmented by the dramatic growth of tourism after the Second World War.

Unfortunately, this economic dependence on tourism as a means of sustaining the Scottish craftworker presented a problem: as Scottish craft objects were being targeted primarily at the tourist, craft and souvenirs became increasingly synonymous. The ensuing craft-souvenir relationship was largely fuelled by a demand for objects representing the *myth* rather than modernity, therefore impeding the growth of a more contemporary Scottish craft identity. The tourist market was also a fickle one, dependent on the vicissitudes of economy, and although souvenir production may, on the surface, have created a sustainable outlet for Scottish craft production, it also appeared to compromise the quality and design integrity of its goods in the interest of commercial viability.

Rather than encouraging the ‘artist craftsman’ as someone whose work ‘although rooted in traditional techniques, had an aim which extended beyond the reproduction of past styles and methods’,^{lxviii} it seemed that the prevailing consumer demand for craft in Scotland was for a simulacrum of what it perceived as ‘Scottishness’. In this sense, it could be argued that Scotland suffered from a surfeit of its own heritage, burdened with its indelible iconography of tartan, thistles, Bonnie Prince Charlie and Brigadoon, which ultimately limited commercial opportunities for artistic experimentation. Although tourism was undeniably good for Scotland in economic terms, the question as to whether the association of souvenirs with craft objects was a positive one for the Scottish craft industry is less clear. It provided an economic boost, that was both expedient and necessary in the short term, but may have mitigated against contemporary Scottish craft’s chances of ensuring a truly sustainable long-term future. As a primary source, *Craftwork* confirms that despite strenuous efforts to control the quality of such craft objects, and attempts to encourage the consumption of a more contemporary craft aesthetic, the consuming public, by and large favoured ‘the myth’:

...it’s a case of educating the general public so they will want more than the hackneyed cairngorm, thistle or Mary Queen of Scots heart. Scotland has a major disadvantage compared to other European countries in so far as it has a strong tradition. The tourist expects to see these old clichés, which is bound to restrict the designer and inhibit his creative field.^{lxix}

(6,041 words)

ⁱ T. Harrod, *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, Yale University Press, 1999, p. 370.

ⁱⁱ Questions such as: ‘What is craft?’ and ‘How does it differ on the one hand from industry and on the other hand from art?’ were being asked by the editor of *Crafts* following the CAC’s first crafts exhibition at the V&A Museum in 1973. ‘The Concept of Craft’, *Crafts*, no. 1, March 1973, p. 21.

ⁱⁱⁱ These include: P. Dormer (ed.), *The Culture of Craft*, Manchester University Press, 1997; P. Greenhalgh (ed.), *The Persistence of Craft*, A&C Black, 2002; Harrod, op.cit. J. Johnson (ed.), *Exploring Contemporary Craft: History, Theory and Critical Writing*, Coach House, 2002.

^{iv} The Highlands and Islands Industrial Board was established in 1965 by the new Scottish Office Department with executive authority over transport, industry and tourism.

^v *Craftwork – Scotland’s Craft Magazine*, no. 1, summer 1972, p. 2.

^{vi} British Rate and Data Index (BRAD), December 1989.

^{vii} A survey of craftworkers undertaken by the HIDB in 1969 reported twenty broad types of craft being commercially undertaken in Scotland which included: boat building, carving and woodturning, costume figures and toymaking, crook and stick making, deerskin, sealskin and sheepskin processing, specialist furniture making, hornwork, jewellery, leatherwork and saddlery, marquetry and fine woodward, model making, painting drawing and sketching, pottery, shellcraft and pebblework, silkscreen, printing and batik work, silverwork, copperwork and pewterwork, textiles (knitting and weaving) wrought ironwork and farriery. *Report Following a Survey of Craftworkers in Shetland, Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland, Rosshire, Invernesshire, Argyll, Highlands and Islands Development Board, Industrial Division, May 1969*, p. 2.

^{viii} T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*, The Penguin Press, 1999, p. 231.

^{ix} Devine explains: 'As Lowland Scotland becomes more and more like England, it turns to the Highlands for symbols and beliefs to maximize its difference.' *Ibid*, pp. 244-5.

^x Ireland can be used as a comparative case study. See: M. Cronin and B. O'Connor (eds.), 'Imagining Ireland: The Construction of Tourist Representations', *Irish Tourism, Image Culture and Identity*, Channel View Publications, 2003, pp. 177-238; S. Rains, 'Celtic Kitsch: Irish-America and Irish Material Culture', *Circa*, 107, Spring 2004, pp. 52-57.

^{xi} E. Hobsbawm and T.O. Ranger, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 12.

^{xii} The Scottish National Party gained seven seats and 22 percent of the vote in the first general election of 1974, and 30 percent of the vote in the second election. Devine, *op.cit.*, pp. 575-576.

^{xiii} The Scottish Craft Centre was founded in 1949, with support of the Scottish Committee of the Council of Industrial Design, as a non-profit organization with the aim of encouraging the production and sale of high quality craftwork.

^{xiv} Recent publications exploring the Scottish myth and its origins include: D. Broun, R.J. Finlay and M. Lynch (eds.), *Image and Identity – The Making and Re-Making of Scotland Through the Ages*, John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1998; R. Carr, 'Scottish Design Myths', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History – Scotland 1900 and Scotching Myths*, vol. 5, 2000, pp. 37-42; N. Davidson, *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood*, Pluto Press, 2000; J.R. Gold and M.M. Gold, *Imagining Scotland – Tradition, Representation and Promotion in Scottish Tourism since 1750*, Scholar Press, 1995; K. H. Grenier, *Tourism and Identity in Scotland 1770-1914: Creating Caledonia*, Ashgate, 2005; J.A. Herman, *The Scottish Enlightenment – The Scots' Invention of the Modern World*, Fourth Estate, 2002; D. McCrone, *Scotland the Brand – The Making of Scottish Heritage*, Polygon, 1995.

^{xv} J. Morrison, 'The Lure of the Highlands', *Painting the Nation – Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800-1920*, Edinburgh University Press, 2003, p. 47.

^{xvi} Hugh Trevor-Roper writes that far from being a traditional Highland dress, the kilt was the invention of an Englishman after the Union of 1707. Being cheap to produce and easy to wear, the kilt's original purpose was not to preserve tradition but to facilitate the transition from 'the heather... into the factory.' After a generation of trouser wearing (Highland dress was banned in Scotland from 1745 until 1782), it is not surprising that the Highlanders were not keen to adopt the new kilt. Instead, it was the upper and middle classes who embraced the costume with romantic enthusiasm. Hobsbawm and Ranger, *op. cit.* p. 24.

^{xvii} B. Williams, 'Editorial', *Craftwork – Scotland's Craft Magazine*, no. 1, summer 1972, p. 2.

^{xviii} McCrone, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-77 and Durie, *op. cit.*, p. 44. See also: 'The Rhetoric of the Open Road' in Gold, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-139, for information on the rise and promotion of Scottish tourism during the twentieth century.

^{xix} J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze - Second Edition*, Sage Publications, 2002, pp. 98-99. See also: J. Urry, *Consuming Places*, Routledge, 1995; Raphael Samuel's *Theatres of Memory - Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, Verso, 1994 (in particular the chapter 'Heritage'), pp. 205-273 as well as D. Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge, 1985.

^{xx} J. Aynsley and K. Forde (eds.), *Design and the Modern Magazine*, Manchester University Press, 2007, includes Linda Sandino's essay 'Crafts for Crafts Sake' on *Crafts* magazine, and Gillian Naylor's essay on the design and promotion of design values in *Design* magazine.

^{xxi} P. Wood in *Craft in Britain, 1971 to the present: a critical ideological study*, unpublished PhD Thesis, Keele University, 1996, p. 29, and Harrod, *op.cit.* pp. 369-370.

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- xxii *Crafts Advisory Committee News*, no. 1, October/November 1977, p. 1.
- xxiii Harrod, op. cit., p. 370.
- xxiv Harrod, op. cit., p. 369.
- xxv A. Macleod, 'World Crafts', *Craftwork – Scotland's Craft Magazine*, no. 12, summer 1975, pp. 11-12.
- xxvi D. Pirnie, *Designer Craftsmen in The Highlands and Islands – Proposal for Development*, March 1974, Highlands and Islands Development Board, CR 1974/23, p. 3.
- xxvii *Report Following a Survey of Craftworkers in Shetland, Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland, Rosshire, Invernesshire, Argyll*, Highlands and Islands Development Board, Industrial Division, May 1969, p. 21.
- xxviii B. Williams, 'Editorial', *Craftwork – Scotland's Craft Magazine*, no. 4, summer 1973, p. 2.
- xxix *The Work of the Crafts Advisory Committee 1974-1977*, Crafts Council Library, London, p. 2.
- xxx Harrod, op. cit., pp. 386-7.
- xxxi B. Williams, 'Editorial', *Craftwork – Scotland's Craft Magazine*, no. 1, summer 1972, p. 2.
- xxxii Pirnie, op. cit., p. 4.
- xxxiii Williams, op. cit., p. 10.
- xxxiv Ibid.
- xxxv Ibid.
- xxxvi S. Stewart, *On Longing – Narratives on the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, Duke University Press, 1993, p. 133. Gloria Hickey in her essay 'Craft within a Consuming Society' also explores the idea of authenticity and place with respect to Canadian craft objects: '... don't be surprised if you find an Ontario potter's work in a Nova Scotia store. Afterall, Ontario still fulfils 'made in Canada' – especially if you are visiting from Japan'. Dormer, op. cit., p. 91. See also *Design and Evocation*, J. Aynsely, C. Breward, M. Kwint (eds.), Oxford, 1999, p. 115 and C. Lury, 'The Objects of Travel' in *Touring Cultures – Transformations of Travel and Theory*, C. Rojeck and J. Urry (eds.), Routledge, 1997, pp. 75-95.
- xxxvii J. Culler, 'The Semiotics of Tourism', *Framing the Sign – Criticism and its Institutions*, Basil Blackwell, 1988, p. 160. See also: G. Shaw and A. M. Williams, *Tourism and Tourism Spaces*, Sage, 2004, p. 27.
- xxxviii J. Kinchin, A. Peach, 'Small Pieces of Scotland? Souvenirs and the Good Design Debate, 1946-1980', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, vol. 7, 2002. pp. 23-30.
- xxxix *Scottish Crafts Now*, Scottish Development Agency, Edinburgh, 1980, p. 76. The HIDB *Retailers Survey*, July/August 1970 results showed that 83.3 percent of the craft souvenir retailers surveyed were open only in summer, substantiating the link between seasonal tourism and the consumption of craft souvenir goods.
- xl E. Lyon, 'STB's [Scottish Tourist Board] New Man', *Craftwork – Scotland's Craft Magazine*, no. 11, spring 1975, p. 13.
- xli *Report Following a Survey of Craftworkers*, op. cit., p. 16.
- xlii *Retailers Survey*, Highlands and Islands Development Board, July/August 1970. This survey was based on 72 Scottish retail outlets, the majority located within the HIDB area.
- xliii Ibid, p. 4.
- xliv See Kinchin, Peach, op. cit., for information about the earlier history of Scottish souvenir competitions. Elizabeth Cummings article 'Northern Highlights', *Crafts*, No. 172, September/October 2001, pp. 41-43 on the Living Traditions exhibition. Also: J. Kinchin and P. Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions, 1901, 1911, 1938, 1988*, Wendlebury, 1988.
- xlvi The *Retailers Survey*, op. cit.
- xlvi D. Pirnie, *Designer Craftsmen in The Highlands and Islands – Proposal for Development*, March 1974, Highlands and Islands Development Board, CR 1974/23, p. 15.
- xlvii Trade Extra, *Craftwork Supplement*, 1973, p.1. A brief look at some of the trade stands at the 1973 Aviemore Trade Fair gives an indication as to what one could expect to see at these fairs, as the following exhibits show: *Caithness Crofting Crafts*: Jewellery made from pebbles; *Lochardil Plastics*: Clan crests in

- copper mounted on plastic; *Cullernie Crafts*: Felt and tartan soft toys (ie: MacBuns, MacDormice and MacBurr); *Wilson's Scottish Crafts Ltd.*: Brooches made from bird claws and plumes. Etc.
- ^{xlviii} J. Youseman, 'Letter to the Editor', *Craftwork – Scotland's Craft Magazine*, no. 3, spring 1973, pp. 3-4.
- ^{xliv} Dobson, op. cit., p. 3.
- ^l D. Pirnie, *Designer Craftsmen in The Highlands and Islands – Proposal for Development*, March 1974, Highlands and Islands Development Board, CR 1974/23, p. 10.
- ^{li} *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- ^{lii} Williams, 'Editorial', op. cit., p. 2.
- ^{liii} Kinchin, Peach, op. cit., p.17.
- ^{liv} £500 was offered by the Scotch House and £100 by The Small Industries Council for the Rural Areas of Scotland. Design Council Scottish Committee. Press Release Number AT CMM/4/75, Design Centre Archive, Brighton. I am grateful to Juliet Kinchin for sharing this research with me.
- ^{lv} The Scotch House advertisement, *The Scotsman*, January 25, 1973.
- ^{lvi} With the exception of 1976, when competition was deferred to 1977 to coincide with the Royal Jubilee year.
- ^{lvii} For the purposes of this competition, the Design Council defined a souvenir as 'any article made in Scotland for retail sale which relates to or is reminiscent of Scotland'. Design Council Scottish Committee, Press Release, op. cit.
- ^{lviii} 'Souvenirs of Scotland', *Craftwork – Scotland's Craft Magazine*, No. 3, spring 1973, p. 21.
- ^{lix} *Ibid.*
- ^{lx} *Ibid.*
- ^{lxi} *Ibid.*
- ^{lxii} R. Hedderwick, 'Letter to the Editor', *Craftwork – Scotland's Craft Magazine*, no. 19, spring 1977 p. 4.
- ^{lxiii} I. Hird, 'Letter to the Editor', *Craftwork – Scotland's Craft Magazine*, no. 12, summer 1975, p. 6.
- ^{lxiv} *Ibid.*
- ^{lxv} R. Clark: 'In today's inflationary times there can be few craft workers who can contemplate a selling price for any of their products of less than £1. But the same harsh economic laws hit the holidaymaker just as hard as they hit the craft producer. The hard pressed mum and dad will be searching with even greater diligence this year for elegant solutions to their gift problems that leave some change from their old devaluated pounds.' *Ibid.*
- ^{lxvi} R. Clark 'Letter to the Editor', *Craftwork – Scotland's Craft Magazine*, no. 11, spring 1975 p. 3.
- ^{lxvii} D. Pirnie, *Designer Craftsmen in The Highlands and Islands – Proposal for Development*, March 1974, Highlands and Islands Development Board, CR 1974/23, p. 1.
- ^{lxviii} Harrod, op.cit., p. 369.
- ^{lxix} 'Ian Clarkson – Man of Silver', *Craftwork – Scotland's Free Distribution Arts and Crafts Guide*, May-June 1978, no. 23. p. 1.