

BUNDANOON IS *BRIGADOON*: IMAGINATION AND INVENTION IN A MODERN SCOTTISH FESTIVAL

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*INTRODUCTION*¹

The annual celebration of Scottish culture and identity, *Brigadoon*, which has transformed the small town of Bundanoon in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales on the first Saturday of April since 1978, marked its fortieth anniversary in 2018. In the 2016 Australian Census 9.3% of Australians self-reported as having Scottish ancestry, the third largest ethnic group after the English and Irish.² It is thus unsurprising that there are localities and towns that reflect high levels of Scottish settlement and host Scottish festivals that recognise local heritage and contemporary population demographics. One example is Glen Innes, a country town in the Northern Tablelands of the New England region of New South Wales. Glen Innes has approximately nine thousand residents and an economy dependent on agriculture, sheep, wool, cattle, viticulture, sapphire mining, and tourism. Since 1992 Glen Innes has hosted the Australian Celtic Festival at the start of May. The Australian Celtic Festival is:

the premier Celtic event in New South Wales ... [and] is the only Celtic themed festival in Australia to recognise different Celtic Nations each year ... Each year up to twenty different Clans and representatives from the six Celtic Nations [Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Brittany, Cornwall and the Isle of Man] turn out in force to hold their annual ceremonies and spectacles.³

The town is also the home of the Australian Standing Stones, a stone circle conceived by the President of the Australian Celtic Council, Peter Alexander, in 1988, the bicentenary year of British settlement in Australia. With the assistance of David Donnelley, the Mayor of Glen Innes, the Australian Standing Stones was opening in 1992, the occasion of the first Festival.

¹ My thanks are due to Francesco Nicoletti and Fiona Petterson, whose residence in Bundanoon has enabled me to enjoy *Brigadoon* in the company of friends, and also to Donald Barrett, with whom I attended the festival in 2017 and 2018 to conduct research for this article.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Cultural Diversity in Australia', *Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia – Stories from the Census, 2016*, 28 June 2017. At: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/2071.0~2016~Main%20Features~Cultural%20Diversity%20Data%20Summary~30>. Accessed 13 January 2019.

³ 'Australian Celtic Festival: 2019 Year of Scotland', *Glen Innes Highlands*, 2019. At: <https://www.gleninneshighlands.com/event/australian-celtic-festival/>. Accessed 13 January 2019.

This monument is a circle of twenty-four granite stones (each weighing about 17 tonnes), representing the hours of the day, which is variously described as being based on one of two Scottish stone circles: Callanish on the isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides; or the Ring of Brodgar on the Orkney mainland. Four stones outside the circle mark the cardinal directions; combined with a stone inside the circle, these represent the Southern Cross, the constellation on the Australian flag. Other aspects of the design are pan-Celtic: stones for Gaelic speaking Celts, Brythonic speaking Celts, and “all Australians”; a viewing platform called Tynwald Hill (named for the Manx Parliament); “the Gorsedd Stone, for the Cornish and Welsh, and the Ogham Stone, for the Irish.”⁴ Lastly, there is a wall built of stones from significant sites in the Celtic lands and a rock with a faux-Excalibur, the sword of the legendary King Arthur, embedded in it.⁵ The appropriateness of Glen Innes as the site for such a structure or the location of a Celtic festival is indubitable; its Celtic, specifically Scottish, credentials are impeccable. The same cannot be said of Bundanoon, the home of *Brigadoon*.



Figure 1: The Australian Standing Stones, Glen Innes, photographed by Michael Usher and reproduced with permission.

⁴ John Connell and Barbara Rugendyke, ‘Creating an Authentic Tourist Site? The Australian Standing Stones, Glen Innes’, *Australian Geographer*, 41, No. 1 (2010), p. 93.

⁵ Carole M. Cusack, ‘“Celticity” in Australian Alternative Spiritualities’, in Olivia Cosgrove, Laurence Cox, Carmen Kuhling and Peter Mulholland (eds), *Ireland’s New Religious Movements* (Newcastle on Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), p. 293.

This article investigates ‘Bundanoon is *Brigadoon*’ as a triumph of the imagination; a festival that transforms a small, obscure Australian country town into a ‘pretend’ Scottish Highland village for a day, using the script of Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe’s stage musical *Brigadoon*, which premiered in 1947. The musical was made into a successful Hollywood film, directed by Vincente Minnelli, starring Gene Kelly and Cyd Charisse as the lovers Tommy Albright and Fiona Campbell, and Van Johnson as Tommy’s cynical best friend Jeff Douglas. The conceit of the plot is that *Brigadoon* is a village under a spell that means it appears only for a day every hundred years; Tommy and Jeff, American hunters, stumble upon it accidentally while travelling in the Highlands, and Tommy falls in love with Fiona. The set pieces include the market in MacConnachy Square, the wedding of Fiona’s sister Jean to Charlie Dalrymple, and the funeral of Jean’s spurned suitor Harry Beaton.⁶ *Brigadoon* was a popular success: as Arianne Johnson Quinn notes, the plot “contained just enough realism combined with fantasy that audiences were able to interpret the work as being ‘Scottish’ ... [It] makes no attempt to represent a historically grounded portrait of Scottish culture, but rather presents a cluster of generic Scottish elements.”⁷ *Brigadoon*, as a musical work of art, is a frothy confection of ‘Scottish’ elements that combine in a charming and whimsical story, in which historical fact plays little or no part.

Likewise, *Brigadoon*, as a modern festival directed toward the transformation of an attractive small town with around three thousand residents that was in danger of being left behind “as a place of relaxation for stressed city folk,” is an imaginative triumph, in which the lack of any historical or demographic link to Scotland, Scots, or even Scottish-Australians has been overcome in the creation of a vibrant and successful ‘ethnic’ gathering.⁸ The links between the Bundanoon festival and Lerner and Loewe’s story are multi-layered and complex, going far beyond the appropriation of a name. The story that Lerner and Loewe set in Scotland was not in fact Scottish folklore but rather a German tale,⁹ for example, just as Bundanoon’s Indigenous and settler past is erased in favour of a fantasy Scottish identity. Further, the Scotland represented in the musical score and staging of *Brigadoon* is not the land of history, but rather the ‘invented’ country of Sir Walter Scott and the nineteenth century ‘customs’ of clan tartans, kilts, Highland games, and other quaint and romantic anti-modern cultural phenomena.¹⁰

⁶ Jennifer Oates, ‘*Brigadoon*: Lerner and Loewe’s Scotland’, *Studies in Musical Theatre*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2009), p. 92.

⁷ Arianne Johnson Quinn, ‘“There but for you go I”: Interpreting the signifying world of Lerner and Loewe’s *Brigadoon*’, *Studies in Musical Theatre*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2016), p. 336.

⁸ B. Ruting and J. Li, ‘Tartans, Kilts and Bagpipes: Cultural Identity and Community Creation at the Bundanoon is *Brigadoon* Scottish Festival’, in Chris Gibson and John Connell (eds), *Revitalising Rural Australia* (Bristol and Tonawanda, NY: Channel View Publications, 2011), p. 265.

⁹ John T. Krumpelmann, ‘Gerstaecker’s “Germelshausen” and Lerner’s “Brigadoon”’, *Monatshefte*, Vol. 40, No. 7 (1948), pp. 396-400.

¹⁰ Hugh Trevor-Roper, ‘The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland’, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 29-30.

Finally, the idea of Brigadoon as a mystical location that manifests in the New South Wales Southern Highlands once per year (in the manner of Lerner and Loewe's village manifesting one day every century), and which casts an enchanting spell over visitors who come to Bundanoon with an attitude of love and a desire to participate in the community that temporarily exists there, is a marvellous marketing success in the late twentieth and early twentieth centuries which merits further research.

BRIGADOON AND THE INVENTION OF A 'SCOTTISH' MUSICAL AND FILM

The 1940s was a particularly rich decade for musical theatre, which reached new heights with the partnership of Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960), generally credited with shifting the musical from airy nonsense to a more serious register with their first effort, *Oklahoma!* (1943). The musical form was new; in earlier examples the songs interrupted the action, whereas in *Oklahoma!* they contributed to it; and the story, which contrasted the intense love triangle of headstrong heroine Laurey, Curly the conventional hero, and menacing 'bad guy' Jud Fry, with the secondary romance of Ado Annie and Will, was unlike any before.¹¹



Figure 2: Bundanoon Railway Station displaying the *Brigadoon* sign, 2017 photographed by Donald Barrett and reproduced with permission.

¹¹ Ethan Mordden, *Beautiful Mornin': The Broadway Musical in the 1940s* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 73-75.

Carousel (1945) continued their distinctive mix of comedy, sentiment, and darkly-themed realism. *Carousel*, adapted from Hungarian Ferenc Molnár's *Liliom* (1909), tells of the redemption of carnival barker, thief and sometime violent husband Billy, a suicide who gains entry to Heaven through assisting his daughter Louise to find her way in life.¹² Rodgers and Hammerstein had a continued run of success in the 1940s (and after) with the film *State Fair* (1945) and *South Pacific* (1949), which featured themes of race, sexual expectations, and war.

In contrast to this strand of realism in musical theatre, Alan Jay Lerner (1918-1986) and Frederick (Fritz) Loewe (1901-1988) composed works that were in the main light and bright, often intensifying the romantic elements of source texts and diminishing darker themes. This tendency is evident in *My Fair Lady* (1956), in which the relationship between Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins is portrayed as romantic, whereas in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* (1913) it is implied she marries Freddy. Similarly, the film *Gigi* (1958) expurgated Colette's novella about a young girl being trained to be a prostitute, and *Camelot* (1960) reduced the pain of the Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot love triangle from the source text, T. H. White's *The Once and Future King* (1958).¹³ *Brigadoon* is a light, fantastical tale, but the underlying theme of "a romantic who is searching, and a cynic who has given up" has particular power for alienated modern society.¹⁴ Despite Lerner's assertions that the plot was original or owed a possible debt to J. M. Barrie, *Brigadoon* is based on German author Wilhelm Gerstaecker's "Germelshausen" (1862), a short story in which the artist Arnold meets Gertrud and spends a day with her in Germelshausen, a pretty village where he experiences, among other things, dancing and a funeral procession. They walk together to the cemetery, where Gertrud grieves at her mother's grave and Arnold notices that Gertrud's mother died in 1224, a date carved on her tombstone. That evening Gertrud perceives that Arnold misses his mother; she promises to meet him at midnight so they can leave Germelshausen together. She never shows up, and the next morning an old man tells Arnold that "such a village once stood centuries ago in that nearby swamp, but was cursed and sank beneath the earth, supposed to reappear just one day every hundred years."¹⁵

Lerner and Loewe's choice of Scotland over Germany was understandable in the post-War context, and Loewe's music employed Scottish folk motifs while adhering to compositional forebears that he especially admired, including Johannes Brahms and Edvard Grieg. The historical setting was moved to 1746, the year of the Jacobite defeat

¹² Mordden, *Beautiful Mornin'*, pp. 85-89.

¹³ Alan Lupack, 'The Once and Future King: The Book that Grows Up', *Arthuriana*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2001), pp. 103-114.

¹⁴ Richard C. Norton, 'The Origins of Lerner and Loewe's *Brigadoon*', *Operetta Research Centre: The #1 Archive for Musical Theater*, 30 August (2015). At: <http://operetta-research-center.org/origins-lerner-loewes-brigadoon/>. Accessed 13 January 2019.

¹⁵ Norton, 'The Origins of Lerner and Loewe's *Brigadoon*'.

at Culloden (which is not mentioned) for the origin of the spell over Brigadoon, which is presented as a pact with God by the minister of the village, to protect its citizens against witches and witchcraft. The action of Tommy and Jeff's visit to the village is dated 1946, two hundred years after the 'first day' when the spell originated, and thus the 'third day' of Brigadoon's new enchanted reality. The musical theatre template of a primary romance (Tommy and Fiona) is here balanced by the secondary (failed) romance (between forthright local lass Meg and a reluctant Jeff), and the dramatic subplot (Harry's jealousy of Charlie's marriage to Jean, which leads him to attempt to leave which will break the spell, causing Brigadoon and its inhabitants to disappear). Ethan Mordden notes that *Brigadoon* is innovative as a musical:

Tommy and Fiona are a romantic operetta duo, but Jeff is a non-singing comic and Meg a belt soubrette. Charlie only sings and Jean and Harry only dance. There is also Mr Lundie, the village schoolmaster, and Jane, Tommy's fiancée back in New York, both speaking roles only. Just four singers and the chorus for the entire score?¹⁶

Elements that now seem kitsch or clichéd were in 1954 perceived as charming and authentic: choreographer Agnes de Mille (1905-1993), for example, melded Scottish elements with ballet and modern dance. These included: the sword dance led by Harry; the wedding dance; and the funeral dance by Maggie, an expression of mourning for the dead Harry, her unrequited love, to a traditional tune accompanied by the bagpipes.¹⁷



Figure 3: The Brig o' Doon, Ayrshire, Scotland, reproduced under Wikimedia Commons.

¹⁶ Mordden, *Beautiful Mornin'*, p. 171.

¹⁷ Kara Anne Gardner, *Agnes de Mille: Telling Stories in Broadway Dance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 122, 127-128, 130.

Vincente Minnelli's adaptation¹⁸ intensified the sense of *faux* Scottishness and mystic feyness (including a strong thread of anti-modern escapism) of the stage show, evident in the name Brigadoon, which recalled "the bridge ('brig') over the river Doon in south-west Scotland near where Robert Burns lived."¹⁹ The design of the bridge that separates the village from the rest of the world is copied from the real Brig o'Doon. Due to limited funds the film was shot entirely on the MGM soundstages in Culver City, California. The painted backdrops of the Highlands as a misty, olde-worlde environment enhanced songs that used Scottish rhythms and melodic elements like "Down on McConnachy Square" and "I'll Go Home to Bonnie Jean", which were sung by the chorus, and situated the more 'American' songs sung by Tommy and Fiona, such as "The Heather on the Hill," "Almost Like Being in Love," and "From This Day On" differently.²⁰ The film's closing sequence sees Tommy's faith in his love for Fiona falter after the funeral, and he returns to New York with Jeff, where his reunion with his fiancée Jane convinces him that he cannot marry her, and that his love for Fiona (whom he believes is lost to him) is genuine. At the end of "Germelshausen" Arnold is alone and bereft as Gertrud is gone, but Tommy returns with Jeff to the site of Brigadoon, and in a romantic twist is greeted by Mr Lundie, the dominie (schoolmaster), who tells him that "love makes all things possible, even miracles, and leads him off, evidently to be reunited with Fiona, in Brigadoon."²¹ A romantic, searching modern American man can, through willingness to forego modernity and embrace the traditional lifestyle of an 'unreal' community, defy the magical conditions of the spell and find true love.

BUNDANOON: INDIGENOUS, SETTLER AND NOW 'SCOTTISH'

Bundanoon is situated at the northern edge of the Morton National Park, and its local tourist attractions include beautiful gullies, the Bundanoon Creek, and the Glow Worm Glen in the Morvern Valley. The Indigenous inhabitants of the region were the Gundungurra people, whose "country stretch over thousands of square kilometres, from the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, beyond Goulburn in the south, to Wallerawang in the north, and Warragamba, Camden and Bundanoon in the east."²² Other Indigenous tribes which traversed Gundungurra territory included the Dharawal from the north, and the Wodi Wodi from the coastal area. It is difficult to estimate Indigenous population numbers in Bundanoon in the early nineteenth century, but it has been

¹⁸ Vincente Minnelli (dir.), *Brigadoon* (Culver City, CA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1954).

¹⁹ Oates, 'Brigadoon: Lerner and Loewe's Scotland', p. 92.

²⁰ Quinn, ' "There but for you go I": Interpreting the world of Lerner and Loewe's *Brigadoon*', p. 338.

²¹ Krumpelmann, 'Gerstaecker's "Germelshausen" and Lerner's "Brigadoon"', p. 399.

²² Bundanoon History Group, *A Place of Deep Gullies: The History of Bundanoon* (Bundanoon: Bundanoon History Group, 2015), p. 5.

speculated that there were hundreds if not thousands of Gundungurra in the area. The Bong Bong clan were the hereditary custodians of the ritual lands. A White observer, Martin Lynch, reported that relations between Indigenous groups were not always cordial: in 1830 that the Battle of Fairy Meadow involved “up to a thousand warriors of the ‘Bong Bong tribe’ (Gundungarra) and Wodi Wodi people ...[and] fierce fighting ... resulted in the deaths of between 70 and 100 men.”²³ White settlers impacted the area from at least 1816 when a significant number of Dharawal people were massacred, and Whites in greater numbers disrupted the traditional lifestyle of Indigenous peoples dramatically. By the mid-nineteenth century their numbers had fallen drastically; the archaeological record of their occupation is especially rich in the Southern Highlands.

The origins of the White town of Bundanoon, a name that means “a place of deep gullies,” were inextricably linked to the construction of the Sydney to Goulburn railway which was completed to Bundanoon in 1868. The first settlement in 1861 was called Jumping Rock, and the general location gained the less than attractive name the ‘Barren Ground’. Some labourers working on the line remained in the area and settled at what was known as Jordan’s Crossing when the station was built in 1875. In 1881 the hamlet’s name was changed to Bundanoon, and amenities including Samuel Tooth’s refreshment rooms and George Osborn’s store were opened in that decade, with a post office being established in 1899.²⁴ Sited 2205 feet above sea level, the air in Bundanoon was crisp and clean, and the local water clear and cold. The railway ensured that visitors from Sydney enjoyed the countryside of the Southern Highlands, and the 1920s and 1930s were the height of the tourist boom. Bundanoon was not as visited as larger towns like Mittagong and Bowral, which also had the advantage of being closer to Sydney, but in the 1920s there were around sixty guesthouses and visitor accommodations there, testifying to its popularity.²⁵

In the mid-twentieth century the Southern Highlands as a resort lost favour, and this economic and population downturn was one of the motivating factors for the creation of the *Brigadoon* festival. A local history publication describes “four major annual events” that the town hosts: the one-day *Brigadoon* in April, the ten-day *Winterfest* mid-year; the *Garden Ramble* in October; and the mountain bike race called the Highland Fling in November.²⁶

²³ Philip Morton, ‘Highlands History: Indigenous Peoples Once Thrived in the District’, *Southern Highlands News*, 9 February (2015). At: <https://www.southernhighlandnews.com.au/story/2868745/indigenous-peoples-once-thrived-in-wingecarribee-district/>. Accessed 13 January 2019.

²⁴ Bundanoon History Group, *A Place of Deep Gullies*, p. 30.

²⁵ Anon, ‘Bundanoon: Established 1861’, *The Southern Highlands of NSW*, 12 August (2000). At: https://www.highlandsnsw.com.au/past_present/bundanoon_history.html. Accessed 13 January 2019.

²⁶ Bundanoon History Group, *A Place of Deep Gullies*, pp. 106-108.



Figure 4: Glow Worm Glen, Bundanoon, reproduced under Wikimedia Commons.

The first occurrence of “Bundanoon is *Brigadoon*” was on 21 October 1978, after planning had commenced on 20 March of that year under the leadership of Garry and Nerida Barnsley, who assembled a group of volunteers to assist them to realise the event. A pictorial record published on the fortieth anniversary of *Brigadoon* in 2018 contained a welcome from Pru Goward, the New South Wales Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister for Social Housing, and the local Member of Parliament for Goulburn. Goward’s address restated a romantic origin for the festival:

No doubt it was Bundanoon’s deep mists, green hills and immoderate climate which prompted the originators of this annual event to even dare to think that a celebration of Scottish heritage and culture would be suited to this tiny town, hidden in the depths of the Southern Highlands, so long ago.

Bundanoon is *Brigadoon* started in 1978 with six pipe bands, a handful of food stalls, and a ... group of devoted Scottish enthusiasts ... residents of Bundanoon have been able to claim their own tartan since 1999, so significant is this event to the promotion of Scottish culture and history.

Bundanoon is *Brigadoon* is not just a display of dancing and music ... spectacular as they are; it is truly a Gathering of the Clans, the diaspora of Scottish people. Genealogy displays, clan tartans and meetings are part of the day, as is the warm embrace of Robbie Burns. The Chieftain of the

Day, always a man or woman of Scottish descent, is an important moment for a pre-eminent Scot, or Scottish Australian, to command the dais and receive the assembled massed pipes and drums.

We have much to thank the countless numbers of organisers, committee members and Bundanoon community members for their commitment over the years ...without these people, so many nameless, and their love of Scotland, our history and understanding of ourselves as Australians would be so much poorer.

Finally, our gratitude should also go to Alastair Saunders and Corinne Dany for this very fine history of an event, but an event which has ensured the preservation of one of Australia's finest and oldest cultural strands. Undoubtedly that which is not written down is easily forgotten; thank you for ensuring the legacy of Bundanoon is *Brigadoon* will never be forgotten.²⁷

Goward, a member of the Liberal-National Coalition, valorises the British origins of White settlement in Australia. While not committing the historical error of treating *Brigadoon* as an ancient gathering or historically venerable tradition, she posits that Scottishness is a crucial element of twenty-first century Australian identity, and suggests that love and enthusiasm (recalling Tommy's miraculous 'waking up' of Mr Lundie and, by extension, the village, granting him the love of Fiona and a future with her, paradoxically in the past) are sufficient to underpin such a cultural event. From this perspective, Indigenous history in the Southern Highlands, and non-Scottish White settlers are both erased in favour of a 'manufactured' Scottish identity. The next part of this article discusses the programme of events at *Brigadoon* and the responses of attendees to questions of identity and entertainment, community and heritage, elicited in the only study of the event, the results of which were published in 2011.²⁸

ATTENDANCE AT BUNDANOON IS BRIGADOON

Each year the programme for *Brigadoon* showcases traditional 'Scottish' phenomena, including a parade of massed pipe bands from the local area, and around Australia, through the streets of the town before arriving at the Bundanoon Oval, the site of the event, for the official welcome. Highland dancing, Scottish country dancing, wearing of kilts and folk costumes, the Gathering of the Clans, a 'Bonnie Bairns' competition,

²⁷ Alastair Saunders (ed.) and Corinne Dany (des.), *Brigadoon 40th Bundanoon Highland Gathering: A Pictorial History of the First 40 Years* (Bundanoon: Bundanoon Highland Gathering Committee, 2016), p. 6.

²⁸ B. Ruting and J. Li, 'Tartans, kilts and bagpipes: Cultural identity and community creation at the Bundanoon is Brigadoon Scottish Festival', in Chris Gibson and John Connell (eds), *Festival Places: Revitalising Rural Australia* (Bristol and Tonawanda, NY: Channel View Publications, 2011), pp. 256-279.

and historical re-enactments feature, as do dog obedience trials, singers and bands, and a range of games such as egg-tossing and hay-tossing. An array of retail outlets selling food and a range of souvenir goods do a steady trade throughout the day.²⁹ A particular highlight, the Highland Games or ‘heavy events’, includes caber tossing, hammer throwing, stone putt, the 25 kilogram weight for height throw, and the 13 kilogram weight throw³⁰ and the unique test of lifting the “Stones of Manhood” or the Bundanoon Stones, which are “modelled on the McGlashen Stones from Scotland” and “consist of a set of five round stones ranging from 90 kgs to 165 kgs in weight.”³¹ The 2017 programme accepts that the McGlashen Stones are themselves a modern tradition, also dating from the late 1970s; what is undeniable is the sheer theatre of the ‘Tartan Warriors’, as the contestants are known, straining to lift the five stones, placed five metres apart, and to place each one atop a four-metre high wooden barrel.³²

Fieldwork at Bundanoon is *Brigadoon* was conducted by Brad Ruting and Jen Li of the School of Geosciences at the University of Sydney in 2006, 2007 and 2008. This research was driven by a desire to identify key factors in the revitalisation of rural Australian towns, and the recognition that “[a]n estimated 35 million people of Scottish ancestry live outside Scotland, more than seven times the population of Scotland itself,” making ‘Scottishness’ a marketable quantity in British colonial nations like Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada.³³ Attendance at Brigadoon has fluctuated between ten and fourteen thousand since the year 2000: Ruting and Li supply useful data about the number of volunteers (around three hundred donating two to three thousand hours’ labour), the festival’s non-profit status, and the main sources of income and expenditure (respectively entry and stallholder fees and corporate sponsorships, and tent hire and public liability insurance).³⁴ It is demonstrated that Brigadoon is significant in the creation of local identity for residents of Bundanoon (despite the fact that some deliberately stay away, decrying the crowds and the takeover of their village by outsiders), acting as a type of ‘social capital’ or shared reality that acts to solidify social bonds. This perceived ‘Scottish’ identity is important for visitors, too, as it reinforces the attraction of *Brigadoon* as an ‘authentic’ event to participate in or even to witness as a bystander.

Scottish festivals are popular in many British Commonwealth countries, and Scotland itself has entered into the business of invented traditions to attract tourists in large numbers, as Karalee Dawn Mackay’s research at the 2009 Gathering in

²⁹ Saunders and Dany, *Brigadoon 40th Bundanoon Highland Gathering*.

³⁰ Anon, *Bundanoon is Brigadoon: 41st Anniversary Highland Gathering* (Bundanoon: Bundanoon Highland Gathering Committee, 2016), passim.

³¹ Anon, *Bundanoon is Brigadoon: 41st Anniversary Highland Gathering*, p. 6.

³² Anon, *Bundanoon is Brigadoon: 41st Anniversary Highland Gathering*, p. 6.

³³ Ruting and Li, ‘Tartans, kilts and bagpipes’, p. 266.

³⁴ Ruting and Li, ‘Tartans, kilts and bagpipes’, p. 267.

Edinburgh, which ran from 24-26 July, and attracted “more than forty-seven thousand people from over forty countries.”³⁵ This festival features a parade of pipe bands and different clans that marched from Holyrood Palace to Edinburgh Castle, a celebration of Scottish immigrants on the parade ground in front of Edinburgh Castle, and a programme of Highland Games in Holyrood Park. The Gathering was a one-off event organised by Event Scotland and Visit Scotland for the Scottish government and was timed for the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns (1759-1796). It was partly funded by the European Regional Development Fund, and themes of ancestry, homecoming and identity were pervasive. Jeremy Boissevain argues that:

[t]he revival of public celebrations also marks a renegotiation of identity and a related realignment of boundaries. By eating, dancing, singing, clowning, and drinking together, a ‘we’ group defines itself vis-à-vis a ‘they’ group. Cohen has suggested that symbolic action in the form of ritual takes place to strengthen social identity and group solidarity when community boundaries and identities are blurred or undermined.³⁶

Mackay’s interviewees, many of whom were Australian, spoke of coming ‘home’ to a place they had never visited before, and of the vital importance of blood kinship with ancestors. The same sentiments are found among Scottish-Americans in the United States.³⁷ While this ancestral pride may function as a positive factor in the crafting of individual and community identities, it may also be linked in subtle (or not so subtle) ways to nationalism and (White) racism.³⁸ This theme, is however, muted or non-existent in research on attendees at Scottish festivals to date.

Ruting and Li observed that almost all interviewees at *Brigadoon* were at most partly Scottish and identified as Scottish-Australian. Very few were born in Scotland or had close relatives there. However, when questioned attendees offered comments like: “It’s back to the way things used to be in Scotland ... Just people having a good day”; “If you’ve got a family history that you can look to ... if you see yourself as part of this unbroken line, it does give you this sense of ‘who I am’, this sense of self-worth”; and “Bagpipes are very emotional ... The sound sends shivers up the back of your spine.”³⁹

³⁵ Karalee Dawn Mackay, ‘Tartans, Kilts and Clans on Tour: Exploring Issues of Mobility, Heritage and Cultural Homecomings at The Gathering 2009’, in Jennifer Erica Sweda (ed.), *Exploring Travel and Tourism: Essays on Journeys and Destinations* (Newcastle on Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp. 207-222.

³⁶ Jeremy Boissevain, ‘Introduction: Revitalizing European Rituals’, in Jeremy Boissevain (ed.) *Revitalizing European Rituals* (Routledge: London and New York, 1992), p. 11.

³⁷ Murray Stewart Leith and Duncan Sim, ‘Scottish Clan Identities in America: Symbolic or Real?’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 14, pp. 2564-2582.

³⁸ Tom Gordon, ‘Scottish “Myth-Making” Hides Country’s Racist Problem’, *Herald Scotland*, 8 May (2018). At: <https://www.heraldsotland.com/news/16210194.scottish-myth-making-hides-countrys-racism-problem/>. Accessed 18 January 2019.

³⁹ Ruting and Li, ‘Tartans, kilts and bagpipes’, pp. 270-272, 2 and 76.

Scottishness in the case of *Brigadoon* might involve separation from the dominant White English narrative of colonialism in Australia, and the nostalgia experienced by attendees might be more for their own childhood than for a remembered or imagined Scotland. The majority of Ruting and Li's informants had positive experiences at *Brigadoon*, but traces of the White racist narrative, presented within the frame of cultural authenticity, are there:

some elements of the festival were seen as detrimental to the Scottish authenticity of the event by a handful of visitors. These included 'ethnic' foods (stands serving Chinese and Turkish cuisines), a significant number of stalls selling no or few Scottish items, and a sense that as the festival had grown it was compromised by needing to attract sponsorship.⁴⁰

It is also important to note that other interviewees were not particularly concerned with the historical or cultural accuracy of the activities they witnessed; rather entertainment was what they sought. This view is found even in publications such as the Clan MacNeil Newsletter, which describes *Brigadoon* as "a fantastic family day in the NSW Southern Highlands."⁴¹

CONCLUSION

Bundanoon is *Brigadoon* is a notably successful example of an invented tradition that has attracted widespread participation and economic success, and which over more than forty years has acquired an aura of authenticity that is strongly attractive to locals and attendees alike. The choice of the theme of *Brigadoon*, which is euphonious in combination with the town name of 'Bundanoon', is inspired in many ways. Lerner and Loewe's fantasy musical (and Minnelli's whimsical and charming film), with its motif of a village that appears for a day every hundred years, offers a model for the festival, in which an ordinary Australian small town with no historical or demographic connection to Scotland or Scottish culture takes on a Scottish identity for one day per year. The event constructs Scottishness through historically questionable invented nineteenth century tropes, such as clans, tartans, and Highland Games, which are also influenced by contemporary popular culture representations including *Braveheart* (1995), the film about Scottish rebel leader William Wallace by (American-)Australian actor-director Mel Gibson, and the immensely popular television series *Outlander* (2014-2018 ongoing), based on Diana Gabaldon's epic series of time-travel novels.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ruting and Li, 'Tartans, kilts and bagpipes', pp. 276-277.

⁴¹ John MacNeil, *Clan MacNeil Association of Australia Newsletter*, December (2014), p. 5.

⁴² Colin McArthur, *Brigadoon, Braveheart and the Scots: Distortions of Scotland in Hollywood Cinema* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2003).

Brigadoon is a festival that presents multiple views of Scottishness, in which those who are committed to the performance of ancestral culture (members of clan societies, representatives of Scottish community associations, and so on) are outnumbered, yet positively supported, by a much larger group with attenuated connections to Scotland or no Scottish links at all. These supporters enjoy the shortbread and whiskey, tartans and pipe bands, without any deep commitment resulting.⁴³ The colourful Highland village is created in Bundanoon once a year, signalled by the change of the railway station sign, in the manner of Lerner and Loewe's *Brigadoon*. In that love story Tommy, a modern American man, abandons 'reality' for the love of Fiona, a woman who may be imaginary, in a supreme act of the imagination. He feels his way to a new reality and a transformed identity. In Bundanoon is *Brigadoon*, as Ruting and Li note at the close of their study, "one does not have to be Scottish to feel Scottish, if only fleetingly."⁴⁴ Visitors to this community festival in the Southern Highlands take part in an enchanted performance of Scottishness, in a fantasy village superimposed over an ordinary rural Australian town, for one day each year.

⁴³ Daniel P. J. Soule, Murray S. Leith, and Martin Stevenson, 'Scottish Devolution and National Identity', *National Identities*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2012), p. 6.

⁴⁴ Ruting and Li, 'Tartans, kilts and bagpipes', p. 279.