The popularity paradox: issues of safeguarding mob football games in the East Midlands of England

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ABSTRACT: Many discussions on the safeguarding of ICH have focused on the risk of intangible cultural heritage elements disappearing because of the lack of tradition-bearers to transmit them. The 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage speaks of 'revitalization' as a potential way of safeguarding aspects of such heritage, but what of those ICH practices which are paradoxically at risk of disappearing because they are too popular? Many traditions which were small localised practices are now increasingly seeing an influx of visitors, as awareness of them has spread on social media and the internet. Two such examples can be seen in the East Midlands of England, both mob or mass football games which can still be found in pockets of rural communities across the country. These folk games can be distinguished from the modern game by their involvement of entire village populations, often thousands of people, the range of play over huge areas and apparent lack of rules. Through interviews and non-participant observation, gathered over the course of two years, I show how the Shrovetide football in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, and the Hallaton Hare Pie Scramble and Bottle Kicking in Leicestershire are at risk, not because of insufficient local participation, but due to new challenges and pressures felt from the growing numbers of spectators. With increased popularity comes added costs of insurance, security, and health and safety measures, and organisers of these ICH practices are having to find ways to safeguard the events for the local communities for whom the football games are so important.

1 INTRODUCTION

In England, there are hundreds of festivals, customs and traditions which continue to be meaningful within their communities. Whilst there are many which have not stood the test of time and have faded from memory, those "with deeper roots have hung on tenaciously. Adapting to changing circumstances and perhaps generating wider interest, some like that at Hallaton have survived and even flourished into the 21st century" (Morison and Daisley 2000b:187). The Hallaton custom in question is the Hallaton Hare Pie Scramble and Bottle Kicking, located in rural Leicestershire, England. Together with the Royal Ashbourne Shrovetide game in Derbyshire, they represent two examples of folk football, forms of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), which have continued to be played with minimal changes, centuries after their hazy origins. UNESCO describes these expressions of ICH as "social practices, rituals and festive events [which] are habitual activities that structure the lives of communities and groups and that are shared by and relevant to many of their members" (UNESCO 2012b). This paper seeks to discover how these two folk football games have persevered and asks if their continued survival is becoming more precarious because they are paradoxically too popular? Many traditions which were small localised practices are now increasingly seeing an influx of visitors, as awareness of them has spread on social media and
the internet. The East Midlands games continue to be immensely popular with the local populace, but in recent times have come up against increasing legislative burden and insurance costs due to these changes. The research consisted of non-participant observation of the two games, in 2015 and 2016, firstly the Royal Ashbourne Shrovetide football on 17 February 2015 and 10 February 2016. The Hallaton Hare Pie Scramble and Bottle Kicking was observed on Easter Monday in 2015 and 2016, which fell on 6 April and 28 March respectively. The events were filmed and photographed and short informal interviews were given by local participants and spectators. After the events of 2016, semi-structured interviews were carried out with John Morison, Hallaton historian and Warrener, and Brell Ewart, Ashbourne Shrovetide Committee Chairman. These interviews helped to provide detailed insight into the organisation of the games.

2 HISTORY OF MOB OR FOLK FOOTBALL

“The term 'folk' can refer to any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is … but what is important is that a group formed for whatever reason will have some traditions which it calls its own” (Dundes, 1989: 11).

In this particular case, the focus is football, but not in the modern sense of association football or rugby with their formal codes, but a more communal game with much older roots, known as folk, mob or mass football. William FitzStephen, in his Description of London in 1174, makes the earliest reference to football in England. He says that “Yearly at Shrovetide … the entire youth of the city goes to the fields for the famous game of ball” (FitzStephen 1772). Although football wasn’t explicitly mentioned, the fact that it is at Shrovetide hints at the probability that this was a forebear of the folk football games of today.

Despite its apparent popularity, between 1314 and 1667, ‘football’ was banned on more than thirty occasions. As Dunning and Sheard suggest, these bans show how authorities were unable to suppress the game, as it would have been superfluous to repeat them (Dunning and Sheard 1979: 22). The first ban in question was by the mayor of London, who issued a proclamation on behalf of Edward II: “Forasmuch as there is great noise in the city caused by hustling over large balls, from which many evils may arise which God forbid; we command and forbid, on behalf of the king, on pain of imprisonment such game to be used in the city in future”. Edward III banned it again in 1349, to stop it distracting men from practising their archery skills which were needed for war (Shearman, 1887).

As well as its tendencies to distract men from their duties, there were also those who considered it too violent. Sir Thomas Elyot wrote in 1531 “Foote balle … is nothynge but beastely fury, and extreme violence …” (Elyot 1531; quoted in Marples 1954: 66). A similar sentiment led James I to say, “From this court I debarred al rough and violent exercises, as the foot-ball, meeter for lameing than making able the users thereof” (Strutt 1801: 94). The disorder of folk football did not abate, as evidenced by the comment of a Frenchman at the Derby game in 1829, "If this is what they call football, what do they call fighting?" (Walvin, 1986). However, though Hornby accepts that injuries were prevalent, he suggests that it is less about “violence and victimisation” and more about a “community at play, revelling in its own backyard” (Hornby 2008: 17).

Joseph Strutt, writing in 1801, commented that “football … was formerly much in vogue amongst the common people of England, though of late years it seems to have fallen into disrepute, and is but little practised” (Strutt 1801: 94). However, there continued to be pockets of resistance to change throughout the country and today there are still localities where folk football games are played. The subject has been of interest in recent years, with general accounts of the history of sports including football (Marples, 1954; Dunning and Sheard, 1979; Griffin, 2005) and accounts of folk football in Britain (Hornby and Inglis, 2008; Fournier, 2013). The two games in the East Midlands which this study focuses on are located in Ashbourne and Hallaton. Ashbourne is a small market town situated on the edge of the Peak District National Park in Derbyshire, and has a population of 8,377, and Hallaton, in south east Leicestershire has a population of 594 (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Studies which have
focused on these two traditions include (Gadsby, 1984; Porter, 2002; McCabe, 2006) on Ashbourne, and Morison and Daisley's two books on the Hallaton game (2000a; 2000b).

3 THE ASHBOURNE ROYAL SHRUVETIDE FOOTBALL GAME

In Ashbourne “the inhabitants of this corner of Derbyshire are a breed of immensely loyal folk, steeped in the traditions of their ancestors and determined to preserve them, if at all possible” (Gadsby 184: 3). Their tradition is the Royal Shrovetide Football Match, which is played annually on both Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday where the Up’ards take on the Down’ards. References to the Ashbourne game are sporadic before the mid 19th century, the earliest appeared in a poem of 1683 by Charles Cotton (Hornby and Inglis 2008). The game starts at 2pm at a location in the centre of Ashbourne known as Shaw Croft, where the ball is thrown or ‘turned up’, from a stone plinth by an invited dignitary. Once the game is under way, a ‘hug’ establishes itself, much like a scrum in rugby, with the large cork filled ball fought over in the middle. The goals are three miles apart, with the Up’ards goal at Sturston Mill and the Down’ards goal at Clifton Mill. Since both mills have been demolished, the current goals are custom built stone plinths. The ‘hug’ often finds itself in the shallow River Henmore. The players, knee deep in water, hustle for the ball before it is thrown clear and the 'hug' reforms in nearby fields or back in the town centre where it can remain in one place for some time, trapped against a wall. Thousands of spectators shout their support for their favoured team, and ready themselves for a quick getaway if the ball escapes the 'hug' and made its way back out into the open. Play lasts all afternoon and into the evening, though play must finish by 10pm. If the ball is goaled before 5pm, a new ball is 'turned up', and the scorer keeps the ball. If it is scored after 5pm, play ends for that day. For Lindsey Porter, who has written extensively on the Ashbourne Shrovetide game,

“It is as much a part of English history and our heritage as anything else. In fact, because heritage so rarely expresses itself through recreational human social behaviour over such a prolonged period and on such a large scale of involvement, its value is so important. This is no re-enactment; the game banned in Chester in 1540 was little different from Ashbourne in 2002. It is an astonishing survivor” (Porter, 2002: 195).

4 HALLATON HARE PIE SCRAMBLE AND BOTTLE KICKING

The Hallaton Hare Pie Scramble and Bottle Kicking occurs every Easter Monday, pitting two teams from the villages of Hallaton and nearby Medbourne. It is a tradition which is centuries old and steeped in myth. The Hare Pie Scramble element possibly has its origins in the story of two ladies who were chased by a bull as they crossed a field. Luckily a hare distracted the bull and the women escaped harm. In relief, the women donated the rents of the furlong known as Hare Crop Leys on the condition that the local rector provide annually two hare pies, two dozen penny loaves and a quantity of ale (Morison and Daisley 2000a: 25). Another theory is that Hare Pie Bank, a large hill where the game starts, may have been a sacred iron age stow where pagan spring or Eostre sacrifices were offered. The pie and ale rituals in the custom may have evolved from these practices.

As the name suggests, there are two elements to the custom, the first being a parade from the Fox Inn to the gates of St Michael & All Angels Church for the Hare Pie Scramble. A crowd of people follow the parade down the hill to the church, led by the costumed Warrener holding a bronze hare atop a pole, and the Bread Lady carrying a basket of Penny Loaves. The Hare Pie is then blessed by the local vicar before being cut up into pieces and thrown into the waiting crowd. The barrels are then paraded up to the Fox Inn to be decorated with ribbons, before a blessing at the buttercross on the village green.

Following the Hare Pie Scramble, the procession then heads up to Hare Pie Bank where more of the pie is thrown before the start of the bottle kicking contest. Despite the name, the bottles are small wooden kegs, two of which contain beer and the third is a dummy barrel made of solid
wood and painted. It is a best of three contest - the first barrel is thrown into the air three times, and on the third count players pile on top of the barrel and the game begins. The aim for each team is to take the bottle from Hare Pie Bank to the boundary stream of their own village, crossing fences and hedges along the way. There is very little kicking involved as the bottle may be carried, rolled, kicked or thrown. John Tailby of Slawston wrote to John Nichols in 1796, in which he gave an eye witness account of the event.

"As soon as the men with the sacks arrive at the Bank, the Pies and Ale are tumbled promiscuously out of the sacks into the hole in the centre, when a scene of noise and confusion takes place, and bloody noses and bruised fingers are often the consequence" (Morison and Daisley 2000a: 21).

There are no limits on the numbers who can play, or restrictions on who can take part. There is no referee, but similarly to the Ashbourne game, there is a sense of fair play and self-discipline which negates the need for any official control of play. "The start of the 21st century finds the ancient custom in rude good health attracting interest from home and abroad." (Morison and Daisley 2000b: 257). Equally, this is evident in Ashbourne, and explains in part why the two games have continued to be played over such long periods of time.

5 PAST ATTEMPTS TO STOP THE GAMES

There have, however, been attempts in the past to stop the games, especially in Ashbourne after a similar tradition in Derby was suppressed after an incident in 1846. In the 1860s there were attempts to prevent play in Ashbourne by the police. It was reported that,

"there was great manifestation of discontent against the notice from the Bench of Magistrates prohibiting the old custom of football playing on Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday in Ashbourne market place … Some rumours were afloat that no one would dare to throw up the ball, but these proved vain, as, with the usual daring of an English crowd, the people refused to abandon their sport for words alone, and so disobeyed the notice" (Derby Mercury, 1860).

Thirty years passed, and the playing of Shrovetide football did not abate. Police intervention was reported in March 1891;

"Considerable excitement was caused in the town on Saturday, when about 90 persons were summoned at the instance of the police, for playing football in the streets on Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday. A fine of 2s, 6d and 7s 6d costs was imposed. As the police left the Court a large crowd assembled in the street and hooted them lustily" (Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald, 1891).

This interference by the police failed to produce the desired effect, as it was reported in The Nottinghamshire Guardian that the proceedings from the previous year "has led to more interest and excitement being taken in the game than ever" (Nottinghamshire Guardian, 1892). According to Brell Ewart, the attempts to quell the Shrovetide game had the opposite effect. A fundraising committee was formed to pay the fines imposed upon the players. That committee then took over the organising of the game which exists to this day (Ewart, 2016).

After the attempted bans of the nineteenth century, the game carried on and has only stopped twice, both times due to foot and mouth disease, in 1968 and 2001. In Hallaton, the main threat came from the vicar of the parish, Reverend. C. J. Bewicke, who tried in 1789 to have the celebration stopped, believing the money the tradition needed could be put to better use. However, protests ensued and he was forced to relent after a message appeared on the church wall, saying "No Pie – No Parson!" (Morison and Daisley 2000a: 20). Since then the Hallaton Hare Scramble and Bottle Kicking has only been cancelled once, in 2001, due to the same foot and mouth disease outbreak which stopped Ashbourne Shrovetide. Two world wars have also unhindered the continuation of the games. According to Gadsby (1984: 3) many local
Ashburnians who were serving overseas wrote to ensure that the game continued, "it was they said, one of the things they were fighting for, part of the old traditional England". In Hallaton, during the First World War, the bottle kicking teams consisted entirely of women.

6 WHY THESE TRADITIONS HAVE SURVIVED

6.1 Community

The 2003 UNESCO Convention recognises the importance of communities in the safeguarding of intangible heritage. "Communities ... groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage" which is "transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity" (UNESCO 2003). This notion of community is an important reason for the survival of folk football. For Griffin, annual matches held a special place in the recreational calendar of the local communities, they were more than simple football matches, but annual festival days, providing entertainment and a holiday for both those who played them and for the much larger number of spectators (Griffin, 2005: 44). Harris (1995: 37) also explains that “This kind of football provided a particularly effective bonding mechanism … Its collaborative, communal structure reflected the social and economic organisation of the … villages …” Looking specifically at the Ashbourne and Hallaton games, strong community ties appear to be a factor for their continued success. McCabe states that the Ashbourne game leads to “… a sense of belonging, the ability to tell stories about events of previous years both in the build-up of the Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday games, and in telling stories after the game, help to establish a community knowledge that is often passed down from generation to generation” (McCabe, 2006: 116). Ashbourne secretary Mick Betteridge has commented that “… in a way it defines Ashbourne; it's part of Ashbourne's identity and because of that it has a huge cultural significance to Ashburnians” (Derby Telegraph, 2014). In Hallaton “though there is this wide interest, the Hare Pie Scrambling and Bottle Kicking is still very much a local affair. There are strong feelings of loyalty and commitment among the locals that outsiders may find difficult to understand” (Morison and Daisley, 2000a: 5).

6.2 Adaptability

This importance of community spirit does not, however, preclude a measure of adaptability and willingness to embrace newcomers in the Ashbourne and Hallaton games. Brell Ewart and John Morison admitted that their populations are in flux. Both are coincidently growing at the same rate – fifteen per cent from the 2001 census to 2011. In many respects, this is a positive development, ensuring the survival of schools and halting a trend of rural areas to have a disproportionate percentage of elderly residents. A growing population has its benefits, but with it comes the uncertainty of whether the newcomers will embrace the traditions. Brell Ewart understands this conundrum.

"If this game's going to continue then we need to promote it. Because in today's world a lot of new people come to live in Ashbourne. If you look at Ashbourne even fifty, sixty, seventy years ago, it was a community that was a bit isolated from Derby, Matlock, Wirksworth, and people tended to live and work in Ashbourne and so … generations of families supported Shrovetide. But today the town is growing significantly, we've got new estates popping up here there and everywhere so you are getting people coming from outside of town and people leaving. Are they going to support Shrovetide? Possibly not, hopefully so" (Ewart, 2016).

In 1908, an anonymous author, published in Hallatonian by F.C Hawke, observed that "A few futile attempts have been made by new-comers to Hallaton to abolish the custom … strangers
cannot be expected to feel the patriotism for this old custom as Hallatonians, who look upon it as their birthright. They have been born and bred into it..." (Morison and Daisley 2000b: 81). Morison and Daisley (2000b:66) accept that there is wide recognition that continuing adaptation has been crucial to the survival of the Hallaton custom. They note that "changes are inevitable", that there has been the introduction of new ideas to make it more accessible and public orientated, and that restored features from the past have been adapted to reflect current attitudes.

7 SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

7.1 Media attention

Despite the ability of both the Ashbourne and Hallaton games to be community driven and adapt to changing times, twenty first century pressures have emerged which threaten the continuity of both traditions. Specifically, the growth of social media has significantly changed how events are publicised and explains how knowledge of them has spread beyond the local area. Having an online presence can have positive outcomes, however, as Fournier (2013: 40) discusses in his study of violence in folk football, "it was necessary to go beyond the usual statements from the media, almost all of which suggesting that this game is an especially violent one". Whilst the internet has raised the profile of both football games, the manner in which they have been reported both online and in print media has been contentious for the organisers, who lament the focus on the perceived violent elements of the games. Morison and Daisley (2000b: 44) comment that "the few times that Hallaton's custom makes the nationals ... are occasions when publicity is focussed on the undesirable rather than the fun and proud tradition of Bottle Kicking. Good news of course, is not so newsworthy". Asked the same question regarding media attention, Brell Ewart's emphatic answer mirrors the opinions of those in charge of the Hallaton game.

"We don't like it, we resist it at all times. And we insist that we have editorial control. However, in law we can't stop them because it's filmed in a public place. But if they want the support of us, and for us to say something, then we demand editorial control, such that we don't get people saying silly things like "Anything Goes Except Murder". We don't want these soundbites. We want you to tell it how it is" (Ewart, 2016).

A selection of headlines such as "Murder against the rules. Is this the World's most violent sport?" (The Week 2014), "Battle Royal: Is This The World's Most Violent Football Match?" (Men's Health 2016) and "Bottle-kicking: the violent, beer-driven British tradition that draws thousands every year" (CBC Radio) show the direction in which many media outlets wish to draw attention. The reality, from watching both competitions, and from speaking to Brell Ewart and John Morison, is that in each game there is a high level of respect for fellow players and "a shared commitment to fair play." (Morison and Daisley 2000b:23). Whilst undoubtedly rough, the violence appears to be overplayed by the media. Equally though, as Fournier notes, (2015:48) "the promotion and organisation of the games are carefully regulated to avoid criticism and fears ... Although the practice of folk football is considered to be violent, its performers try to create a positive image for it in order for it not to be condemned".

Another effect of the proliferation of social media is the number of YouTube videos of the two events, 2260 on Ashbourne, and 556 on Hallaton, increasing awareness and prompting those curious to visit the customs to sate a desire to 'tick off' experiences linked with the recent internet trends of 'top ten' and 'bucket' lists. This coincides with a rise in publications about 'strange' and 'eccentric' British traditions and events, such as Wacky Nation (Bamber and Raynes, 2008), A Brit Different: A Guide to the Eccentric Events and Curious Contests of Britain (Didcock and Wood, 2010), and Eccentric Britain (Le Vay, 2011). The added publicity from the internet, newspapers, and other publications has led to an explosion in numbers visiting such customs as the Lewes bonfire celebrations, and the cheese rolling at Cooper's Hill, as well...
as increased numbers at the Ashbourne and Hallaton customs, putting strains on their future viability.

7.2 Funding and costs

One of these strains is the additional burdens associated with funding the traditions. Brell Ewart (2016) explained some of the problems associated with costs of the Ashbourne Shrovetide game.

"To stage the game the actual net cost is in excess of £10,000 a year. And it's going up every year. Every year I've been Chairman it's gone up. For example, for this year we had to provide all the marshals with a two-way radio system so we could communicate. Communication is very difficult and it's absolutely paramount that we can communicate, so we had to provide them with radios which of course is additional costs."

Funding comes from Ashbourne Town Council, approximately one or two thousand pounds, and the rest comes in small amounts from businesses, individuals and from a luncheon before the game which brings in a four-figure sum. Of equal importance is the 'in kind' support. According to Brell Ewart (2016),

"Derbyshire Dales District Council are an immense help. They provide car parking, they allow us to use the Leisure Centre for the luncheon, though we do pay for that, we pay the going rate. But other things like street cleaning, they do extra for the event. They do a lot of support work".

The District Council's clean and green team clean the streets, removing three tons of rubbish from Ashbourne's in the early hours after each day's play (Derbyshire Dales District Council 2016).

The Hallaton tradition costs at least £5000 to organise and much of the revenue comes from parking charges at the official car park and from volunteers collecting money in buckets. John Morison (2016) pointed out that the local pubs also help, and events are organised such as discos and band nights to help raise the money required.

With both games, local support is vital to repair any damage which could otherwise be extremely costly. Fences, walls or hedges are repaired as soon as possible, by in kind support from brick layers and gardeners, and contributions from companies for materials. Brell Ewart (2016) suggests that this is "very good for community spirit and it engenders the well-being of the game".

7.3 Insurance and legislative issues

One of the biggest threats comes from the strains of finding and paying for insurance. As Hornby and Inglis realise (2008: 181), "The world of Uppies and Downies can only survive if it remains free of the shackles of insurance, and does not invite the attention of health and safety inspectors. Otherwise, it could soon become swamped under a welter of regulations it can ill afford." This observation has been put to the test in both Ashbourne and Hallaton. In 2015, Ashbourne faced the possibility of having to cancel the event due to the inability to find an insurance company willing to take over the policy. The issue was only resolved with four days to spare.

Tied closely to the problems surrounding insurance is the increasing legislative burden from local councils which must adhere to health and safety laws. The Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and Other Events written by The Events Industry Forum provides practical health and safety assistance to those who organise large events and festivals, including crowd management, planning, communications and safety responsibilities. Brell Ewart (2016) explained how this effects the Ashbourne Shrovetide game. "We've not changed the game per se but we've changed the support functions quite dramatically. We now have a doctor on standby
all the time, we have first aid, we have to have traffic management, we have to have a PA system ... if the game is going to continue then we have to abide by the law.”

Similar issues have occurred in Hallaton. Daisley and Morison (2000b: 60) refer to the arrangements for the Hallaton custom as previously being solely a village matter where only the rector, local farmers, pub landlords, shopkeepers and clubs needed to be consulted. A Bottle Kicking Committee now liaises with the police and Harborough District Council. The Council provides forms and templates for Event Management, Risk Assessment, Volunteer Briefing, and Lost Child Procedure (Harborough District Council 2017). This has led to broadening concerns around the imposition of constraints from outside authorities involved in licensing laws, music and entertainment rules, traffic control, health and safety regulations and environment protection. As John Morison (2016) contends, "health and safety has crept in a bit ... they [Health and Safety Officer] did try to stop us on the field of play ..." Daisley and Morison (2000b: 60) also point out that the attendance of police and road closures are costly. They use an example where the committee was faced with financial impositions beyond the budget, threatening the event:

As committee chairman and event Master; Pinny Allan had to engage in some serious negotiations to avoid enormous bills. The breakthrough came when Pinny was able to quote the wonderfully titled Thronging and Merriment Act of the previous century. The problem was then circumvented by an agreement to a rolling closure in which roads are closed but only temporarily while the parade passes (Daisley and Morison 2000b: 60).

8 CONCLUSION

The reasons why the Royal Ashbourne football game and the Hallaton Hare Pie Scramble and Bottle Kicking have continued and flourished are numerous, many find meaning in the history, tradition, and continuity. The importance of strong community identity cannot be over emphasised, as Ashbourne’s Mick Betteridge voices, "Shrovetide is a tradition which defines us as a community ... without Shrovetide Ashbourne would be a poorer place. A great loss of tradition, heritage and an event of historic significance” (Ashbourne News Telegraph 2015). Winter and Keegan-Phipps talk of a patchwork of distinctive places, “England’s locally specific ... traditions ... rely on and reinforce a sense of the distinctiveness, the uniqueness, of places and local cultures” (Winter and Keegan-Phipps 2013:121). It is this very distinctiveness which has drawn people from far afield to watch the Ashbourne and Hallaton games. But it is also this increased enthusiasm which has created a paradox: the popularity of the two events has put additional pressures on the organisers. Event organisation is becoming increasingly complicated, bureaucratic and expensive, and with rising numbers of spectators comes management plans, risk assessments and insurance forms. Passion and enthusiasm is no longer the only requirement for committee members and volunteers. Local people involved in the preparation and implementation of the traditions need the necessary skills as more time is taken up with form filling, meetings with councils and researching new funding streams. It may become harder for the committees involved in the running of the traditions to recruit new members who are willing and able to commit so much of their free time to the cause. Whilst the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage concentrates on revitalising elements which are at risk of being lost because of a lack of tradition-bearers, there are other reasons, as shown here, why traditions can become endangered. Nations and organisations interested in safeguarding living heritages should be aware of this conundrum and be vigilant of it occurring in their own territories.

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