

**THE PERFORMANCE OF HERITAGE TOURISM SITES: COMMUNICATIVE
COMPETENCE IN TWO CORNISH TOURIST VILLAGES**

by © Emma Tennier-Stuart

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ABSTRACT

Much has been written about the role of various imaginings of authenticity in the study of heritage tourism. This thesis examines tourists' and locals' experiences of two villages in Cornwall, England as a comparative case study of the roles that the perception and performance of authenticity play in heritage tourism. Using Richard Bauman's work on performance theory in conjunction with Dean MacCannell's concept of "staged authenticity" and John Urry's concept of the "post-tourist," this thesis will show that heritage destinations are emergent, succeeding or failing based on locals' ability to perform these destinations to their visitors' satisfaction.

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Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Cornwall, the most south-westerly county in England, a land composed of ‘a heady concoction of Celtic Remains, Merlin’s Magic Land, tales of smugglers and wreckers, ruined tin mines, pasties, pixies and cream,’ as one writer critically, but aptly puts it (Bernard Deacon, in Kennedy & Kingcome 1998, 50). Cornwall is, indeed, many things to many people. It is all of the things listed above, and more besides: a place of surfing and family-friendly beaches, a modern art destination, one of the most economically depressed regions of Europe, home to an all-but-extinct Celtic language, and an English county with an undercurrent of fierce nationalism and a history of nonconformity, to name only a few more. Cornwall has always been a place of many identities, of miners and fishermen, staunch Catholics and staunch Methodists, the setting to some of the most popular romances of the Middle Ages, and the real-life core of a Europe-wide mining economy from the Bronze Age to the twentieth century. In the past century, however, as it transitioned from an industrial economy to a tourist economy, Cornwall has needed to self-consciously negotiate its many identities as something not only lived, but packaged and presented to the outside world.

The decline of Cornwall’s mining industry, which began in the mid-nineteenth century, and was completed in the 1990s, inspired a twofold process, the effects of which are still very much felt in Cornwall today (Coupland and Coupland 2014, 499-500). The first was that, partially in recognition of the fact that Cornwall was on its way to losing the work which had been the pride of Cornish workers for centuries, certain Cornish visionaries began to dream up a romantic Cornish Revival, in the same nationalistic vein as its contemporary, the Irish Revival (Coupland and Coupland 2014, 499). Drawing

upon a vast array of cultural markers, the Cornish Revivalists painted Cornwall as a land proudly independent of, and oppressed but never defeated by, England. They aimed to have Cornwall take her place alongside Ireland, Scotland and Wales, her Celtic sisters (the Celtic nations always being portrayed as feminine to contrast their gentle-but-unknowable nature with the impersonal, masculine industrialism of England). At the same time, the market for mass tourism within the United Kingdom was becoming a serious industry. British railway companies used this new Celticism to market Cornwall as a destination which was both domestic and exotic all at once (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 49). Prescient individuals within Cornwall also recognised the value of investing in a tourist economy, and participated in the advertising of Cornwall as a tourist destination. Both groups had an interest in constructing definitions of Cornish identity, one to present to the Cornish, and one to draw outsiders to the county. The two processes worked alongside one another, sometimes in conflict, but more often drawing upon each other.

In 1998, the last tin mine in Cornwall closed (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 48). The transition from industrial to tourist economy was complete, and like it or not, Cornwall would now have to rely on its heritage rather than its living industry to stay economically afloat. Or rather, the Cornish would have to mine something other than their traditional copper and tin: Neil Kennedy and Nigel Kingcome quote the miner, 'Iron Mike' Hillman saying, "Your mines may close, but you can go on mining your heritage for ever" (1998, 54). Here, Hillman echoes a concept put forward by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, that a place which has lost its primary industry can gain a "second life as heritage" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 129). When a place can no longer produce money in its traditional way, it may turn to selling something less tangible: the essence of

what it is as a place. History, customs, landscape, and the character of the local people all become products in the area's economic plan. If the idea of a place which, unable to generate any other income, turns to selling itself to avoid destitution evokes uncomfortable parallels with sex work, it is no coincidence: tourism, like prostitution, gives rise to many difficult questions about the ethics of commodifying that which we hold most precious, be it our bodies or our cultural identities.

Cornwall provides a perfect case study to explore such questions. Its primary industry, and accompanying identity, is lost, and it must now rely on performed versions of this identity, with liberal amounts of romanticism and mysticism in the mix, to remain economically viable. The contrasts between an unmediated identity and a performed one raise fundamental questions about authenticity. What is the "authentic" Cornwall? Does it exist anymore? Can tourists ever access it? Much of what has been written about tourism in the past forty years has taken questions about authenticity to be the core of tourism studies. Dean MacCannell leads the camp who believe that tourists travel to seek authentic cultural experiences, but can only ever access a "staged authenticity," a cultural performance designed to look authentic, but a construct all the same (1973, 595). The other philosophy is that championed by John Urry, who writes about "post-tourism," a postmodern approach to tourism which claims that many tourists today recognise the constructed nature of the sights they see, but revel in the performance anyway (Rojek 1997, 62). While technically in conflict with one another, both of these approaches to tourism have the pursuit of authenticity at their cores. MacCannell asserts that authenticity exists, but tourists cannot access it; Urry posits that authenticity exists, but tourists do not want to access it. Of course, as both these researchers and others have

acknowledged, the lived experience of tourism is much more nuanced than this simple dichotomy, with tourists and locals living in tourist destinations holding a much more complex range of attitudes towards the idea of authenticity than these theories would suggest.

My fieldwork in Zennor and Tintagel, two Cornish villages whose economies depend almost entirely on tourism, provided me with the opportunity to test out these theories, and led me to ask how both locals and tourists perceive tourism-dependent Cornwall, what it means to consider the Cornwall tourists see as authentic, and if it even matters to tourists and locals if what is being presented is authentic at all (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

Cornwall's Heritage Era: The Rise of the Tourist Economy

Cornwall wears its history on its sleeve. Perhaps this is because a century's worth of work has been put into making its heritage as readily accessible as possible, or perhaps because so much of its built heritage is made out of the sturdy granite local to the area, and generation after generation of Cornishmen and women have grown up surrounded by the monuments of centuries and millennia past. Indeed, this built heritage plays an active part in the ongoing construction of Cornwall: many a recent farm building has been built with stones pillaged from Neolithic stone burial structures and abandoned nineteenth century mine shafts. In addition to the stone ruins that dot the Cornish landscape, and along with its towering cliffs, desolate hilltop moors, and expansive sandy beaches, Cornwall has a rich cultural legacy to draw upon. Cornwall's tin and copper mines allowed the region to maintain a certain economic independence from the Bronze Age through to the end of the twentieth century, but its identity has also always existed as a

counterpoint to that of the rest of England. Immortalised in literature from the Middle Ages to the present day, home to a Celtic language widely spoken until the eighteenth century, and characterised by homegrown resistance to outside forces beginning in the Roman era, and still ongoing to this day, Cornwall's distinct cultural markers have made the county an object of interest to, and sometimes the source of conflict with, the rest of England and beyond.

The Cornwall experienced by those who come from outside the county has been invented and reinvented, and reinvented again, by outsiders and insiders alike. There is nothing inherently fake about this Cornwall, just as there is nothing inherently fake about invented traditions, which become traditions in their own right (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). As with invented traditions, though, problems arise when people try to deny these constructs' invented nature, saying 'this is the way things have always been,' and picking one point in the history of a cultural tradition which had always been changing to crystallise as the culture's true essence. Cornwall certainly struggles with this, though arguably, it is safe from the worst effects of being an invented place simply because so many people and so many forces have created so many different interpretations of Cornish heritage, tradition, and place that the idea that one invented Cornwall exists is automatically problematized. Instead, there are many Cornwalls, some invented, some real, and some both, depending on who you ask. What follows is a brief history of the processes, deliberate and not, which have gone into creating the definitions of "authentic" Cornwall still used by both the Cornish and visitors to Cornwall today.



Figure 1.1. Map of the United Kingdom, with Cornwall outlined in the South-West of the country (Google 2009).



Figure 1.2. Map of Cornwall showing the locations of Tintagel and Zennor (Google 2017).

Tourism to Cornwall began in the early nineteenth century, when the town of Penzance was marketed as a health resort, an idea made popular both because of royal example, and because many of the traditional seaside health destinations favoured by the British upper classes were in southern France, and had been cut off by the Napoleonic Wars (Payton and Thornton 1995, 88). This was the first time, but certainly not the last, that Cornwall would function as a domestic stand-in for Mediterranean holiday destinations. With Penzance the only Cornish location widely advertised to outsiders, Cornwall could not be said to have a true tourist economy yet. That would come with the decline of the mines, and the concurrent rise of the railroads. The Industrial Revolution, Paul Thornton contends, gave rise not only to the railways which would cover all of the United Kingdom, but also to a system of labour which would benefit from granting its labourers annual paid holidays as a form of placation (1993, 83-4). Suddenly, thousands of working class families were taking the new trains away from their industrial cities and out towards the coasts for holidays by the seaside all around the coast of England. Cornwall, though, was the last county in England to become accessible by rail: it was not until 1859 that the first railroad was laid there (Thornton 1993, 85). Even with the railroads, Cornwall's remoteness made it an uneconomical choice for many working class families, and it remained predominantly popular with wealthier holidaymakers.

Inspired by literary accounts of King Arthur, and by the romanticism which lamented the decline of the peasant classes – a decline most to be lamented, it seemed, by the upper classes – Cornwall was already being conceived of as a place to escape to, a remnant of times gone by (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 50; Hale 2001a, 188). In her 1884 book,

An Unsentimental Journey Through Cornwall, the anonymous author betrayed more than a little sentiment when she wrote the following:

I had always wished to investigate Cornwall. This desire had existed ever since, at five years old, I made acquaintance with Jack the Giantkiller, and afterwards, at fifteen or so, fell in love with my life's one hero, King Arthur.... I wanted to see if the same spirit lingered yet, as I had heard it did among Cornish folk, which, it was said, were a race by themselves, honest, simple, shrewd, and kind. Also, I wished to see the Cornish land, and especially the Land's End, which I had many a time beheld in fancy, for it was a favourite landscape-dream of my rather imaginative childhood...

(1884, 2-3)

The author's travels took place just after the founding of what would come to be known as the Newlyn School, an artists' colony near Penzance whose ethos and subject matter relied heavily on romanticised interpretations of the coastal fishing villages (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 51). Nearby St. Ives, with its white sand beaches and palm trees, also became a holiday destination. The young Virginia Woolf, then Virginia Stephens, spent many summers in a house her father rented in St. Ives; Godrevy Lighthouse, in St. Ives Bay was later the inspiration for her novel, *To the Lighthouse* (Andrews 2010, 288).

By the end of the century, however, the mining industry was in full decline, and many in Cornwall began to turn their attention to developing the county as an attractive destination for more than just the upper classes and bohemian artists. In 1904, one of the United Kingdom's foremost railway companies, the Great Western Railway, took an interest in Cornwall, seeing it as a highly marketable holiday destination (Payton and Thornton 1995, 90-1). A great number of factors led them

to build upon Cornwall's reputation for being the English equivalent of the Mediterranean coast: the idyllic imagery of hardworking, sunbeaten fishermen, lit by a clear, distinctly maritime type of sunlight put out by the artists of the Newlyn School echoed popular conceptions of Mediterranean life; the Cornish climate is the mildest in all of England, and while it is well known for its harsh landscapes, it is also home to many broad, sandy beaches, complete with palm trees; and finally, a cultural movement within Cornwall itself had been working to build an image of a Celtic Cornwall (Payton and Thornton 1995, 91; Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 50). This last was the most significant to the Railway. The Great Western Railway had already had a great deal of success with its Highland Railway which took passengers through a Celticised Scottish landscape (Payton and Thornton 1995, 91). As many have pointed out, following a similar pattern in Cornwall allowed the Railway, and other promoters of Cornish tourism, to position the county as the "domestic exotic," or "the-other-that-we-are-comfortable-with" (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 49). One of the guidebooks created by the Railway reminded its readers, "[Cornwall is] a Duchy which is in every respect un-English... the Cornish people are not English people" (S.P.B. Mais in Payton and Thornton 1995, 95). And yet, to get to Cornwall required no overseas travel, and a visit there required the knowledge of no foreign languages. The Railway called its rail line to Cornwall the *Cornish Riviera Limited*, and marketed the coasts of Cornwall accordingly (Payton and Thornton 1995, 92). This blend of the domestic and the exotic proved to be hugely appealing, and made Cornwall a very popular seaside holiday destination by the 1920s.

Historians Philip Payton and Paul Thornton, in their article on the symbiotic relationship between the Great Western Railway and the Cornish Revival, emphasise that the Cornish-Celtic Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not undertaken for the sole purpose of attracting tourists. Instead, the impending collapse of the mining industry threatened to leave an identity vacuum in the county (Payton and Thornton 1995, 84). Drawing on Celtic Revival movements in Scotland, and particularly Ireland and Wales, the Cornish Revival developed one of what Bethan and Nikolas Coupland, respectively a sociolinguist and historian, call Cornwall's "two truths": the symbols of "old" Cornwall, including "sea-faring culture, piracy and the Cornish language," to contrast with its other truth, that of the culture which had arisen around industrial mining (2014, 499). The Cornish wanted to harken back to a time when Cornwall was more "purely Cornish," the "era of Celtic-Catholic Cornwall, its origins shrouded in the mysteries of Arthur and the Saints," as Payton and Thornton put it (1995, 85). Societies were created to revive the Cornish language, celebrate the great figures of Cornwall's mythic past, and to attempt to establish a Cornish version of the *Gorsedd*, a Welsh-language celebration of Bardic culture (Payton and Thornton 1995, 86). This Cornish Revival was well timed to work in tandem with the burgeoning tourist economy in Cornwall. Payton and Thornton write, "there was something of a symbiotic relationship between tourism and the Cornish-Celtic Revival... the former attempting to construct a post-industrial economy and the latter striving to revive a pre-industrial culture" (1995, 84). And while this post-industrial economy did not conform entirely to the Cornish Revivalists' mission, relying as it did on outsiders' interpretation of the

Cornish-English dichotomy as one in which the Cornish possessed, “the generic, archetypal... [Celtic] traits which were arrayed in classic binary opposition to those of the rational, disciplined English male,” it did provide the financial stability the county so desperately needed (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 50).

Alongside the growing popularity of mass tourism to the county, Cornwall had remained of interest to artists and other bohemians, especially those who were taking up the Modernist movement which began in the 1910s. Tate St. Ives, a branch of London’s Tate Modern art gallery, is a tribute to the St. Ives School of modern art, a loose collection of artists operating out of St. Ives beginning in the 1920s (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 51). The area was, at that point, already of interest to a number of prominent figures in the modernist movement. Virginia Woolf returned to the holiday destination of her childhood, visiting the area around St. Ives numerous times (Lee 1994, 157-86). The area also boasts a connection with D.H. Lawrence, who lived in the village of Zennor, near St. Ives, for several years during the First World War. Though his experience was not entirely positive, due to distrust amongst locals of his German wife, he spoke highly of the landscape of the region, and wrote his novel, *Women in Love*, while living there (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 51; Andrews 2010, 286). To this day, St. Ives is home to a great number of small art galleries, and both the Tate St. Ives and the area’s literary reputation continue to attract visitors from all over the world.

The 1920s also saw the rise of what Paul Thornton calls “permanent tourists,” attracted by the spirit of artistic endeavour for which the area was becoming known (1993, 85). Some such incomers muddy the definition of who is local to the area: in

an ongoing process, several generations of artists, writers, and craftspeople have come looking for the heart of Cornwall, and in the process, have created definitions of that heart which are taken by visitors as true. One of the most famous such individuals was Daphne Du Maurier, a writer whose works are certainly not as highbrow as those of the earlier modernist writers, but are decidedly more popular. Born in London to a prominent theatrical and literary family, Du Maurier discovered and subsequently moved to Cornwall as a young woman in the late 1920s, and set many of her gothic, romantic novels there (Du Maurier 1972). Her books, including *Rebecca* and *Jamaica Inn*, continue to be immensely popular, and portray a dramatic, brooding Cornwall, full of moors, cliffs, romance, and mystery. More recently, the *Poldark* series, written by Winston Graham between 1945 and 1953, and continued between 1973 and 2002, centres on Ross Poldark, a late eighteenth-century mine owner with distinctly Byronic tendencies. This romanticised vision of the golden age of Cornwall's mining industry was adapted for television first in 1975, and again in an ongoing series first aired in 2015. Both the *Poldark* books and television series, as well as Du Maurier's books, and their many film and television adaptations have played a large role in crafting the Cornwall which lives in outsiders' imaginations (Lowerson 1994, 130).

While there had been steady tourist interest in Cornwall for most of the twentieth century, by the 1990s, the seaside holiday was beginning to lose popularity, and the county once again had to consciously examine its tourist appeal and develop those assets which would draw the most tourists (Meethan 2002, 25). Thornton argues that the seaside holiday, which the Cornish Riviera Express had

made so popular, is a hallmark of an industrial society, a chance to get away from the industrial environs of everyday life (1993, 86). By the 1990s, Britain's de-industrialisation was all but complete, and this contrast between the everyday and the holiday was not as striking (Thornton 1993, 86). Furthermore, with increased national prosperity, Britons could once again afford to go further afield, to warmer, whiter beaches in Southern Europe (Thornton 1993, 87). In response, Cornwall drew upon its heritage movements, and recast itself as a heritage sightseeing destination. Interestingly, by the early 1990s, industrial society, so recently a reality for a great many working people in the United Kingdom, became a subject of tourist interest in its own right (Thornton 1993, 87). Geevor mine, the last working tin mine in Cornwall, was shut in 1991, and then reopened as a museum in 1993 (Coupland and Coupland 2014, 500).

Concurrently, a "Celtic craze" was sweeping Britain (Hale 2006, 273). This craze came at an ideal time for Cornwall, which was perfectly suited to cast itself as England's pre-eminent Celtic tourist destination. This was quite clearly in Cornwall's best interest: as anthropologist Amy Hale writes, "Celtic, like sex, sells" (2006, 274). While the Cornish language functions as a relatively concrete tie to the "Celtic" identity, potential tourists' interpretations of the idea of the Celt proved to be very broad. Hale writes that there are several categories of "Celtic enthusiast," explaining that, "Someone wearing a Celtic knotwork brooch could be either a Methodist from mid-Cornwall celebrating her Cornish heritage, or a Wiccan from Suffolk visting Cornish megalithic monuments or holy wells on a religious pilgrimage, or a woman from Wisconsin who is descended from Cornish

miners” (2006, 275). In effect, what was marketed as Celtic was every element of Cornish culture which made it distinct from mainstream English culture. Clearly, popular notions of the Celtic had not evolved much from the Victorian definition of a local “other,” a way of life which stood in contrast with the economically-driven mainstream.

This form of Celticism did take on a newly spiritual tenor, however. Many equated the Celtic way of life with one which was more in tune with nature and a mystical worldview. When coupled with the political stance that Cornwall had been marginalised by the rest of England, it was seen by some as a place being suppressed for its heightened spirituality. As historian John Lowerson writes, it came “almost to represent a British Tibet; distant, valued by outsiders and threatened by an occupying power” (1994, 135). Alongside other sites in England’s South-West, such as Stonehenge and Glastonbury, remote Cornwall became central to England’s New Age movement (Hale 2004, 206-211; see also Bowman 2005, 2007). Tintagel, with its legends of King Arthur, and the West Penwith Peninsula, whose unparalleled concentration of standing stones are said in the British Neo-Pagan community to have been used by England’s prehistoric people for goddess worship, are areas of particular interest (Hale 2004, 211; Hale 2002, 160). Many continue to be drawn to Cornwall for its Celtic character, both as visitors, and as “permanent tourists” like those who came for literary and artistic reasons in the early twentieth century.

Today, the tourists who visit Cornwall come from elsewhere in the United Kingdom, and from all over the world, drawn by a wide range of attractions.

Following the economic crisis of 2008, many British families have once again taken to Cornish beaches as an affordable alternative to those in continental Europe. But it is heritage tourism which plays the principal role in keeping tourist numbers high. In 2006, Cornwall's mining heritage landscape was declared to be a UNESCO World Heritage site, and the various sites dedicated to presenting the history of mining in Cornwall now attract more visitors than ever. New Age tourists have a number of spiritual destinations to choose from, and a pair of ley lines, or Earth energy lines, which criss-cross the county, to follow.¹ The South-West Coast Path, a walking route which traces the coast of the entire South-West of England has some of its most striking sections along the extensive coast of Cornwall, and people who walk it are well served by Cornwall's many hostels and bed and breakfasts. The bed and breakfast industry is a fundamental part of the cycle of tourism in Cornwall, as many are owned by people from elsewhere, who move to the county and operate bed and breakfasts in their homes in order to fund their dreams of living there. St. Ives is a major destination for modern art aficionados, but is also, along with a number of other coastal towns, home to a thriving surfing scene. Small communities throughout the county, which once depended on farming and fishing, now make their money selling an image of a land of granite buildings, ancient parish churches, and hardworking people living a life exposed to the elements.

¹ Ian McNeil Cooke, in *Mermaid to Merrymaid: Journey to the Stones*, describes ley lines as a western analogue to the eastern concept of feng-shui. He writes that "all ancient sites were deliberately placed in the landscape to form part of a complex interlocking network of straight alignments." He and other "earth mysteries" writers have extrapolated from this that there are energy lines running through the landscape which have influenced the placement of sacred and meaningful sites, whether consciously or not (Cooke 1996, 190-1).

Fieldwork and Methodology

In June, 2015, I travelled to Cornwall, England, and spent close to two weeks each in the villages of Zennor and Tintagel, interviewing tourists and people working in the local heritage industry (See Appendices A, B, and C for my information sheet for informants, sample interview questions and preliminary communications with informants). Sally Everett writes that due to the oft-remarked upon similarities between research and tourism, reflexivity is crucial when conducting tourism-focused research, and furthermore, that the researcher must always position herself in what she writes (2010, 161). As such, I will briefly outline the influences which informed some of my research decisions.

The villages of Zennor and Tintagel are both locations I had visited on multiple occasions before engaging in my thesis research. My first visit to Tintagel was as part of a grand tour of the United Kingdom taken with a close friend in the summer of 2011, when I was nineteen years old. We were both drawn to Tintagel because of its connection to the legends of King Arthur, and though we had read in several guidebooks that it had a reputation for being touristy and full of tacky New Age shops, we were eager to see it nonetheless, even if it meant throwing away our serious cultural pretensions for a time, and enjoying the campy fun of it. While we did not know it at the time, in Tintagel, we were perfect post-tourists. I made two subsequent visits to Tintagel, one in 2012 with new friends I had made while spending a year studying at the nearby University of Exeter, and one alone in the summer of 2014.

I first visited the much more remote Zennor alone, during my year at the University of Exeter. Wanting to see more of Cornwall, which I had already heavily romanticised in my mind, I read about a scenic walk from the town of St. Ives to the village of Zennor, and took the three-and-a-half-hour train ride from Exeter to St. Ives, completed the walk, and returned to Exeter the same night. While the coastal walk was stunning, it was the village of Zennor, complete with its folk museum, and granite thirteenth-century pub and church, the latter of which houses a mysterious mermaid carving, which caught my imagination. On the same trip I took with my University of Exeter friends, I brought them to Zennor, and they agreed that it was far more beautiful and “real” than Tintagel was. Finally, in the summer of 2014, I spent three nights staying in a bed and breakfast just outside the village, which gave me the opportunity to explore the area and learn more about the history and folklore of the place.

It was my own early, uncritical interpretations of each village which, when coupled with my readings about tourism theory, led me to believe they would function as excellent case studies for the two dominant theories. My experiences in Tintagel had been ones of ironic fun, and good-natured eye-rolling, while my visits to Zennor had been full of unbridled enthusiasm about the way it seemed to be a place lost to time, a remnant of a time gone by. Naturally, these preconceptions, as well as the fact that, returning to each place as an academic, I was determined to prove these preconceptions false, both influenced the questions I asked of those I interviewed, and the observations I made. I aimed to be conscious of this during my fieldwork, and include my own positionality in the following chapters.

My research was conducted through a combination of interviews and participant-observation. This participant-observation took the form of field notes I kept during the month of June, 2015, which recorded my observations about the experience of engaging in a number of different activities available to tourists in each village, as well as my observations about the ways the tourists around me seemed to engage in these activities. I also reflected on how my own previous experiences as a tourist in each village compared to those I had in my position as a researcher. The interviews I conducted were a combination of pre-arranged, audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews with individuals in each village whose work caused them to interact with visitors on a regular basis, and impromptu interviews with approximately forty tourists to each village, which were not audio-recorded. I asked all interviewees about their perspectives on various elements of tourism in the village, engaging particularly with the concept of authenticity.

Outline

The chapter following this Introduction will be a comprehensive literature review, examining several issues in tourism studies. The concept of authenticity is at the heart of many schools of tourism studies, and is particularly relevant to heritage tourism. As such, the literature review will begin by examining several theories about the significance of authenticity to tourism, before presenting an overview of heritage tourism scholarship more generally. Finally, I will explore some recent scholarship on heritage tourism in Cornwall, specifically,

problematizing the various ways in which Cornwall has been constructed as a tourist destination.

Following the Literature Review will be a two-chapter section on tourism in the village of Zennor. The first of these chapters will present my research on local life in Zennor, both historically, and in the present day. Based predominantly on the interviews I conducted with locals working in Zennor's tourism industry, this chapter will discuss the two-tier sense of local identity, and the ways in which two groups of locals work together to create a successful tourist site. The following chapter will again examine Zennor as a tourist destination, but from the tourists' perspective. It will reveal Zennor to be a site which successfully confirms tourists' understandings of "authentic" Old Cornwall, and one visited by tourists who are heavily invested in the concept of authenticity.

Next is a two-chapter section on Tintagel, which will be presented as a tourist destination which stands in sharp contrast to Zennor. The first chapter will feature my interviews with local tourism providers, and will examine the various, non-cohesive tourist attractions found in Tintagel. The second chapter will be based on the interviews I conducted with tourists, and will explore why the majority of them were disappointed with Tintagel. While understandings of authenticity are very different in Tintagel than they are in Zennor, they are equally significant to tourists' appreciations of Tintagel, and it is here that Tintagel fails to live up to tourists' expectations of authenticity.

Finally, the Conclusion will compare tourists' experiences of these two sites, examining what it is that makes Zennor a successful tourist site, and Tintagel an

unsuccessful one. Richard Bauman's concept of communicative competence will be shown to be significant to the success or failure of a tourist site in presenting something tourists may accept as authentic, and the Conclusion will show that it is the quality of the dialogue between tourists and locals at each of these sites that determines this success or failure.

Conclusion

I approached these two villages with the expectation that Tintagel would provide a case study of post-tourism, and Zennor one of staged authenticity, and that taken together, these would showcase the diverse ways in which Cornwall markets itself as a tourist destination. As I will discuss in the following chapters, neither location provided as clear-cut an example of these two theories of tourism as I expected. In both locations, tourists and locals alike held much subtler understandings of the nature of authenticity and the role it plays in tourism. Thus, while the research question I took to the field was, "How do tourists to Tintagel and Zennor fall into the staged authenticity-post-tourism dichotomy," the questions I aim to answer in this thesis are, as mentioned above, "To what extent are tourists and locals aware of the issues of authenticity involved in the heritage tourism industry?" and, "To what extent do these issues of authenticity matter to the tourist experience?" In this thesis, the answers to these questions will form the basis for my determination of whether the site is successful or not; while Tintagel, as one of English Heritage's top five most visited tourist sites, is inarguably the more financially successful of the two sites, the definition of success I use in this thesis

relies more on tourist experiences rather than tourist numbers. Positive or negative visitor feedback will indicate the success of the tourist experience, and therefore of the tourist site.

Chapter Two: LITERATURE REVIEW

The first page of Regina Bendix's seminal book, *In Search of Authenticity*, addresses cultural and heritage tourism, presenting it as a perceived opportunity to connect with the culturally authentic. She writes, "As tourists, we can choose between a cruise to the last real headhunters, a stroll through the back alleys of famous places in search of the hidden authenticities of everyday life, and the opportunity to witness authentic belief experiences among parishioners in Harlem's churches" (1997, 3). As we have seen, it is this concept of access to the "authentic" Cornwall on which the county depends to attract its tourists. While the study of tourism is truly interdisciplinary, with academics in disciplines including folklore, anthropology, sociology, geography, history, and business all examining tourism in their own ways, all scholars of tourism, regardless of discipline, engage with questions of authenticity to a greater or lesser degree². This is true of folklorists' studies of tourism in particular, but as we shall see, matters of authenticity and the authority to define what is authentic show up in virtually all discussions of tourism and heritage tourism, both generally and specifically to Cornwall.

Tourism and Authenticity

There are two prevailing sociological theories which have informed much of the discourse around tourism and its problematic relationship with the concept of authenticity. The first of these is that of "staged authenticity," a concept first developed by Dean MacCannell in his 1973 article, "Staged Authenticity:

² See, for example, Busby and Laviolette 2012; Cohen 1988; Coupland and Coupland 2014; Deacon 2007; Meethan 2002; Voase 2006; Woods 2005a.

Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings.” This theory, in turn, depends on Goffman’s concept of front and back regions; what MacCannell believes tourists seek is access to their destinations’ back regions, or “society’s id,” rather than that version of a destination’s culture which might be presented in a guided tour, or other component of the increasingly unfashionable “mass tourism” (Goffman in MacCannell 1973, 593). However, MacCannell posits that this mission is futile, that the very fact of being seen by a tourist acts as a mediating veil between the back and the front, that a culture as seen by outsiders is one that is self-consciously performed by insiders. Just as Goffman argues that individuals never truly see one another’s back regions, but rather mere performances of self, what the tourist sees is not the “back region,” or the “authentic” culture, but a performed version of that culture: “staged authenticity” (2011, 13).

This construction of tourism as a “quest for authentic experiences” is a recent one (MacCannell 1973, 593). Many argue that it is the natural result of the modern condition, in which tourists travel in order to connect with something which has been lost. Sociologist Erik Cohen writes that tourists believe an “opposition between self and society” exists in their own cultures, but not in certain other cultures (1998, 373-4). When tourists travel, they are searching for those cultures in which the self and society seem to be connected rather than opposed. Heritage tourism, which will be discussed in greater depth below, is a particularly common vehicle for this pursuit. MacCannell writes, “For moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles” (in Fife 2004, 150). David Lowenthal’s oft-quoted maxim, “the

past is a foreign country,” certainly applies here: the past is seen as a destination to which a tourist can travel, and one which grants access to a different, valued way of being (Lowenthal 1985).

Richard Voase argues the same in economic terms. The contemporary, postmodern economy is one based on consumption rather than the production which formed the modern economy. This transition to a consumption-based economy has “provided the economic motor for new industries, such as tourism, to replace old ones” (2002, 6). It has also, however, inspired anxiety about the wholesale commodification of those elements of culture which have never before been commodified. The most satisfying tourist experiences, Voase writes, are those involving human interaction without commodification (2002, 8). He quotes anthropologist Tom Selwyn, who says that tourists visit an “imagined world which is variously pre-modern, pre-commoditized or part of a benign whole” (2002, 8). Tourism is thus taken as an escape from the social and economic conditions of the tourist’s home culture, to a world which is perceived to be one of greater authenticity.

This mediating element of perception, however, causes certain issues with the process, and is the focus of the majority of the theorizing by tourism scholars. MacCannell casts this in terms of paranoia, writing that the “paranoid subject is one for whom the world has begun to take on ‘meaning,’” whether or not there is any deeper meaning to be found (2011, 20). Believing a location to possess a meaning which is deeper than that which meets the eye, a hidden “authenticity,” the construct of tourism requires a moment of revelation, in which a veil is presented

and then parted, allowing the tourist to see a hitherto concealed back region. This process has become such an integral part of tourism that it is often the revelation itself which must be staged (MacCannell 2001, 13-15; Voase 2006, 288-291). While mundane reality may be readily apparent to the tourist, the tourist cannot frame their travels as a “quest for authentic experience” if there is no digging deeper, or peering beyond veils involved in the process. Instead, a tourist destination may choose to stage a seemingly deeper identity than that which is visible at first glance, in order to satisfy tourist expectations that this deeper truth exists.

Further complicating this are the preconceptions tourists bring with them. MacCannell writes that tourism depends on the “imaginary symbolic,” a system in which meaning is constructed for a location through an almost immeasurable series of media representations, including those designed to appear to be revealing the “authentic” nature of the place (2011, 141). This is a cumulative process which goes on today through many channels. Literary, artistic, and film representations, guidebooks, and year upon year of tourists’ travel stories shared online and in person all conspire to create preconceptions about the nature of a place’s authenticity in the mind of the prospective tourist, to the extent that when the tourist does visit the location in question, he or she paints a film of the imaginary onto the place, and perceives this to be authentic. In MacCannell’s words, “[t]he refuge of tourist ‘experience’ is the imaginary;” tourism involves a process which “requires systematic efforts to shut down perception in the presence of an attraction” (2011, 185).

MacCannell and Voase both present this in terms of Barthesian “myth” (Barthes 2012). Voase writes that touristic place branding is the process of creating a myth of place, a set of signifiers which work on the connotative level to evoke an understanding of the “truth” of a place (Voase 2002, 10-12). As postmodernism is a “regime of signification,” things are consumed not for their functional value, but for their “sign-value” (Voase 2002, 12). This “mythicization of the real” results in a state of hyperreality, in which the imagined version of the place, the version of place which exists on the sign level, is perceived as more real than that which truly is real (Voase 2002, 12). This is the foundation of the paradox of staged authenticity: those who travel in search of the authentic may not believe they have found it until they witness a hyperreal version of the place which fits their own preconceptions, having bypassed the mundane but authentic version of the place on the way.

Playing with this idea is John Urry’s theory of “post-tourism,” presented in his 1990 book, *The Tourist Gaze*. Another dominant theory of tourism, it stands in contrast to the staged authenticity-focused philosophy of tourism, with its view of tourists who are preoccupied with accessing the authentic. Chris Rojek describes post-tourism as “a playful, ironic, formally individualised attitude to sight-seeing,” and further writes, “post-tourists have no interest in attaching themselves to a guided tour or tour group. However, they will readily treat these social formations as part of the sight-seeing experience” (Rojek 1997, 62). The post-tourist, a postmodern traveller, is intrigued by notions of pastiche and simulacra, and laughs at the idea that a tourist would hope to witness the hidden truth of a place. Rojek

writes that for the post-tourist, “tourism is seen as an end in itself, and not a means to some loftier goal” (1997, 102). The aim of the post-tourist is not to see the real place, but to witness tourism. Extending this further, the post-tourist becomes not simply an idle witness, watching a performance which obscures the authentic place, but a performer in his or her own right, enacting, rather than only consuming, tourism (Urry and Larsen 2011).

Ironically, despite this superior knowingness of the post-tourist, who rejects the idea that the authentic can be accessed by the tourist, the idea that the authentic does exist is not challenged. As anthropologist Katherine Frank writes, “In many ways... a post-tourist’s mentality is not very different from that of someone seeking authenticity. After all, the cynic is once again the one who perceives the “real nature” of things—even though, in this case, it is an essential fakedness that in the end is revealed to be the truth” (2002, 184). Post-tourists who know that what they see is not the ‘real thing’ imply that they are closer to knowing what the ‘real thing’ is than those who accept a staged authenticity as real. Thus, for tourists acting according to either dominant theory of tourism, a relationship with the idea of authenticity is fundamentally important to their experience.

MacCannell and Urry’s theories are often presented as contradictory interpretations of tourism, with MacCannell’s representing an older, predominantly modernist form of tourism, in contrast with Urry’s postmodern view of tourism. Other writers have, however, expanded this new-old dichotomy with complementary definitions of both. Voase identifies a qualitative difference between “old” tourism, which is a more passive, leisure-focused escape from the

quotidian, and “new” tourism, which has a postmodern character, and involves a more active and individualised pursuit of cultural activities (2002, 2). Both MacCannell’s and Urry’s approaches to tourism fall within this new, postmodern category. Anthropologist Wayne Fife, however, puts forward an alternative application of modernism and postmodernism in tourism in his work on tourism in Newfoundland’s Great Northern Peninsula. He writes, “One of the common themes of post/modernist literature involves the idea that modernism celebrates depth, while postmodern cultural forms can best be thought of as gliding along a semantic surface that does not require something to be ‘behind it,’ ‘underneath it,’ or ‘inside of it’ in order to offer meaning” (2004, 149). He then presents two different forms of authenticity: “rational authenticity” and “aesthetic authenticity” (Fife 2004, 163). Those seeking rational authenticity look for empirical fact; in the context of heritage tourism, this often involves the belief that the archaeological record or an academic history contains the objective truth of a place. This is a modernist understanding of history. Fife argues that those who look for aesthetic authenticity, on the other hand, are aware of the postmodern understanding of history, which is that the past is composed of highly subjective histories, dependent on individual perceptions, rather than of one master narrative. This subjectivity allows an imagined version of the past to be taken as real, and aesthetic authenticity to be found when a place simply “feels right” (Fife 2004, 163). Essentially, when a site aligns with the hyperreal, imagined version of itself which exists in the tourist’s mind, it conveys aesthetic authenticity.

Both of these two versions of authenticity, the modern and the postmodern, rely on the tourist's belief that there is an authentic site to be found, even if the processes undergone to reach that belief are different for each version. As such, both fall under MacCannell's theory of tourism, and not Urry's theory of post-tourism. There is a subtle distinction to be made, however. All tourists seeking an authentic experience carry with them an aesthetic understanding of that authenticity, but while postmodern tourists recognise to a certain extent that the authenticity they seek is authenticity to a construct or fiction, tourists with a modernist worldview believe that there is a rational authenticity to be found, and that it will align with their aesthetic understanding of a place's authenticity. Furthermore, as constructed sites, certain heritage tourism destinations are developed in the modernist paradigm, presenting an absolute, linear history, whereas others take the postmodernist approach, allowing visitors to explore a multitude of perspectives and interpretations. Using Richard Bauman's theory of communicative competence, wherein performers have a responsibility to their audiences to communicate in an understood language, or through a familiar paradigm, I will argue that a misalignment between the paradigm in which a site is presented and that through which it is perceived can result in a fundamental divide between the tourist gaze and that upon which it gazes (Bauman 1975).

Heritage Tourism

Issues of authenticity are particularly prevalent in the discourse around heritage tourism. Heritage tourism relies on the repackaging of a location's history and historical

identity for consumption by outsiders, who, it is believed, often see that particular interpretation of local history as more authentic than the living culture of the location in question. Those who study heritage tourism encounter the same conflict between the real and the hyperreal as that which was discussed above, but with additional ethical implications deriving from the fact that the process relies on living people presenting themselves as living in an antiquated version of their culture. With Cornish tourism heavily dependent on heritage tourism, these ethical implications are of the utmost importance.

One of the best discussions of heritage and authenticity can be found in Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Looking at how an economically depressed area can gain "a second life as heritage," she examines the economic advantages, as well as some of the cultural pitfalls, which occur when the economy of an area relies on heritage tourism (1998). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett describes heritage tourism as a "value-added" industry, writing that heritage "adds value to existing assets that have either ceased to be viable (subsistence lifestyles, obsolete technologies, abandoned mines, the evidence of past disasters) or that never were economically productive... or that operate outside the realm of profit because they are "free, inherent and natural resources" or inalienable possessions" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 150; Leiper 1979, 398). This "second life as heritage" that these places take on allows them to be economically viable, despite the failure of their primary industries.

Crucial though heritage tourism may be to a location's economy, however, it takes a particular process to transition a place from a primary industry to one based

in tourism, and this process is not without risks. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett writes that heritage “tests the alienability of inalienable possessions” (1998, 149). Where once a place sold one or more commodities, this process turns its own landscape and history into a commodity, and this alters the very nature of the place. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that the “life world” of a location before it is made into a heritage site cannot continue to exist in the same way once it becomes a sightseeing destination (1998, 132). It is this commodification of what many believe should be inalienable which makes heritage tourism such a difficult topic to engage with. Whether it is because of a postmodern concern with the implications of commodification, as Voase would suggest, or because of the anthropological and folkloristic tradition of wanting to engage only with the “pristine and untouched,” as Bendix argues, heritage tourism is an uncomfortable subject for those who engage in any form of cultural studies (Bendix 1989, 133).

Voase writes about the desire to develop a “process of de-commodification and reauthenticization” in tourism (2002, 14). If this is, in fact, the goal, then it stands to figure that what tourism is currently causing is commodification and de-authenticization of the tourist destinations. This commodification is argued to have a twofold impact. The first is that the heritage seen by tourists is an untruthful, or inauthentic, presentation of local history, and the second is that the identities of those who are local to the area become part of this process of commodification, and that the locals therefore lose their own, “authentic” identities.³

³ See also Goldstein, Grider and Thomas 2007.

The first of these issues has been thoroughly explored both in the context of heritage tourism, and in that of heritage studies more generally. Heritage, in all its forms, is often described as some variation of “history in its commodified form” (Voase 2006, 287). Kennedy and Kingcome describe heritage as a form of entertainment rather than education, saying “the tag ‘heritage’ becomes a synonym for ‘consumable,’ something preserved rather than living” (1998, 53). While it may appear that there is nothing inherently destructive about this deliberate packaging of history, many have written about the increasing customer focus of the heritage industry, and the need to produce a marketable customer experience, meaning that customer demands have a greater than ever impact on heritage programming, and therefore on the construction of heritage and landscape (Wells 2006, 7). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggests that where landscapes and heritage are concerned, tourists would often prefer to look at a tidy, pleasing image of the destination rather than the real thing, with all its contradictions and messy edges (1998, 144). Wayne Fife writes about a “semantic slippage” in which tourists believe a heritage construct, or hyperreal version of a location’s history, to be real, without recognising that the academic historical record may contradict what they believe to be accurate (2004).

The postmodern approach to history has problematized the idea of a grand historical narrative, and the idea that only one true historical narrative can exist for a location (Harvey 2010, 325-6). Cultural geographer David Harvey argues that in every society, heritage is a construct, but that the idea of a true history is a construct as well, and that the influence of market demands and commodification does not

necessarily invalidate the narratives told at heritage industry attractions.

Nonetheless, while the accuracy of competing historical narratives may be a purely academic matter, the process of making a landscape into a heritage landscape does have very real consequences for those who live in it. And when the narratives in competition with one another are those of the locals and those of any number of outsiders, the matter becomes even more fraught.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett writes, “Dying economies stage their own rebirth as displays of what they once were, sometimes before the body is cold” (1998, 151). Often, individuals who have lived the experience being displayed must witness it being packaged and marketed as a tidier, more pleasing version of reality. And as part of this, these individuals become part of the package. MacCannell writes that tourism is an inherently othering activity, in which tourists see locals as the other, and in so doing, objectify them, seeing them as parts of the landscape (2011, 10). Moreover, tourists may take a relatively enlightened approach to othering a people, seeing their otherness as a positive, rather than something which makes them lesser. However, in heritage tourism, which is so often about seeking to access a pre-commercialist time, this tends to occur as part of the “cult of the picturesque,” which Amy Hale argues involves the imposition of middle-class values on a working class people, and has distinctly colonialist undertones (MacCannell 2011, 8; Hale 2001a, 188).⁴ Anthropologist Claude Jacobs elaborates on this further, describing tourism as the search for something different from the everyday.

⁴ See also McKay 2009.

Because of this, that which is seen by tourists, including the local people they encounter, is susceptible to being exoticised. Jacobs quotes Pierre Van den Berghe and Charles Keys, who write, “the native is not simply ‘there’ to serve the needs of the tourist; he is himself ‘on show’ a living spectacle to be scrutinized, photographed, tape recorded, and interacted with in some particular ways” (2001, 310). The longer locals spend enacting mythicized versions of their culture, the more likely they are to believe this definition of their culture is an accurate one (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 51). The danger of this happening as a result of heritage tourism is that a community may begin to believe that all of its potential lies in the past, and develop an “unwillingness to break from the past” (Hale 2001b, 173). Alternatively, locals may reject the imposition of a heritage-based identity by outside forces, causing very real tension between those locals and the forces driving tourist development (Hale 2001a).

Amongst all this, there is one hopeful, and indeed important, note. Several writers have identified the discipline of folklore as being particularly well suited to prepare people to act as cultural mediators when developing a site for heritage or cultural tourism. Regina Bendix looks at heritage productions not as mere “fakelore,” but as invented tradition (1989, 132). While the concept of invented tradition carries negative connotations for some, Bendix argues that the act of invention implies expressivity and agency: the very things folklorists study (1998, 132). Public folklorist Robert Baron makes a similar argument, saying that although cultural tourism relies on the objectification of a place, objectification does not have to be a damaging activity. Rather, a community can use its agency to agree to be temporarily objectified (2009, 65). Already

at risk of objectification by tourists, recognising a community's agency in choosing to develop a reified version of itself is an important step preventing academics from doing the same.

As folklorist Patricia Wells writes,

We [folklorists] understand the complex politics of culture and those of outside developers and government agencies. We do not assume homogeneity of community members, or that community representatives actually speak for all members of a community. We also understand that, although cultural and heritage tourism initiatives require the generation of products, we are dealing with people.... it can mean life or death in both cultural and economic terms for some traditional communities (2006, 11).

In addition to understanding that community representatives are not always, in fact, representative of the community, folklorists are also well positioned to negotiate other forms of representation, both etic and emic. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett identifies "the power inherent in the act of representing others," and as was discussed above, the representation of a site, both on location, and in pre-consumed media, has a large role in shaping outsiders' understandings of the site (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1988, 143; Jacobs 2001, 311). Ensuring that some of this power of representation remains in the hands of locals is crucial to local cultural wellbeing (Baron 2009, 79).

Heritage Tourism in Cornwall

Engaging with all of the difficulties outlined above, a great deal of research has focused on authenticity, agency, and heritage tourism in Cornwall. The process through which heritage tourism came to be integral to the Cornish economy was outlined in the

introduction. Today, with Cornwall still being one of the most economically underprivileged regions in the European Union, tourism is as crucial as ever (Meethan 2002, 27; Thornton 1993, 80; Hale 2006, 272). Part of the success of Cornish tourism depends on both insiders and outsiders believing that the industry helps the Cornish economy, even if the impact of tourism is minimal, and may benefit outsiders more than it does locals (Andrew 1997, 722-725). Further complicating this is the fact that for some, Cornwall's peripheral cultural status may be linked to its peripheral economic status; in line with scholarship done on other tourism-dependent, economically marginal regions, Graham Busby and Patrick Laviolette argue that for some visitors attracted by Cornwall's reputation for being culturally rich, material poverty and spiritual wealth are inexorably linked (Busby and Laviolette 2012, 166; see also: Everett 2007, 73; Ó'Giolláin 2000, 142-164). Clearly, questions of heritage and power in Cornwall are not simple ones to answer.

As I discussed in the introduction, outsiders see Cornwall in many different ways. Beaches, granite-built hamlets, King Arthur, megaliths, hill forts, holy wells, mine shafts, pirates and wreckers, fishing villages, the Cornish language, Methodism, and many other symbols all become markers of Cornish identity, as understood by outsiders. Busby and Laviolette quote archaeologist Barry Cunliffe, who writes that there is a "new Celtomania in Europe, where visitors are more likely to be spirit Celts rather than blood Celts" (2012, 170). Amy Hale similarly writes of "cardiac Celts," who have an emotional rather than genetic connection with the Celtic identity (2002, 167). In the context of Cornwall, these groups take the various markers of Cornish identity, and particularly those which have to do with spirituality or Celticity, and claim rights to them, appropriating them for their

own benefit. Insofar as historical and cultural accuracy are concerned, this is problematic, because a great deal of this appropriation is, in fact, the appropriation of values and symbols which, as I outlined in the introduction, outsiders projected onto Cornwall in the first place. Many have written about this, with Busby and Laviolette describing the “reification of Old Cornwall,” a process which Kennedy and Kingcome problematize, when they ask which era of Cornwall’s past constitutes the “real” Cornwall (Busby and Laviolette 2012, 166; Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 46). Kennedy and Kingcome write about “the spectre of a sanitised, Disneyesque, ‘Kernowland,’ shrink-wrapped, preserved, and furnished with fudge for the consumption of visitors and locals alike”^{5, 6} (1998, 45). But these writers are most concerned with the consumption of this version of heritage-Cornwall by locals. Using Barthes’ concept of myth, they write that as heritage tourism became the dominant industry in Cornwall, “simulation, rather than accurate representation began to overwhelm reality. Myths, which, according to Barthes, naturalise ideology, and render it into ‘common sense’ forms, took root which still inform views of identity and locality” (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 51). Kennedy and Kingcome ask, “to what extent do these simulations displace what existed before?” (1998, 53). They conclude that there is no such thing as “the real Cornwall” (1998, 46).

And while this mythologised past distorts locals’ understandings of place, it also distorts the way outsiders perceive Cornwall. As a place which seems to now

⁵ “Kernow” is the Cornish-language name for Cornwall, and is often used in the Cornish heritage industry.

⁶ Clotted cream, a rich dairy product, is produced in the neighbouring counties of Devon and Cornwall, and is considered an important cultural signifier. Both counties use this cream in their respective variants on the “cream tea,” and Cornwall specifically uses it in particular styles of ice cream and fudge. As fudge is the only one of these three treats which can be packaged and transported, and is considered distinctly Cornish, it is frequently found in souvenir shops in the county, and is therefore heavily associated with the tourism industry.

exist in the past, Kennedy and Kingcome write, “Cornwall is not a place to live in or a place with problems; it is a place to visit, an escape from the centres, the humdrum of fast-paced consumerism” (1998, 55). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett writes that when the appeal of a destination is that it is a place to escape to, “the push away from home is stronger than the pull toward [that] particular place” (1998, 153). As a result, Cornwall now has a notable second home problem: wealthy individuals from elsewhere in the United Kingdom purchase second homes in Cornwall, spending only a few months of the year there, hollowing out communities in the off-season, and driving up property prices to the extent that the Cornish cannot afford to live in their own county (Hale 2001a, 187).⁷ Cornwall becomes a place to be invented by outsiders as a heritage-infused antidote to their everyday lives, rather than one which is allowed to sustain a mundane, contemporary reality. The semi-imagined folk customs of previous generations of the Cornish become more real than the everyday existence of those who live there now.

This leaves something of an identity vacuum for the native Cornish, an issue about which Hale has written extensively. She points out that one of the core causes of this was the closure of the last tin mines in the 1990s (Hale 2001b, 169). While outsiders most often define Cornwall by its more pre-industrial, romanticised traits,

⁷ A much remarked-upon phenomenon affecting rural settings marketed to city-dwellers, the Newfoundland cognate is addressed in Emily Urquhart’s PhD thesis, *The 21st Century Outport: Reimagining Home in Newfoundland*. Further discussion of second home ownership can be found in *Second Homes: Curse or Blessing* (ed. Coppock 1977) and, more recently, *Tourism, Mobility and Second Homes* (ed. Hall and Muller 2004).

the mining industry has always been integral to the self-identification of the Cornish (Hale 2004, 206). Thus, the Cornish face a double challenge: the loss of their primary identity marker, and the imposition of other markers by outsiders. Hale quotes a study undertaken in 1986, which reported, “the picture that emerges from our study is of a Cornwall swamped by a flood of middle-class, middle-aged, middle-browed city dwellers who effectively imposed their standards upon local society” (Perry *et al.* in Hale 2002, 166). Writing in 2001, Hale suggested that Cornwall’s mining heritage had no place in the picturesque vision tourists wanted to encounter while visiting the county (2001, 188). Over the past fifteen years, this has changed to a certain degree: Cornwall’s mining landscape gained UNESCO World Heritage status in 2006, and the recent BBC historical drama, *Poldark*, has sparked a renewal of interest in Cornwall’s mining heritage.

This is not, however, to say that an interest in Cornish mining has replaced the “cult of the picturesque.” Rather, it has been neatly incorporated into it. Coupland and Coupland write of the bitterness of the many Cornish miners who lost their jobs in the 1990s, only to be rehired as tour guides in the newly opened mining museums (2014). The fact that they had, until recently, been making their livings as miners was intended to convey a sense of authenticity to the tourist experience, but these miners were strictly instructed to present a cleaned up version of the mining experience; they were not allowed to swear, or to express the racist or sexist sentiments which had once circulated amongst the miners (2014, 507). Coupland and Coupland call this “mediated authenticity” (2014, 507). Similarly, the “Poldark Mine Heritage Complex” is a visitor attraction, where mining is portrayed as a

romantic cottage industry, much as it is in the *Poldark* books and television series (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 52).

One other factor in the use of mining in Cornwall's heritage industry is its importance to diasporic and genealogy tourism. As discussed in the introduction, the mid-nineteenth-century 'Great Migration' was a formative event in Cornwall's modern economic development. But in losing such a significant portion of its population, Cornwall created a global diasporic community whose members became renowned for the advanced mining prowess they carried with them from Cornwall (Busby and Laviolette 2012, 167).⁸ Pride in their mining heritage has made mining as important a cultural marker to many of these communities as it still is in Cornwall, and visits to mining-based attractions are frequently a part of genealogy-focused visits to Cornwall (Hale 2006, 280). However, it is important to note that these diasporic populations do not have identical understandings of Cornwall's mining heritage and identity to those held by those still living in Cornwall. Hale writes that many such diasporic visitors associate their Cornish heritage with both mining and the spiritual and cultural 'Celtic' identity (2006, 280-1). Their Cornish ancestry does not prevent them from romanticising the county, or buying into the "cult of the picturesque."

The tension between the way Cornish identity is portrayed to outsiders, and the way the Cornish wish to understand their own identity has led to some very real political consequences. An undercurrent of Cornish nationalism exists in

⁸ See, for example, Pendarvis House, a heritage tourism site in Mineral Point, Wisconsin, established in 1935 to showcase the Cornish foundation of the area's mining heritage.

Cornwall's political scene, and protests have been launched over the past twenty years against organisations from outside of Cornwall which work to protect and present Cornish heritage (Hale 2001a; Hale 2002). The most notable of these organisations is English Heritage, one of the largest heritage organisations in the United Kingdom, deemed objectionable not only for the fact that its name implies an English appropriation of Cornish heritage, but for the fact that some believe it imposes an Anglicised historical narrative onto Cornish heritage (Hale 2001a, 188-191).

Taken together, all of these factors create a confused picture of Cornish identity and heritage, and make any pronouncements on the nature of a true Cornish identity virtually impossible.⁹ In the absence of any universally accepted grand narrative of Cornish identity, visitors must construct their own understanding of the “deeper truths” of Cornwall. Multiple scholars writing about tourism in Cornwall have alluded to constructions of authenticity similar to Fife's “aesthetic authenticity.” Coupland and Coupland write about the frames of “performative authenticity” and “recreational authenticity,” in which what is presented as authentic to tourists is acknowledged to be at least partially constructed to align with tourist expectations (2014, 503, 513). They write, “Heritage tourism discourse is best characterised as a complex of authentication moves, reflecting heritage's complex social construction – the past meaningfully reconstructed for consumption and commemoration in the present” (2014, 513). This reflects a certain

⁹ I interviewed several Cornish people, from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, who insisted that today, the “real Cornish” are those who live in the council estates surrounding several formerly industrial towns, far from the county's tourist attractions.

amount of self-awareness on the part of the tourist about his or her role in constructing a definition of authenticity. Busby and Laviolette suggest that this process may be considerably less consciously undertaken when they say, “[i]mportant distinctions between *a priori*, *in situ* and *a posteriori* visitor perception exist” (2012, 167). Like MacCannell, they assert that a great deal of the way in which tourists see a tourist landscape depends on the ways in which those tourists have imagined it beforehand, and that the ways in which they later remember the landscape can also be affected by external mediating factors. Tourists believe they have accessed the “authentic” Cornwall when they find those presentations of the county which align with their imagined vision of it.

Conclusion

Though heritage tourism has long been taken as “just another aspect of a... leisure industry,” the issues surrounding heritage tourism in Cornwall provide very clear proof of its many complex implications for both locals and visitors alike (Harvey 2010, 324).

Voase writes,

The service class predilection for individuated, non-contrived tourist experience has reached hegemonic levels, because tourism, like other fields of consumption, has become a battleground for the symbolic struggle.... It could be added that tourism makes a very suitable battleground because, in a world where global manufacturing has led to a convergence of styles... in tourism, it is still possible (almost) to do something completely individual. In this symbolic struggle, the active rejection of the contrived and commodified is as much a part of the act of consumption as the seeking out of the individual and tasteful: they are in symbiotic binary opposition (2006, 292).

In a world in which the consumption of symbols has the power to reflect identity, the ways in which individuals consume the “imaginary symbolic” while engaging in tourist practices takes on great importance. Locals and tourists each have their own understandings of heritage and identity, and of the ways in which these are constructed and verified. In the following chapters, I will examine moments of alignment and misalignment between tourists’ and locals’ expressions of their understandings of place. When their understandings are in line with one another, or when locals exercise communicative competence in their portrayal of the site in question, presenting the version of the site that tourists wish to see, tourism is at its most successful (Bauman 1975). When, however, there is a disconnect, when tourists judge the locals’ performance not to be communicatively competent, the site is less successful, leading to dissatisfaction on the part of the tourist.

Chapter Three: ZENNOR

INTRODUCTION

I first visited Zennor near the end of the year I spent studying in Exeter, a city in the county to the east of Cornwall (see Figure 2.1). Having discovered that year how rich England's hiking infrastructure was, and looking for a walk which was a little more rugged than what the rolling hills around Exeter could offer, I decided to spend a day walking on Cornwall's north coast. I had heard that this coast offered some spectacular scenery, and knew that the award-winning South West Coast Path (SWCP) had a well-maintained, demanding trail right along the area's dramatic cliffs. Looking through the SWCP's website for a walk which was accessible by train, I found the eight-mile St. Ives to Zennor walk (see Figure 2.2). Immediately intrigued by its strange name, I read the small scraps of information about Zennor in my *Rough Guides Devon and Cornwall* guidebook. Three short paragraphs promised that this "ancient village" had once been home to D.H. Lawrence, and had a museum rich with artefacts from prehistoric Cornwall (see Figures 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5), a Mediaeval church containing a carving of a mermaid which related to a local legend (see Figures 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8) and a 4,500-year-old granite burial structure nearby (see Figure 2.10). An inset segment about D.H. Lawrence's time in Zennor included the following quotation: "[Zennor is] a tiny granite village nestling under high shaggy moor hills, and a big sweep of lovely sea, lovelier even than the Mediterranean... It is all gorse now, flickering with flowers, and then it will be the heather; and then, hundreds of foxgloves. It is the best place I have been in, I think" (D.H. Lawrence in Andrews 2010, 286). Even before laying eyes on Zennor, I was smitten with it.

I was only able to spend a brief amount of time in the village before catching the bus back to St. Ives, but I was lucky enough to be able to return two more times, once with friends, and once alone, before visiting to do my fieldwork. During those first three visits, I developed a sense of fascination with the place, feeling it to be unlike anywhere I had ever been before. Though the possession of a local legend is hardly unique to Zennor, its famous mermaid legend, about a mermaid who came to shore and joined the church choir, then lured the choir's most handsome, young tenor either to a watery grave, or a happy marriage below the waves, depending on who tells it, is supplemented by a mysterious fifteenth-century carving of a mermaid on a bench end in the church (see Figure 2.9). Westwood and Simpson write that, "according to [the people of Zennor], the story accounted for the carving of a mermaid on a bench-end in Zennor church. But rather than this image being made in her memory, it was undoubtedly the bench-end, carved in the fifteenth century and now part of the chancel seat, that inspired the story" (122). What I was most intrigued by was the fact that nobody seems to know where it falls on the spectrum between Christianity and Paganism. This sense of mystery extends to Zennor quoit, a half-collapsed Neolithic burial structure in the moors which loom above the village. I made the difficult climb through the moor's heather and gorse twice, and on both occasions, as I sat alone by the ruin to read or play the tin whistle I had brought with me, I was battered by a strong wind which whipped through the chambers of the quoit, and which the weather down in the village had given me no cause to expect. I was quite taken by the sense that there was something otherworldly about this landscape.

The West Penwith Peninsula, where Zennor is located, has the highest concentration of Neolithic megaliths of any region of the United Kingdom (Hale 2002, 160). On one of

my visits, after a 26-mile cross-country hike from Penzance which I had plotted specifically to allow me to visit four of these monuments, Sue Wilson, owner of Tregeraint House Bed and Breakfast, where I was staying for two nights, lent me a book entitled *Mermaid to Merrymaid: Journey to the Stones*, by Ian McNeil Cooke. The back cover of the book describes it as being about the “ancient sites & pagan mysteries of Celtic Cornwall” and pairs nine walking routes which “guide the reader on a journey of mystery to ancient ceremonial sites going back in time beyond the Christian kingdoms of the post-Roman Dark Ages, past pagan Iron Age warrior clans to the shadowy and elusive ‘merry maidens of the moon,’” with extensive chapters covering speculative interpretations of Stone, Bronze and Iron Age spiritualities as well as various elements of Cornish folklore (Cooke 1996). Reading it while recuperating from my walk in the beautifully restored Tinnars Arms pub, which looks like it comes straight from the set of the *Lord of the Rings* movies (see Figures 2.13, 2.14, and 2.15), I was well aware of how deeply fanciful this book was, but nonetheless enjoyed the way it confirmed the mystical landscape I had constructed for Zennor and the whole West Penwith Peninsula. The contradiction between the superiority I felt at knowing that books like this, written by those interested in the so-called “Earth Mysteries,” were not historically or archaeologically sound, and the sense of deep fascination I felt for the magic with which these writers had imbued the landscape around them, as well as my propensity to do the same, was something which intrigued me. It was this interest which first led me to consider Zennor as a possible subject of study.

As I was to find out when I decided to make Zennor one of the locations for my thesis research, my experience was far from universal; there is a much greater range of

factors which draw people to Zennor than those which first brought me there, and led me to want to return. Many come purely because their hike takes them there, but have no interest in the history; some have heard the legend of the Mermaid of Zennor, and some have not; some come because it is part of an area dense with sites from Cornwall's mining heritage, a subject of greater interest in the United Kingdom than I had previously realised; some come because of literary associations which, until recently, I knew nothing of. Furthermore, when I came back to do my fieldwork, I was armed not only with a year of folklorist's training and an awareness of the need for critical thought and distance which that engendered, but also, perhaps, a small amount of academic arrogance. I expected to find that, like me, the tourists would be taken in by the picture perfect historicity of the village, but that unlike me, they would not stop to wonder if any part of that image was staged. I also assumed that, like me, most tourists would be interested in the Neo-Pagan landscape, and the village's mermaid legend, not knowing as I did that this interpretation of the landscape and the legend of the mermaid had been built up around the ruins and the mermaid carving, respectively, rather than being remnants of ancient belief systems. And when I learned what an integral part of Cornwall's tourist landscape its mining heritage was, I jumped to the conclusion that people's understandings of Cornwall's mining past must have been derived entirely from representations such as that in *Poldark*, which show a romanticised, softened version of the brutal mining industry. Naturally, I learned that the reality was far more nuanced than this. Zennor is not as thoroughly a tourist construct as I had anticipated, and the tourists certainly were not as naïve or uncritical as I had expected them to be.

The first chapter of this section will explore the way Zennor is presented and experienced by those who live and work there now, and the processes which have gone into its construction over the previous several centuries. The second chapter will use the interviews I conducted with tourists to examine visitors' perspectives on the village, and their understandings of what makes the site authentic or not. Finally, this section's conclusion will present these two groups' perspectives in dialogue. A tourist site cannot exist without both tourists and locals, and only a successful dialogue between these two interests can produce a successful tourist site. In the case of Zennor, I will argue that while locals and tourists have a broad range of differing perspectives on authenticity in Cornwall, there is a shared sense of "aesthetic authenticity" in Zennor which makes it a very functional heritage tourism site.

“WE’M PLEASED TO SEE ’EM COME, AND PLEASED TO SEE ’EM GO”:

LOCAL CONSTRUCTION OF ZENNOR

Zennor, seemingly unchanging, has a complicated history which has made defining the essence of the village, and what it means to be local to the area, very difficult. Beginning its life as a standard, if exceedingly picturesque, Cornish village, Zennor became one of the jewels in the crown of the Cornwall favoured by artists and more adventurous travellers around the turn of the twentieth century. Since that time, Zennor’s population has been a balanced mix of incomers drawn to the area by its natural beauty and readily apparent heritage, and old Cornish families. Increasingly part of this mix are the second home owners from wealthier counties in England, who buy cottages in the village, and spend one or two months of the year there. While these second home owners are seen as a threat, driving up house prices, and hollowing out the village in the off-season, those who move to Zennor permanently (henceforth referred to as “incomers”) play an important role in maintaining the economy and cultural vitality of the village, and their presence is therefore accepted by the old Zennor families.

With the concept of staged authenticity being so integral to tourism studies, it is often easiest to assume that belief in the existence of the authentic core of a tourist destination is a fallacy. Locals in Zennor, however, do have a very strong sense of the “real” Zennor, and it is one which is full of the old customs and magic of the land, even if these might seem like they should be part of the version of Cornwall constructed for tourists, rather than the Cornwall experienced by the county’s native inhabitants. Nonetheless, locals in Zennor are insistent that their parish is in a magical part of the world, and one which has

maintained a certain number of the old ways. How, then, can this be reconciled with the principle that tourist sites are commodified for tourist consumption, damaging local communities and their customs by making objects of them? It seems that in Zennor, the old families and the incomers have developed a symbiotic relationship to take advantage of this. The old families, most of whom live on the farms surrounding the village, recognise that tourism is crucial for their economic survival; meanwhile, those involved in the tourism of the village, who are predominantly incomers, depend on the continuing presence of the farming families who function as a living backdrop to the vision of Zennor as a village which has kept to the old Cornish lifeways. This partnership, whether the two groups have consciously joined in it or not, is one which allows the old families and the incomers to work together to portray the version of Zennor visitors would like to see, which matches visitors' understandings of aesthetic authenticity, while also allowing the old families to continue in their customs, undisturbed by the visitors. Unlike the laid off miners at Geevor Mine, the Zennor farming families do not have to perform their identities for tourist consumption: the incomers do this for them.

In this chapter, I will discuss the ways locals understand the processes which have gone into making Zennor into what it is today: a village partially constructed for tourist consumption, but which is also able to accommodate a thriving local community.

History

Before the twentieth century, Zennor's history was much like that of any other small, Cornish village or hamlet. When he passed away fifteen years ago, John Wilson, originally from South-East England, but then living in the house which had formerly

belonged to Zennor's resident antiquarian, was in the middle of compiling research for a book on the history of Zennor. His wife, Sue, whose bed and breakfast I stayed at for two nights, and about whom I will write more later in this chapter, was kind enough to give me access to his notes, and the following brief history is based on the notes he collected from a variety of sources. Several of these sources are quite old, some are not indicated, and some are from oral histories collected by Mr. Wilson, but at the very least, they provide a useful overview of Zennor's history as it is understood by the people of the area. He cites an unidentified 1931 history of Zennor, which said, "Practically nothing definite or uncontroversial is known about the Parish of Zennor previous to the year 1270. After that year such information as is available is fragmentary and occurs in spasms which are not closely linked together." When the church and pub were built around the year 1270, Mr. Wilson's notes say that there were wooded areas near Zennor; when chopping down the wood to be used in construction, "the woodcutters suffered greatly through the attacks of wild animals." He quotes a source which said, "It was still told in the 1920s that ten men went from the village to guard ten men cutting the wood, from the attacks of wild animals – wolves, probably." Zennor was certainly part of a remote, wild landscape: one of Mr. Wilson's sources says that there were no roads in Zennor until after 1500.

Based on the fact that there were no local gentry or major landowners, and reflecting contemporary beliefs about Cornish ethnicity, the author of the 1931 history of Zennor wrote, "It is therefore a fair presumption that the true indigene of Zennor in 1931 is of practically pure Celtic extraction, but is tinged to an unknown extent with Iberian blood." And reflecting Zennor locals' own understandings of who they were, Mr. Wilson

provides the following uncited quotation: “In Zennor anybody is a foreigner who is not born of Zennor stock.” To a certain extent, this attitude still prevails today.

Though some of Mr. Wilson’s notes may seem to take more from legend than fact, Zennor is a village whose history is clearly based on a tradition of hard work. Items on a list of “industries that have gone from Z[ennor]” include “mining, milling, spinning, weaving, cheese-making, bacon-curing... dressmaking, tailoring, cobbling, blacksmithery, shoeing, carpentering and shopkeeping.” Mr. Wilson also records a long history of fishing, saying it was “tithed as early as 1270.” At the height of Cornwall’s mining industry, people from Zennor worked at Ding Dong mine, approximately six miles away, “leaving before daylight... [and] coming home in the dark.” The need for hard work is reflected in the following story, collected by Colonel Hirst, the local antiquarian, in the Tinner’s Arms pub in the village:

Young Willie Nicholls of Kerrow met Miss Edwards of Fooge at 11am on a bright summer’s day on the Zennor moors. They chatted amiably for almost half an hour. When WN reached home he said to his mother: - “They tell me that girl is a good worker and would make a good wife. But I do not believe that any maid who can waste half an hour talking to me, would suit me for a wife.”

Mr. Wilson comments on this that “the point of the story is that ‘a Zennor farmer’s wife is as much of a drudge as any wife could well be.’”

Poverty, too, was far from unknown in Zennor. Mr. Wilson records the fact that “since the Z[ennor] folk can never have had much money,” both local tin and wool were “bartered for the liquor which smugglers brought to the coast – the duties on both, inwards and outwards, being thus avoided.” Indeed, there seems often to have been a

certain amount of illegal activity in Zennor. Mr. Wilson quotes a source which says, “smuggling was a regular industry until about 1840,” and another more fanciful source, which says that “some years ago, before the noble art of smuggling had been suppressed by the ubiquitous coastguard, Zennor men used to keep a few boats here [in Zennor Cove].” Despite this, the sources that Wilson draws upon are adamant that wrecking, for which Cornwall was notorious, was never practiced in Zennor. Wrecking, which either involves using lights to lure ships onto sharp rocks in the middle of the night, or simply waiting until ships naturally run aground in difficult waters, is the practice of taking advantage of shipwrecks by stealing the goods which float ashore, and, sometimes, murdering the survivors. Wilson quotes two sources, both of which describe shipwrecks, one in 1470, and the other in the seventeenth century, in which the survivors were rescued and cared for by the people of Zennor. Both of these sources claim this as proof that wrecking was never practiced in Zennor.

Whatever the case, none of these historical claims are unique to Zennor. Until the twentieth century, Zennor was in many ways simply a variation on the theme of the West Cornwall village. Around the turn of the twentieth century, however, the village began to be noticed by those holidaying in St. Ives. As previously noted, it became a popular haunt of England’s modernist literati and others in their social circle, with visits by Virginia Woolf, John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield, Havelock Ellis, and Saxon Sydney-Turner, among others recorded by Mr. Wilson. While these visitors were the first generation of many to forge a link between the arts and the area around Zennor, the region was also increasingly being advertised to the slightly wider public at the beginning

of the century. The guidebook, *From St. Ives to Land's End*, published in 1908, paints quite a picture of the West Penwith area:

Come to one of these little coves when the summer clouds scarce move across the blue, 'shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind,' when the flowers glow like jewels against the azure of the sea, when the air is heavy with the scent of the heath and the drowsy hum of bees; when the little waves are murmuring to the sound as soft as crooning dove, and it will remain with you as one of your most exquisite memories of peace and beauty. But come here when the storm fiend is lashing the waves to fury, and the air is thick with flying spume, when even the cliffs are trembling before the terrific onslaught, and perhaps some broken vessel, as, alas, often happens, is being torn to fragments on the rocks beneath, and it will probably form the most tragic experience of your life (Stokes 1908, 22-3).

Evidently, from the very beginning of its construction as a tourist landscape, West Penwith's natural beauty and elemental volatility were its key selling points.

The same 1908 guidebook later goes on to describe the walking route to Zennor, and the village itself. This description is worth quoting at length, as evidence of the fact that Zennor was already being portrayed as a desirable holiday destination.

This quaint little village is situated in a wild and rock-strewn region, and is a charming place in which to spend a summer's holiday. The moor rises immediately above it, cliff and cove are within easy access, its stream is full of trout, and it has a fine logan rock of its own about a hundred yards to the north-east of the church. In fact, the finest scenery in the district lies between this village and Morvah, a distance of about four miles. The thirteenth-century church has been neatly restored, but contains no very interesting architectural features... the famous Zennor mermaid is a curious fragment of

medieval wood-carving. The story goes that this fair daughter of the sea was drawn some way up the valley by the fine singing of the squire's son, who in his turn was drawn by his admirer into her native element, and never seen again. The moral to be drawn is left entirely to the reader's particular idiosyncrasies. We will now get a glass of milk at the house opposite the church. It belongs to Mrs. Griggs, who lets lodgings. One can always get tea here, and comfortable permanent quarters, provided her rooms are vacant. To those who require something stronger than milk or tea, the "Tinner's Arms" will be found an adequate hostelry (Stokes 1908, 78-9).

Mrs. Griggs, it must be noted, seems to have been something of a local character and, if the notes and sketches left in her guestbook are any indication, one of the main attractions in Zennor. Her granddaughter, Alison Symons, discusses her role in the community in *Tremedda Days: A View of Zennor, 1900-1944*, her excellent memoir of life in the village. "Granny Griggs" hosted several of the prominent figures who stayed in the village, and "was much admired as a landlady and provider of cream teas" (1992, 142). But while this, and the guidebook's description of her, may make her sound like a sedate, grandmotherly type, Symons goes on to write about her various escapades, including the fact that at one point, she and another villager "were fined five shillings, quite a sizeable sum of money in those days, for gambling in the Tinnars' Arms!" (1992, 144). Granny Griggs' success may have contributed to the fact that, by 1931, Zennor had a booming tourism trade. Mr. Wilson provides the following quotation from the 1931 history of Zennor mentioned earlier:

In the summer months the letting of rooms and boarding of lodgers is a regular industry in Z developed already as far as it is likely to develop. Such occupation is allied to the selling of teas in farm

houses and cottages. Relatively prices and charges are high and they are fixed without regard to changes in commodity prices. Thus in 1931 it is possible to obtain similar accommodation and greater amenities in Penzance for little more than half what is ordinarily charged in Zennor.

I will address the fact that Zennor continues to be compared favourably to “tacky” and “inauthentic” tourist destinations in the next chapter, but it is evident that this early iteration of the tourism industry in Zennor laid the groundwork for it to be considered a relatively costly, sophisticated destination.

It was also at this time that the “permanent tourists” began to arrive in Zennor. While this is, perhaps, an unkind moniker for the people who moved to the village and became important members of the community, it does reflect their shared characteristic of having been first attracted to some idealised notion of life in village, but then settling into the local patterns of life. Alison Symons’ family is a perfect example of this process. Granny Griggs was Symons’ father’s mother, and of old Zennor stock. Symons’ mother, on the other hand, was the “daughter of well-to-do Scottish parents,” and moved to Zennor as a young woman around the year 1910, determined to become a farmer (Symons 1992, 3). Upon his return from fighting in World War One, Granny Griggs’ son Maurice, “a farming man from Zennor Churchtown,” managed to court Symons’ mother, despite attempted interferences by her Italian chaperone, and they were married in 1920 (Symons 1992, 5-6). Writing about his visit to their farm not long after their marriage, Hamada, “the famous Japanese potter,” described a household which could as easily entertain visiting artists and sophisticates as carry out rigorous farm duties (Symons 1992, 6).

Another incomer who made a significant mark on the village was Colonel Frederick Hirst, whose archaeological work inspired the creation of Zennor's Wayside Folk museum. After moving to Zennor in the 1930s, Hirst wanted to engage with what he saw as the "primitive" agricultural history of Cornwall, and founded the West Cornwall Field Club, which later became the Cornish Archaeological Society (pers. comm.). The archaeological digs undertaken by this group supplied some of the many artefacts on display in the museum. Hirst was also an amateur ethnographer, with one unnamed writer quoted by Mr. Wilson remembering how he "spent hours on end maybe leaning over a wall talking, or sitting on a bench or boulder in the sun listening, and remembering, all these men and women could tell." When he passed away before being able to realise his dream of opening a museum to display these artefacts, a Mrs. Lloyd took over his artefacts and succeeded in establishing the Wayside Folk Museum. She herself was from a wealthy family, and had persuaded her husband, a retired army major, that they should, in the words of Bob Priddle, the current owner of the museum, "come and live in a cottage with no running water and no electricity," so that she could become an artist. Her one surviving son, now quite elderly, still lives in the village today.

Zennor has come a long way from its early days as a village of hard workers living on the brink of poverty. Over the past century, its charms have been noticed, embraced, and shared by outsiders who have adopted Zennor with varying degrees of permanency. The next section of this chapter will discuss the population groups which have taken up this legacy and live in the village today.

The Locals

In *Tremedda Days*, Alison Symons writes, “Zennor Parish had many colourful characters. They could be divided into two categories; those ancients who were part and parcel of the farming community, and the fraternity of artistic-minded folk who were drawn to Zennor like moths to a candle flame, trying to capture some of the wild grandeur in words, music or paint” (1992, 139). This double population is still firmly in existence today, although the space occupied by the artistic community now contains many working in the heritage industry instead, people who work to allow visitors to access some of that “wild grandeur.” During my two weeks in Zennor, I spoke to four individuals involved in some way with Zennor’s heritage. Three were from elsewhere in England, and one was from nearby St. Ives, but all were considered part of the community, and all had a great deal to say about the dynamics of what it means to be local in Zennor.

The first person I talked to was Bob Priddle, who, along with his wife Sara, owned the Wayside Folk Museum and Trewey Mill until December, 2015 (see Figures 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5). Having had a long conversation with him about local folklore and history when I visited the museum the summer before, I was not disappointed by his hospitality on this occasion. Talking in the “recent” addition to his sixteenth century house – built in 1830 – Bob filled me in on the history of the parish and the museum, as well as on local dynamics and the importance of tourism to the community. He and Sara moved to Zennor in 2002, about which Bob said, “I decided I wanted to retire from my corporate life and consequently wanted something to do. So what else do you do? You buy a museum, and a water mill. So that’s what we did.” While they had never been to Zennor before

deciding to visit and buy the museum, they had been living in the neighbouring county of Devon for some time, and were familiar with the area, as well as its tourism industry. He said, “when I came down, I was amazed at the richness of the collection and the beautiful area. So, halfway round, I said, ‘Yeah, we’ll buy it.’ And that was it. So it was... probably an impulse buy, but one which I certainly don’t regret, not for a moment.”

My next informant was Sue Wilson, whose husband’s notes I used in the history section of this chapter. Sue singlehandedly runs Tregeraint House Bed and Breakfast, which is just outside the village, but well within Zennor Parish. She and her late husband moved to Zennor from Kent, in South-East England, in 1986 in order to establish a small publishing business. Having visited Zennor a year earlier, an advertisement in a newspaper reading, “property 5 miles from St Ives and also Penzance needing a bit of work doing on the roof!” caught their eye. In an interview I conducted with her by email, she wrote,

It needed more than a roof repair, more like complete renovation. We battled our way through trees that were growing horizontally until we came to the front door, and walked straight over it! Inside the floors were compacted earth on the ground floor with many layers of rotting lino on top and the ceilings were falling in, so you could see straight into the bedrooms. It was grey because of the fog, a magpie was also flapping around in the front room, and although it was quiet we could still hear the booming of the fog horn. Ivy that was thick and lush on the outside had it's roots growing on the inside walls in the downstairs rooms [sic].

Despite this, Sue and her husband decided to take on the project of fixing up the house, and moved in to what they later learned had been the home of Colonel Frederick Hirst.

They operated their publishing company and a bed and breakfast out of the house, and Sue also worked as a potter. While Sue says that living in Cornwall has not had a great deal of impact on her artistic style, she recognises why “artists always refer to the ‘light’ in St Ives and flocked down here from up-country in the early part of the 20th century to capture the said ‘light,’” saying, “I believe it has a lot to do with the clear water over the sand and with the reflection of a blue sky it creates the perfect brightness and also sharpness of colour.” Sue carried on her pottery work and the running of the bed and breakfast after her husband passed away fifteen years ago. In addition to generously allowing me to use her husband’s notes, it was Sue who had lent me her copy of the book, *Mermaid to Merrymaid: Journey to the Stones*, which first led me to consider Zennor as a potential subject of study for my thesis, when I stayed at her bed and breakfast a year earlier. Her love of Zennor is contagious, and is expressed in her description of the area:

Zennor, is like nowhere else that I have lived, the coast line here is wild and rugged with small hamlets and most of the surrounding countryside is farmed by dairy farmers and also there are some sheep. The width of land across from Penzance to Zennor is 5 miles, but the terrain and composition is very different in this short area and at one point on the moor, one is able to see the sea of both sides of the coast. We lived in the Weald of Kent before moving here where most of the properties in our village would be very pretty tile hung Wealden homes, very old with lot's of character [sic]. The area surrounding us would have been hop farms and orchards, very different to the granite houses of Zennor, with their 2-foot thick walls to withstand Atlantic gales and the wild weather that hits our shores.

Serge Middleton, the former vicar of St. Senara's Church, was my next informant. After studying and then working in Oxford for many years, Serge moved to Zennor to take up the post. Now an integral member of the community, he says he was surprised by how he took to life in Zennor, after having built a life in Oxford. He says, "I lived and worked for ten years in Oxford, and I was up there with it, sophisticated, I lived in a beautiful town, I'd been there at university as a student, I was just part of it all, and I thought Oxford was it. I really did." Zennor could not be more different, but he is now a great advocate for the village. Coincidentally, his partner is a former vicar of St. Materiana's Church, the Anglican church in Tintagel, so Serge had much to say about the comparisons to be made between Zennor and Tintagel.

Finally, I had several interactions with Tony Farrell. Born in St. Ives, and educated as an archaeologist, he had a long career in teaching and archaeology and, now retired, gives tours of the St. Ives area, and also sings in Zennor's church choir. I met him by chance while attempting to take an afternoon off from my field work; I had hiked up to Zennor Quoit, and was sitting in the shade of the structure, reading a book, when he and two guests arrived on a tour of West Penwith's ancient monuments. After striking up a conversation with the small group, I was invited to tag along for the remainder of the excellent tour, and afterwards arranged to meet with Tony for an interview. Tony truly has a wealth of knowledge about the area's history, from its earliest, prehistoric days right through to its current political situation. In addition to telling me all about the various local customs still practiced, Tony, who comes from a long line of Cornish seafarers and miners, was able to give me much-needed insight into the attitudes towards incomers and visitors held by some of the old Zennor families.

What does it mean to be local?

Early in my interview with Tony, he said to me,

One of the things that I would have thought would probably be fundamental – but this is me being a St. Ives Cornishman saying this – is the need to separate the indigenous population from even people who... are relatively new incomers.... At what point do I truly define you as indigenous? Is it two generations, three generations, fifty years, I don't know.

Given the coexistence of the population groups I have already described, defining who is local, and what it means to be a local, can be difficult. Everyone I talked to, however, expressed a sense of there being three groups of property owners in Zennor, of which two could consider themselves local. The population Tony called “indigenous” and those who have settled permanently in Zennor, the incomers, comprise the locals, but those who merely own holiday homes are still on the outside. The understandings of these groups, and their relationships with one another, were fairly homogeneous amongst those I talked to.

In an email exchange with Tony about the “indigenous” population, he wrote,

Zennor is very interesting in this sense. You are right that there are “layers” of inhabitants there. But there is a firm bedrock of people who farm the land and do so in the knowledge that their families have done so for generations. Zennor is quite unusual in this sense – and even more so, because the farming community have a sense of the antiquity and traditions of the land they farm. They are a very independent and strong-minded bunch of people.

Bob Priddle, giving the incomer's perspective, concurred with this, saying, “the vast population round here... are farmers, involved in agriculture, and I would say by and

large, they are people that have families in generations that go back many years, in terms of farming.” Adding to this, Sue Wilson outlined the restrictions on what it means to be truly local, writing, “I think to be a local [“indigenous”] in Zennor, you have to have been born here, preferably married here and have children here. About 40 percent of people would be able to say this. There are a few very well-established families (mostly farmers) in the area and who go back generations.” Tony told me that this dynamic, with families rooted on their ancestral farms, is rare in Cornwall now. He said that with properties in Cornwall being bought up by wealthy outsiders and people catering to tourists, “you do have an indigenous population, but they’re on the council estates [government-funded social housing] around the edge of the town.” He added, “You can replicate that in just about every coastal, seaside resort.” In the formerly industrial areas with no tourism to rely on, the situation is even worse.

The impact tourism has had on Cornwall’s native population has led to fairly widespread criticism of incomers. Bob asserted that while people who move to the village permanently are welcomed, “If they have holiday homes here, that’s a different matter.” He explained that this is because of the way holiday home ownership has hollowed out the village, and said,

My wife worked out that in the church town – that’s the few houses around the church – there are only eight people that live here full time. My wife and I, that’s two... nobody lives at the pub... two at the vicarage. Post office row, which is the row of cottages there, probably five, six cottages, up at the back of the church—every one is a holiday home That’s not good for a community. No. So I think that, you know, people... buy holiday homes. They often come

into the museum or the shop to chat, introduce themselves, [and] they always pledge, of course, ‘We’re probably going to be moving here.’ Rare that they do.

Sue Wilson echoed this, saying that this is a common problem in small communities. She wrote, “Properties in this area are very sought after and can be fairly expensive so difficult for any young people to get on the property ladder and therefore to see houses that aren’t lived in all the year around is sometimes moaned about.”

After explaining the Newfoundland concept of the Come-From-Away (CFA)¹⁰ to Tony, he said there was a similar shared attitude towards outsiders in Cornwall. He was particularly aware of outsiders who believed they knew what it meant to be local, or how to act like the locals, and shared the following anecdote:

My father and I used to smile about the incomers from middle-class England who sit outside the Sloop Inn here in St. Ives drinking beer in a howling gale and rain because it’s what they think locals have always done! My father and I used to call them “Taters” because we believed they had always been to the Tate Gallery before going to the Sloop.¹¹ We realised that this was a simple caricature, of course, but it does say a little bit about the way these things are perceived.

The prevailing feeling seems to be that it is only those incomers who commit to life in Zennor, on the old families’ terms, who are accepted.

¹⁰ A Newfoundland label for someone from mainland Canada, or further abroad, living in Newfoundland, often used as a way to slightly “other” these incomers, differentiating them from “real” Newfoundlanders. For an in-depth discussion of the impact of outsiders moving to, and buying property in, small communities in Newfoundland on local definitions of what is “authentic,” see Emily Urquhart’s PhD Dissertation, *The 21st Century Outport: Reimagining Home in Newfoundland*.

¹¹ The Tate Gallery, or Tate St. Ives, is the St. Ives branch of the Tate Modern in London, and is home to much of the art produced in and around St. Ives during the twentieth century. It is one of the foremost tourist attractions in St. Ives, and according to Tony, attracts predominantly middle-class visitors from elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

All four locals I spoke to were quick to assure me of this fact. Bob Priddle affirmed that, “in terms of incomers, people that move into the village, if they move into the village and they’re permanent residents, they’re welcomed.” Sue Wilson was a little more circumspect, saying, “I have been here thirty years, but would assume that I would be referred to as an ‘up-country’ person.” She added, though, that she does get on well with her neighbours and is included in community events. Both Serge, and the owner of the Tinnars Arms pub, who I was unable to interview formally, said that in order to be accepted, incomers must make the effort to fit in to the old families’ way of life. Serge added that “You can be very quickly ostracised if... you don’t go with the flow.” While this may sound a little harsh, Tony said that it does not seem to be too much of a problem, as “incomers/newcomers seem to have caught the flavour of this and generally melt in quite well.” It is this harmonious relationship between the old families and the incomers which has allowed the development of Zennor’s tourist landscape to be so successful and relatively conflict-free.

Incomers: On the Heritage Tourism Front Lines

The Zennor that the incomers working in the heritage and tourism sectors portray to visitors is undeniably one which is constructed to satisfy tourist expectations. They engage in the same processes I discussed previously, selling the version of local culture tourists wish to see. In Zennor, however, contrary to the concern that such commodification of culture contributes to that same culture’s destruction, this arrangement appears to work to everyone’s benefit.

All four locals I spoke to acknowledged the fact that most of what the tourists see as emblems of Zennor's 'Old Cornish' character exists solely for those tourists' benefit, and if the village were not gazed upon by outsiders, simply would not exist. Furthermore, the locals are acutely aware of the preconceptions and, often, misconceptions tourists have about the "authentic" Cornish experience, and sometimes amplify those elements of local culture that match those misconceptions in order to meet tourists' interests. This is a clear case of authenticity being staged.

Sue Wilson wrote that the "tourists see a different side to Zennor as would any of us visiting other countries and areas in a holiday context. They would see beautiful rugged coastline and hopefully sunny days and visiting our quaint pub and folk music on a Thursday and think it idyllic." She then explained that, while it is all this, there is also a great deal of work which goes on below the surface that is never seen by the tourists. She detailed the gruelling schedule she keeps in order to allow her bed and breakfast to run smoothly. Interestingly, she also noted that visitors of different nationalities considered different components of her home emblematic of its Englishness. The Germans recognise her Rayburn cooker and inglenook fireplace from period dramas, while Americans and Australians are often most taken by the age and apparent isolation of the house, even though by English standards, the house is not isolated at all. Sue recognises that this fulfilment of cultural preconceptions is an important part of the tourist experience. Adding another layer to the argument that tourists' understanding of Zennor as a Cornish idyll is a construct is the fact that, until very recently, Zennor was not a prosperous village. I have already discussed its historic poverty, but Tony explained that, even after its 'discovery' by artistic outsiders, the name given to Zennor's inhabitants by those in St.

Ives was the “Zennor goats,” meant to reflect the poverty of the parish. While Zennor now presents its culture as one which is charmingly unchanging, the reality is that its culture has, in fact, changed from one which, until very recently, nobody would consider idyllic.

The romanticising of difficult pasts is widespread in West Penwith. During my time in Zennor, I took the bus to Levant Mine and Beam Engine, a nearby National Trust property (see Figure 2.11). This abandoned mine, built in 1820, is situated practically next door to the more popular Geevor Mine. Both of these mines are operated as tourist attractions, with Geevor, which closed down its operations in 1990, offering tours deep underground in the modern mine, and Levant only offering above-ground tours and information. Interested in Cornwall’s more distant history, and, admittedly, because I had a National Trust membership which would grant me free access, I chose to visit Levant rather than Geevor. While there, the very knowledgeable tour guide impressed upon the small group of us on the tour just how brutal mining had been. It should be impossible to romanticise mining in a tunnel so claustrophobically narrow that the men had to swing their picks sideways, their shoulders being too broad for the space. Nonetheless, the volunteer at Levant’s front desk told me that, due to the airing of the show *Poldark* earlier that year, visitor numbers were up by 30%. Tony was deeply critical of this trend, saying that the show’s depiction of Ross Poldark, a landed gentleman working alongside the miners he employs, and doling out charity whenever necessary, comes nowhere near depicting the truth. He said of the industrial mines, “it was probably hell on earth.”¹²

¹² See the “Work Life” page (<http://www.cornish-mining.org.uk/delving-deeper/work-life>) on the Cornish Mining World Heritage website for descriptions of the “appalling” working conditions in Cornwall’s mines.

Even before *Poldark* captured people's imaginations, Cornwall's mining heritage had been subjected to romantic reimaginings for a very long time. In the 1908 guidebook, *From St. Ives to Land's End*, which I discussed earlier, the author writes,

Some years ago I was travelling through Cornwall in a Great Western train. A lady and her daughter were the only other occupants of the carriage. The girl, an enthusiastic creature, was constantly drawing her mother's attention to these frequent, disused engine houses. 'Oh, mother, look! there is another old castle,' and she expressed her astonishment and delight at the number of these feudal ruins.... I did not undeceive her (Stokes 1908, 67-8).

The mines certainly are a striking component of the Cornish landscape, and having had much the same reaction as the young girl on my first visit to Cornwall, I have to admit to being able to understand the initial impulse to romanticise their place in Cornish history. I will return to this topic later when addressing tourists' experiences of Zennor and West Penwith, but it is certainly interesting to note that even while these mining museums do an excellent job of conveying the brutality of the work that happened there, they use the more romantic image of Cornish mining to attract visitors in the first place.¹³

Tony said that Cornwall's maritime heritage receives similar treatment. Coming from a seafaring family, he explained that, as "a huge number of my family have drowned at sea [or] been injured," the lifestyle is "not one that you romanticise about." Nonetheless, tourists seem to be drawn to the camaraderie of the difficult lives the Cornish fisherman had at sea. Much of the Newlyn School's artwork depicted interpretations of this life, as

¹³ For example, one heading on the National Trust's Levant Mine and Beam Engine website reads, "The Real Poldark? Levant was used for the filming of Poldark. Why not visit and uncover some of the real stories of Cornish mining?" (<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/levant-mine-and-beam-engine>)

have many artistic endeavours since. An event called Tom Bawcock's Eve, which happens every December 23rd in the nearby coastal village of Mousehole, provides an excellent example of this. People flock to the village from all over to eat what is known as starry gazey pie, a pie featuring six different types of fish. The whole harbour is lit up with Christmas lights, and the church choir sings for the crowds. However, Tony told me the story behind the event, which is as follows: "Mousehole was starving (and many villages did for five hundred or so years, the area was poor—very poor) when the boats couldn't get out, and there was no food. And a man called Tom Bawcock, a local Mousehole man, braved the weather singlehanded and went out and got a catch of six types of fish. He came back to Mousehole, and basically lifted the starvation." Tony pointed out that while this brings in large numbers of tourists who want to revel in local customs, the entire event is founded in the poverty which was an ever-present reality in most, if not all, Cornish fishing villages.¹⁴

Even many of those traditions and aspects of life in and around Zennor which seem to prove that life has continued as it always has there, safe from the modernising forces which run rampant elsewhere, only exist because of the outsider's gaze. The area's megaliths are featured heavily in books about local folk customs and Neo-Pagan beliefs. For example, one nearby monument I visited, Men-an-Tol, consists of two standing stones flanking a doughnut-shaped stone (see Figure 2.12). Crawling through the hole in the centre stone three times is said to cure rheumatism, and, according to Earth Mysteries writer Cheryl Straffon, the stones may also have fertility associations, and provide "a

¹⁴ For more on food-sharing customs, see Danaher 1972; Esteve-Faubel and Esteve-Faubel 2015, 343-375, and Mire 1993.

symbolic ‘rebirthing’ for the people at various ‘rites of passage’ in their lives” (2010, 21).¹⁵ However, as Tony told me, many of what are believed to be old Cornish customs are, in fact, Victorian inventions. He said of Cornwall’s eighteenth- and nineteenth-century austere Methodism, “They almost got the more excessive aspects of Cornish culture—Celtic Cornish culture—kind of stamped out. So drinking, you know, bonfires at midnight, all those kind of Popish or Pagan elements were kind of excised.” Even Zennor’s mermaid, so emblematic of the distinctly Celtic marriage of the Church and older, more Pagan beliefs, and so crucial to Zennor’s appearance of being a piece of Old Cornwall, only exists because outsiders have deemed it to be of interest; Serge said, “About the mermaid... you know, without her [and the tourists she attracts], we couldn’t actually—couldn’t survive.” It is an irony unknown to many tourists that it is only the tourist gaze which allows the preservation of this piece of “authentic” Cornwall.

None of this has gone unnoticed by the people I spoke to. Bob, in particular, was aware of the need to show tourists what they wish to see. When I talked to him about his development of the museum, he used the terms “unspoiled,” “atmospheric,” “evocative,” and “like a step back in time,” to describe the ways tourists perceive the village. He and Sara worked hard to ensure that the museum, which was “very rundown” when they arrived, fit in with this aesthetic, and he said that they now “get positive feedback from that point of view.” Bob and Sara also put a great deal of effort into stocking and

¹⁵ The same author also suggests that Men-an-Tol was associated with a prehistoric “moon Goddess,” that it is guarded by “a guardian fairy or pisky,” and that children could be cured of rickets by being passed “three or nine times through the hole widdershins” (Straffon 2012, 22-24). However, to give some credit to those who document the uses of these stones, Cornish-born historian Thomas Tonkin did document the custom of passing through the hole several times in order to relieve back pains around the year 1700 (Cooke 1996, 81). There is, however, no evidence to explain their prehistoric use.

maintaining the museum's gift shop. During my visit there, it was selling a mixture of sea-, slate-, or Celtic-inspired jewellery, local treats, tea towels and ornaments with local iconography, Cornish music CDs, and a wide range of books about Cornwall. Sara was able to detail the fluctuations in tourists' interests which have happened over the years: visitors were more interested in mining when they first bought the museum than they are now, and books about the standing stones are declining in popularity as well, though two booklets that I bought, one about ley lines, and the other about sacred sites, are apparently still very popular. Both Bob and Sara made it very clear that they are very mindful of tourists' interests, and stock the shop with what will sell.

This constructed version of Zennor and West Penwith is particularly interesting because underlying it all is a very strong sense of something "real" and even a little mystical about the area. However, even those tourists who come looking for a glimpse of the "authentic" Zennor see its constructed authenticity, and may catch only a glimpse of the truly "real" Zennor shared by the old families and the incomers. In fact, it is here where the incomers most face the need to prove the willingness to adapt to local life deemed necessary by the owner of the Tinnars Arms. Serge told me that, not long after becoming vicar of St. Senara's church, he was talking to the church treasurer, a local geography teacher and core member of the church, about how some people find Zennor quoit a scary place (see Figure 2.10).¹⁶ He told the treasurer, "Oh no, it's all right. I go

¹⁶ While Serge did not identify why the quoit was felt to be a scary place, this may be due to its stark and isolated location, but is more likely connected to old beliefs that quoits, and other prehistoric burial structures are locations where the world of the dead can access that of the living. Joseph Blight, recording Cornish folk beliefs in the 1860s, wrote of a barren, quoit-filled section of the West Penwith Peninsula that it was "a well-known haunt of the fairies," and was host to "midnight fights by demons, and of a shadowy form holding a lantern..." (Westwood and Simpson 2005, 97, 100).

up there. And the first time I went round, I actually circled it three times, and did Christian safety prayers.” Serge then said, “[the treasurer] went nuts at me! He said, ‘Don’t you destroy the power of that quoit with your Christian things.’” The lesson Serge took away from this was that “basically, us incomers were tolerated, but we mustn’t destroy what’s here.”

Tony Farrell very helpfully gave me a sense of what it is that locals believe makes the area special, asserting several times that while he considers himself a skeptic, there is an undeniable magic around Zennor. He wondered about his beliefs, saying, “Are you projecting meaning onto it, or is there, for want of a better way of putting it, something really rather odd about these places? There is something definitely different about here, but I can’t define it any more than that. And that’s from the inside.” A connection to old customs supplements the magic of the land. Tony wrote of Zennor, “the people there are very conscious of the ancient landscape they live in and the customs that are associated with it,” and said that many individuals in the old farming families “are very, very firmly rooted in the reality and history of the place.” He then went on to describe a number of customs still practiced, including the bilingual Cornish and English “crying of the neck,” the lighting of bonfires on the hills at Midsummer, and the beliefs around holy wells.^{17,18}

¹⁷ A 2010 BBC article describes the tradition of “crying the neck” as one which has ancient origins, and which was revived in 1928. The tradition, marking the end of the harvest, has a farmer lift the last “neck” or bundle of corn scythed, and begin a scripted call and response ceremony with the assembled farmers and onlookers, announcing the scything of the final neck. In the revived tradition, the cry is performed first in English, and then in Cornish.

(http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/cornwall/hi/people_and_places/nature/newsid_8755000/8755545.stm)

¹⁸ Holy wells exist throughout Cornwall, with a particularly high concentration in the West Penwith Peninsula. Natural springs, these sites are associated with a local saint, but are widely believed to have pre-Christian spiritual origins. Tony described one custom in nearby St. Ives: on the feast day of St. Ia, patron saint of St. Ives, the mayor takes a silver ball and “blesses it with the holy water” from the holy well of St. Ia. Tony describes this process as one in which the ball is “taken to a Pagan site, blessed by Pagan/Christian water, [and] brought back to the church.” Historians Nicholas Johnson and Peter Rose write about the holy

He called the first two “very Pagan,” and the use of holy wells “religious, in a Christian sense, but also Pagan.” Tony attributed the local maintenance of these old ways to “the magic of the landscape,” and said, “I’m skeptical of metaphysical issues, but it’s certainly had a pull on me.” Serge used the phrase “the feeling’s close to the surface” to describe the “magic” of Zennor, but both he and the owner of the Tinnars Arms agreed that those who come looking for this magic often fail to find it. Instead, it takes living in the village, and accepting life there, to gain awareness of the feeling of magic.

Conclusion

It is the combination of their awareness of the old families’ connections to Zennor and their understandings of tourists’ preconceptions which makes the small group of incomers I spoke to uniquely well suited to the work of presenting Zennor to visitors. They recognise and respect the old families’ values, customs, and sense of the land, often taking part themselves, but were either drawn to Zennor for the same reason tourists continue to visit, or have carefully studied the reasons for tourists’ visits. It was made very clear to me that tourism is crucial to the local economy. Bob told me, “it’s generally recognised... that without tourism, Cornwall would be a very poor place.” Sue, adopting the local dialect, wrote that what the local farming families would say about the tourists is, “We’m pleased to see ’em come, and pleased to see ’em go.”

However, as I discussed in the introduction and literature review, even that tourism which is deemed necessary for a location’s survival can, paradoxically, destroy the local

wells, “Most have medieval superstructures but their supposed supernatural powers may well have pre-Christian origins” (16).

life of the place it is trying to save. As Tony made clear, this is a pattern which has firmly taken hold in other tourist-oriented locations in Cornwall. What is it, then, about Zennor which has allowed it to find a way to depend on tourism without destroying the lifeways of the old farming families? I contend that this is the case for two reasons. The first is that the work of the incomers means the old families are spared from having to perform a tourist-pleasing version of their traditional identities, allowing the incomers to do it for them. Tony wrote, “The locals [old families] in Zennor don’t pander to the Romanticism of tourists and know the parish for what it is. Their feel for the land and its history is genuine.” The second reason is that the incomers who do take on the task of romanticising the landscape for tourists do so while also respecting the old families’ customs, and the fact that their existence is of vital importance to the ongoing success of Zennor as a tourist destination. What the old families and the incomers have is a symbiotic relationship: without tourism, the farmers’ way of life would not be economically viable, and without the farmers forming living, human props in the vision of Zennor the incomers sell to outsiders, that vision would fall flat. The tourists may not see the quotidian reality of the Zennor farming families, but if that is so, it might be for the best: an objectified version of those farmers’ lives is subjected to the tourist gaze, but their values, customs, and beliefs, those things which are core to their cultural existence, are protected from that gaze by the mediating role played by the incomers.

“LIKE TIME STOOD STILL”: VISITORS’ CONSTRUCTION OF ZENNOR

There is something about Zennor which conveys a sense of otherworldliness. To the tourist, entering Zennor is like stepping back in time, or somewhere off the edge of the map. During the first week of my research, I stayed in St. Ives, just up the coast from the village, visiting every day. Only a ten-minute drive, or if hiking the South West Coast Path, a three- or four-hour walk along the cliffs, there is still a sense, when in the village, of being removed from the everyday life of the world outside. In the fieldnotes I wrote on my first afternoon in Zennor, after I had finished the six-mile hike from St. Ives, I wrote, “This feels like a world apart (no internet or cell phone reception). Hard to think I’ll be back in St. Ives in a couple hours.” In fact, when discussing my research over supper one night with the group of young Australians who had come to St. Ives for the surfing, and who were funding this by running the hostel where I was staying, Caz, the hostel manager, said that she had heard rumours of how remote Zennor was, and had brought a first aid kit and several days’ provisions the first time she did the coastal walk. As should be clear from the previous chapter, Zennor is, in many ways, as mundane a place as any other. Nonetheless, it occupies a distinct place in the imaginations of the tourists who visit it, one which is remarkably consistent in being characterised as simultaneously romantic and authentic. In this chapter, I will argue that tourists who come to Zennor come seeking the perfect marriage of aesthetic and rational authenticity: they want to see a world which, using modernist historical devices, seems to confirm the visions of “Old Cornwall” they have extrapolated from the various artistic, literary, and cinematic representations of Cornwall they have consumed.

In researching visitors' experiences in Zennor, I was also keen to discover whether or not there would be a sense of conspicuous consumption amongst the tourists. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the sense of authenticity Zennor exudes leads to a sense of superiority amongst some visitors; proving one's ability to know the authentic from the inauthentic implies education and high socio-economic standing. In addition to this, as was discussed in the second chapter, the "cult of the picturesque" is a construct of the middle and upper classes, and tourism is increasingly a site of conspicuous consumption (Hale 2001a, 188). I suspected that this pursuit of the picturesque would be one of the reasons for tourists to visit Zennor.

Compounding all of this, I had to admit that my own previous experiences of Zennor led me to believe this would be likely. Upon reviewing photo captions and status updates that I had posted on Facebook during my various visits, I found things such as: "Heading to a remote corner of Cornwall, and I'm not going to have internet for a few days!" and, as the caption to a photo: "the view from my b + b's breakfast room. I was talking to the owner about burial mounds, and he said, "Oh yes, there's one just over there," and pointed to... the field at the far left. Cornwall is marvellous." Another photo caption reads: "The antechamber to the quoit is a wonderful place to play tin whistle away from the howling winds." Even while doing fieldwork, the tourist in me was still active, telling friends about how excited I was to attend a traditional music session in Zennor's thirteenth-century pub, or about how charming I found the prospect of attending church with the "townsfolk." Evidently, there was a great deal within my own experience of being a tourist in Zennor to unpack: did I see it as a gleaming example of authentic Cornishness, or a Neo-Pagan dreamscape? Why did I feel compelled to show off my

personal visions and experiences of Zennor to friends? How would other visitors' motivations and experiences compare to mine?

Methodology

In order to find answers to these questions, I conducted 27 informal interviews with a total of 52 visitors to Zennor from the UK and abroad. I asked all of them what had brought them to Zennor, what they liked best about it, and what aspect of the village and surrounding area had made the strongest impression on them. I also asked them a question I had adapted from Hilary Orange and Patrick Laviolette's 2010 study, "A Disgruntled Tourist in King Arthur's Court: Archaeology and Identity at Tintagel, Cornwall." In this study, they asked visitors if they believed Tintagel to be "Celtic, English, Cornish, Arthurian or Pagan" (Orange and Laviolette 2010, 102). In order to be able to ask the same question of tourists to Tintagel and Zennor, I changed this to, "If you had to choose one, would you call Zennor/Tintagel Celtic, Cornish, or English?" The answers I received to this question led to some illuminating discussions of the ways the people I was talking to imagined the landscapes around them.

Because these interviews were informal and impromptu, the logistics of conducting them took some time to organise. For the first week of my field research, I stayed in St. Ives and travelled to Zennor each day, making daytime interviews my only option. My initial impulse was to target people eating lunch at the Tinnars Arms and the Zennor Chapel Café, the two places in the village that serve lunch. However, the Tinnars Arms proved to be too formal a setting to allow me to comfortably interrupt people's meals, and I soon abandoned that approach. During my second week, I stayed in Zennor, and with

the Tinnars Arms being the only place in the village to eat supper, I was able to develop a relationship with Ann-Marie Quester, one of the servers, who sat me at what became “my table” each night, and directed the occasional visitor my way while I ate. Nonetheless, my most fruitful interview locations were the picnic benches outside the Chapel Café at lunchtimes, and the churchyard just outside the village church which houses the famed mermaid carving. My spot outside the church was particularly useful, as speaking with those who had been in to see the church and/or mermaid chair meant I was speaking with visitors who had decided to take a look around the village, rather than those who were simply stopping for a meal during a hike or drive. While such passing visitors do form an important part of Zennor’s tourist economy, I was most interested in those who had at some stage made a deliberate decision to visit or explore Zennor.

The Visitors

To begin each of my interviews, I asked my informants what sort of holiday they were taking, and what had brought them to Zennor, with the aim of getting a very broad demographic picture of Zennor’s visitors. The three most popular reasons for a visit were because they were walking some portion of the South West Coast Path, because they were staying in a holiday home in a nearby town or village, or because they were doing a scenic tour or drive around Cornwall.

In nine of my interviews, informants identified walking as the primary reason for their visit, with most walking from St. Ives, and planning to return there later in the day, but with some walking further on the South West Coast Path, and others walking the Tinner’s Way, an ancient path which crosses 29 kilometres of the West Penwith

Peninsula, now linking several mining heritage sites. Eight of my interviews were with people who were staying in holiday homes, ranging from nearby rental cottages and even a lighthouse, to second homes owned by the informants. Informants in seven of my interviews were on driving tours, with some focusing specifically on the West Penwith Peninsula, some on all of Cornwall, and some on Cornwall and Devon. Several specifically identified having chosen to drive along the coast road which traces the northern coast of West Penwith and passes Zennor, due to its scenic beauty and the number of small villages and hamlets it gives access to. In addition to these reasons, informants in three of my interviews had driven or taken the bus from St. Ives for a day trip, informants in another three were visiting friends in the area, and finally, informants in another three interviews were there only to visit the pub or café, and expressed an explicit lack of interest in the local heritage and scenery.

Of those of my informants who identified how they first heard about Zennor, eight were there for the first time, and eleven had been at least once, but often multiple, times before. The eight individuals who were in Zennor for the first time – three couples from the United Kingdom, and one couple from Germany – had been drawn to Zennor due to its mermaid chair, its connection to DH Lawrence, or both. For those who had been many times, there were a wider range of reasons for their visits. Michael and Bev, from Durham, had been attracted by the mermaid legend twenty years ago, as they like to travel to small places with local legends, and had been back many times since. Others lived in St. Ives, or had friends in the area. These individuals, such as Diana, from Bristol, who told me about a visit she made at Christmas one year, in which the whole village

stayed at the Tinnars Arms until 1:00 am, and was “hungover for Christmas Mass the next day,” often conveyed a sense of ownership over Zennor and the area.

During my interview with local tour guide Tony Farrell, he said of the visitors to Zennor, “they’re sort of a walking, middle class clientele here, and in the public mind, they’ll be a sort of slightly more sophisticated palate.” For the most part, this seemed to hold true of the visitors I talked to. The majority were middle aged or older, many retired, with the means to take a long vacation, to stay in a nearby holiday rental, or to eat supper at the Tinnars Arms. The average rental price in the West Penwith Peninsula is approximately \$130 CAD a night, while meals at the Tinnars Arms cost anywhere from £9.50 to £16.50 (\$18.50 to \$32.00 CAD).¹⁹ As will be discussed below, this socioeconomic character of the Zennor tourists is significant to the way the village is constructed and perceived as a tourism destination.

The Main Attraction

When I asked my informants about what aspect of Zennor appealed most to them, and what their overall impressions of the village were, most had very general, impressionistic responses. Some described the natural beauty of the village’s environs, such as Paul, from Norfolk, who said that the setting, with its flowers and scenery, is what stood out most, and that “You couldn’t beat it, really.” For Claudia and Jonathan, from Berlin, who were on their fifth trip to Zennor, one of Zennor’s standout features was its natural setting – its “landscape, weather, clear air, and ocean.” They, as well as Jane and

¹⁹ Average holiday rental price based on holiday rental listings for the West Penwith Peninsula on [Tripadvisor.com](https://www.tripadvisor.com).

Max from Wales, and Nigel and Jane from Yorkshire, remarked upon the peaceful, natural ambience of the area. Many called Zennor beautiful, with the word taking on multiple meanings. To Joan and Margaret, from Helston, Cornwall, who said that Zennor was their “favourite place in the world,” it was beautiful because it was so “wild.” To several people, Zennor was beautiful because the coastal walk to get there was so scenic. For Claudia and Jonathan, the beauty of Zennor lay in its granite architecture, and the fact that “the people are so nice,” while for Jane and Max, it was in the fresh air, coastal walks, and the quilt-like pattern of the ancient fields. Many more people, however, remarked on an even less tangible quality which had attracted them to Zennor.

By far the most frequent comments I heard about what made Zennor special had to do with its perceived atmosphere of authenticity and, linked to that, comments about the village being “charming,” or “picturesque.” As discussed in the previous chapter, the “cult of the picturesque” has classist and colonial undertones, and this element of tourists’ perceptions of Zennor will be further explored later in this chapter. Joan and Margaret from Helston used the words “unspoiled” and “untamed” to describe the atmosphere of the village. Nigel and Jane from Yorkshire had a similar impression, describing Zennor as an “unspoiled hamlet,” a piece of “unspoiled England,” and a “tucked away little gem.” Elspeth, from Gloucestershire, also appreciated the impact Zennor’s remoteness had on its character, calling it a “hidden corner of England.” Many considered this hiddenness to have a temporal aspect to it: Bev and Michael, from Durham, said that the village was like “time stood still,” while Jim from Humberside said that Zennor was “reminiscent of times gone by,” and his wife, Sue, said Zennor gave them “a taste of history.” Max, from Wales, said that the local appreciation of tradition meant he “could feel at home” in

Zennor. Finally, Gillian and Audrey, from London, said they loved the village because it was “picturesque, ancient, and gorgeous,” while Isabelle and Steve, from Ontario, came back to Zennor for supper after a daytime visit because it was “so charming.” For all of these people, a visit to Zennor was the chance to step into an imagined landscape replete with natural and architectural beauty, and given weight by its perceived authenticity.

The tourist’s Zennor is a fantasy of the past, whose apparent authenticity allows the visitor to feel both the thrill of seeing a fantasy come to life and pride in being able to differentiate the authentic from the inauthentic. While this seems to be a contradictory experience, the following section will explore the various markers of modernist heritage which are found in the village, and how experiencing these markers, however steeped in the imagination they may be, allows visitors to believe that what is being presented to them is a true window into the past, rather than a construct showing them what they wish to see.

“It’s a good *story*, very Cornish. Don’t know about the facts of it”: Confirmations of authenticity in Zennor

There are several of Zennor’s component and contextual attractions which seem to serve as proof that the area has been unaffected by the passage of time. This very notion of proof of authenticity is steeped in a modernist approach to history, according to which there is only one accurate interpretation of the past, often conceived of as something which is not even an interpretation, but rather a statement of chronological facts. In Zennor, a number of attractions serve as a sort of “greatest hits” tour of the master narrative that is held as the true story of Cornwall’s past. Their continued existence seems

to prove that the area is one which has been unmediated by tourism boards' efforts to change the story of the area's history, and further serve to confirm visitors' preconceived notions of what constitutes "authentic" Cornwall.

Mining Heritage

The first local attraction which plays into this is the mining heritage landscape. Immediately to the west of Zennor lies the St. Just Mining District, a part of the UNESCO-recognised Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape. The Tinner's Way, mentioned earlier in this chapter as one of the walking trails popular with visitors to the area, passes through the St. Just Mining District, which, as well as countless former mine shafts in various states of ruin, also contains Levant Mine and Beam Engine, a National Trust property which provides interpretation of Cornwall's mining heritage, and Geevor Tin Mine, Cornwall's last working tin mine, currently open for tours (see Figure 2.11). While the mining industry is still remembered in Cornwall as both a vital and a brutal part of the county's history, these sites have been recast for visitor viewing and consumption. The pamphlet for Levant Mine and Beam Engine introduces the mine as "one of the most dramatic Cornish mining sites," and provides the following suggestion from the site custodian: "Don't miss my favourite Levant moment: The view from Carn Du, the prominent rock on the south side of Boscregan Zawn, looking back at the engine houses" (National Trust 2013). On the back side of the pamphlet, along with a list of nearby sites of interest, is information about a National Trust-owned holiday rental nearby: "The Canyack is a romantic mid-nineteenth century miner's cottage set in the secluded Cott Valley" (National Trust 2013). Two nights' accommodation for two in the peak season

costs £649 (“The Canyack,” www.nationaltrustholiday.org.uk). The pamphlet for Geevor Mine provides basic information about accessing the site, then encourages the prospective visitor: “Don’t forget to take home a souvenir of your visit to Geevor from the Mine Shop,” and “Why not try one of our famous pasties in the Count House Café with its stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean!” (Geevor Tin Mine). These sites offer up Cornwall’s mining heritage for consumption, pairing the modernist approach of a fact-based tour of the mines with the opportunity to purchase romanticised tokens or experiences of that same heritage.

Clearly inextricable from West Penwith’s tourist economy, mining heritage did come up in a number of my interviews. Jane and Max from Wales noted that they had been to several mining sites, and that they were “definitely not romantic.” Given that Wales has a parallel use of mining heritage for tourism, this is not entirely surprising.²⁰ Claudia, from Berlin, said that the appearance of the ruined mining towers made them “feel romantic,” but she “knows it was hard,” while her companion, Jonathan, agreed that their history was “almost tragic.” Others, however, simply remarked on the tin mines as one stop of many during their trip to Cornwall. Deirdre, from Durham, mentioned having visited the ruin of the “Boskednan lead mine” – in fact, the mine had been used for tin. Finally, Ann, from Devon, said that she wanted to visit the tin mines because she finds them romantic. Perhaps it is the *Poldark* effect, or perhaps visitors simply still share the sentiment of the young girl who exclaimed, “Oh, mother, look! there is another old castle,” upon seeing the ruins of a mine shaft (Stokes 1908, 67-8). Whatever the case, the physical remains of

²⁰ See Coupland and Coupland, 2014.

Cornwall's mining heritage are a point of access to Cornwall's hardworking past. While some see them as remnants of a time of hardship, and others as proof of the existence of a simpler time, for all of those who visit them, they are gazed upon and fit into the narrative the tourist holds of Cornwall's history.

Old Beliefs

There are many features of Zennor village which seem to indicate that an older way of life has continued on, uninterrupted: the sturdy, granite buildings, the cattle grazing in the fields between the village and the ocean cliffs, the lack of cell phone reception. The Tinnars Arms pub, with its gourmet renditions of traditional fare and pet Jack Russell Terriers wandering in and out of the kitchen at all hours, was mentioned by several visitors I talked to as a reason enough to stop in the village. In fact, Deirdre and Stewart, from Durham, had come to Zennor because they had read about the Tinnars Arms' charms and wanted to experience the pub for themselves. Another couple, John and June from Bristol, told me that their visit to the pub was what had stood out most to them on their previous trip to Zennor.

The pub is, indeed, an old building: it was built in order to accommodate the workers who would go on to build the church in 1270. Now, however, it hosts a mix of tradition and modernity, housing massive fireplaces, pleasantly disarrayed tables and benches, and low ceilings, alongside a very contemporary tap list and a standard gastropub menu of elevated traditional dishes (see Figures 2.13, 2.14, and 2.15). It is possible, on a Wednesday, to sit in the pub and hear Coolio's "Gangsta's Paradise" on the kitchen radio, interrupted only by the sound of the church bell ringers practising every time the pub door

opens. On Thursday evenings, locals and visitors pile into the small pub for a traditional music session. The lights are turned low, beer and cider flows steadily, and walking home afterward becomes treacherous if the moon is hidden by clouds, but the music played is mostly Irish trad.²¹ Aesthetically, the pub appears to have been lifted from the pages of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, or even better, the *Poldark* series, and despite the fact that this conveys a sense of age and steadfastness, the idea of its having been taken from the page or screen is, perhaps, closer to the truth: one couple I talked to had been to Zennor in the 1970s and reported that the whole pub had been covered in a fake wood veneer, and lit by fluorescent lights for many decades before it was renovated to look the way it does now.

Whatever the Tinnars Arms' claims to historicity, the majority of visitors to the pub were there primarily for the food and drink. People were much quicker to identify St. Senara's Church explicitly as a sightseeing destination. For many, the church, and the mermaid legend tied to it through its housing of the mermaid chair, were the only things they knew of in Zennor before visiting, and these were often identified as their reason for coming to the village (see Figures 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, and 2.9). As I have discussed previously, all sightseeing is dependent on the imagination and takes place at the meeting point of imagined preconceptions and the perceived reality. In the church, perhaps because of its

²¹ When I asked local tour guide Tony Farrell where I might find a traditional Cornish music session, he explained that, because "folk singing is often associated with folk drinking," the tee total Methodist reform movement of the early nineteenth century heavily discouraged the continuation of a folk music tradition. Farrell further asserted that none of the "great collectors of English folk music" in the nineteenth century collected songs from Cornwall. Because of both of these factors, he said, a "longstanding tradition of folk pieces probably doesn't exist."

link to the mermaid legend, visitors' understandings of the site were strongly steeped in the imagination, as well as a desire to access the truth of the place.

Some visitors do see the church as simply an old building, such as Cheryl, from Somerset, who upon exiting the church said that she was surprised to learn how many people the mermaid chair attracts, as "it's just an old chair." Several remarked predominantly on the beauty of the church, with Renate from Germany saying several times that it was the most beautiful church she had ever seen, and church guestbook comments containing notes such as "Stunningly beautiful," "What a lovely church and nice organ music," and "Thank you for keeping open a beautiful + historic church."²² Others most appreciated the extreme old age of the church. Several said that they were drawn to it due to its old age, while Claudia and Jonathan, from Berlin, linked the mermaid chair, the ancient graveyard, and the medieval church as a historical ensemble, each proving the age of the other two. Isabelle, from Ontario, was excited to ask me, "So you heard about how the church was on an old Iron Age circular site?" A short informational pamphlet for St. Senara's Church discusses the site's spiritual heritage, saying, "The circular graveyard is an Iron Age site overlaying the Stone and Bronze Age boundaries of this ancient land. There has probably been a small Celtic church on this site since the sixth century AD."

Interestingly, none of the people I spoke to had visited the church for spiritual purposes. While a book of prayers written by visitors sat next to the church's guestbook, and was as full as the guestbook, the weekday visitors' attitudes to the church seemed to

²² All comments made in June, 2015.

be well-represented in a comment from Jane and Max, from North Wales: “We’re not churchgoers, but we love the church here at Zennor.” For visitors, the church becomes something other than that which it was built to be: a tangible, accessible representation of a tradition of belief with which countless other cultural practices have been associated.

It is here that both visitors’ imaginations and their desire for historical truth are exercised. Though many people I spoke with simply indicated a general interest in seeing the mermaid carving, purely out of curiosity, many elaborated further, assigning meaning to the mermaid, or its existence in the church or village. Bev and Michael, from Durham, explained that it was the story of the mermaid which had first attracted them to Zennor, as they “go to all the small places with legends.” West Penwith’s legends, they said, were like Durham’s, though comparing Zennor’s maritime legend with Durham’s mining-related legends allowed them to glean something about the local character. Gerhard and Renate from Germany had a similar comment, saying that they were not surprised by the mermaid carving, “because churches are often full of old, mysterious things.” The Zennor mermaid reminded them of seeing ships and ghost footprints in churches in Denmark, though as Gerhard said, “I’ve never seen a mermaid in a church before!” Others looked for the story behind the legend. Jim, from Grimsby, puzzled over the disparities between the version of the mermaid legend he had learned long ago and that told by the church; in the version Jim knew, the young man drowned, whereas the church says that he survived. Sinead, from West Cork, said that she had come to see the mermaid because they, along with “selkies, Sheila na gigs, and other transformative female figures” interested her, and because she had a “real interest in the layers of Christianisation of older sites.” Cheryl, from Somerset, elaborated on this point. After initially saying that she knew nothing

about folklore, she became quite passionate when I brought up the subject of the mermaid, saying that the church's mermaid was a corruption of an older, better, Pagan notion of the mermaid. In her words, "that [was] the mermaid, before they put the mirror in her hand. That's what the Christians do, isn't it? Sort of bend it."²³ Evidently, the Zennor mermaid does not mean the same thing to everyone who visits her. Nonetheless, many visitors shared the desire to learn what they could consider the true story behind the mermaid, or wanted, at least, to show that they were aware of the difference between truth, fiction, and legend. As Paul, from Norfolk, said of the mermaid legend: "It's a good *story*, very Cornish. Don't know about the facts of it."

The non-Christian spiritual heritage of Zennor and the West Penwith Peninsula were also brought up by a number of visitors I spoke with. Some appreciated the ambience this legacy lent to the area: Claudia, from Berlin, said she loved the "land of King Arthur sort of thing" with which she associated West Penwith, while Jane and Max, from North Wales, appreciated the mystery and mysticism of the village itself, without further specifying what it was that made the location so mysterious. Others had plans to see other sites they associated with mysticism and Neo-Paganism after visiting the mermaid. Bev and Michael were looking forward to visiting more stone circles, and Chysauster Ancient Village, an English Heritage-owned Iron Age village,²⁴ while David and Elspeth, from

²³ Here, Cheryl is perhaps alluding to a belief that Mediaeval Christians co-opted an earlier, positive image of the mermaid by always depicting the mermaid with a comb and mirror, implying "her vanity... her alluring appearance and voice, and her danger to the human soul" (Waugh 1960, 77).

²⁴ The English Heritage webpage for Chysauster Ancient Village says in its introduction to the site, "There are also the remains of an enigmatic 'fogou' underground passage – the purpose for this could have been as a ritual building, a hiding place or a cold store – what do you think it was used for?" This pairing of authoritative information on the history of a site with an invitation to visitors to use their imaginations and to embrace the mystery of the site is common in English Heritage and National Trust informational/promotional material ("Chysauster Ancient Village").

Gloucestershire, were planning to hike up to see Zennor quoit. As with the mermaid legend, many people explained the curiosity they had about these ancient sites. Jane and Max both said that they loved standing stones, though he had an archaeological appreciation for them, while hers was spiritual. Claudia, from Berlin, said she was “interested in mystic things,” and wondered if the “beautiful, fantastic stone circles” were for telling time, for worship, or for something else entirely. Bev and Michael also wanted to know what the “mysterious stones” were for: were they for astronomical purposes? Maps? For fertility rituals? They both became very animated saying that “the appeal of the stones is their mysteriousness.” In addition to this, Bev and Michael wondered about the veracity of the notion of a Pagan landscape as a whole, asking if a set of standing stones walkers pass on the South West Coast Path between St. Ives and Zennor was real, and concluded that they probably were not. It was important to them to be able to differentiate between what is real and what is not, what carries the weight of millennia of belief, and what does not.

The Museum

Traditionally, the museum has been a bastion of modernist historiography. Lisa Karlsson Blom and Mikela Lundahl write that in museums, “collections are made available through a classificatory system that fixes and delimits the understanding of objects” (2012, 3). With, as archaeologist Chris Wingfield writes, a particular interest in “civilization and its development,” museums were traditionally home to linear accountings of history, telling the story of progress through time, frequently with colonialist undertones (2011, 247). In more recent years, many museums have shifted

their focus away from such practices. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett writes that contemporary museums are increasingly focused on the visitor experience, and on acknowledging the role of subjectivity in the study of history. She writes, “Museums were once defined by their relationship to objects: curators were “keepers” and their greatest asset was their collections... The presumption in some quarters is that visitors are no longer interested in the quiet contemplation of objects in a cathedral of culture. They want to have an “experience”” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 138-9). In light of this, The Wayside Folk Museum in Zennor plays a twofold role in allowing visitors to confirm that they are seeing in Zennor what they want and expect to see.

The Wayside Folk Museum does present a modernist look at the history of Zennor and the area. The visitor to the museum moves through Cornish history, passing through a series of rooms, organised by era and industry (see Figures 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5). Rooms dedicated to farming, mining, shoemaking, milling, and several other industries are filled floor to ceiling with artefacts of those industries from throughout Cornish history. In one room, remodelled to look like a seventeenth-century Cornish kitchen, visitors can look at the prehistoric quern, or grinding stone, embedded in the floor as proof of Cornwall’s historical continuity. In addition to this, however, is the museum’s very existence. The museum owners truly are the “keepers,” in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s words, of an object-based collection. In addition to presenting an array of historical artefacts allowing visitors to connect with the area’s history, the very experience of visiting the museum amounts to time travel: visitors access an old-fashioned style of museum, and confirm the assumption

that Zennor, alone, has remained unchanging, while the rest of the world develops around it.²⁵

While most people I spoke with had more to say about the church and the mermaid legend, many acknowledged that they were also planning to go to the museum, or had already been, and saw it as a given that the museum would be part of their time in the village. Several expressed how impressed they were by the sheer quantity of artefacts held by the museum, and by how large it was, something which Bob Priddle confirmed is regularly mentioned in the feedback he receives from visitors. Priddle told me that most of the feedback he hears is from people who have a nostalgic interest in the artefacts on display, often saying that they remember a parent or grandparent having used some of the tools in the museum. Multiple people I talked to remarked on this, and one, Max, from Wales, said that he could remember having used some of the tools himself. Priddle also makes an effort to accompany the artefacts with contextual images and anecdotes which illustrate their use, and said that this gives the museum an “atmospheric, evocative” feel, making it seem an organic part of the village. As I mainly interviewed visitors outside of the church, and as the church is usually visitors’ first stop in the village, many had not yet been to the museum, but virtually all expressed interest in going, particularly when I told them about its collections of agricultural and mining tools.

²⁵ The museum was the brainchild of Colonel Frederick Hirst, whose collection forms the core of the museum’s holdings. As Bob Priddle, current curator of the museum, explains it, Hirst moved from India to Cornwall in the 1930s with the aim of creating an archaeological society and museum that would compare “primitive Cornish agriculture to primitive Indian agriculture.” See “From Greater Britain to Little England: The Pitt Rivers Museum, the Museum of English Rural Life, and Their Six Degrees of Separation” by Chris Wingfield for more on the rise of rural folk museums in Britain in the 1920s and 1930s.

“Oh God, not English. Definitely not English”: Cornishness and Aesthetic

Authenticity

What Zennor provides for many of its visitors is the opportunity to confirm their belief that aesthetic and rational authenticity can be one and the same. Wayne Fife describes rational, or modernist, authenticity as being “predicated upon scientifically verifiable signs, ones that meet the canon of empirical accuracy and the rational discourse that can be created from the evidence” (2004, 163). He contrasts this with postmodern, “aesthetic authenticity,” which “occurs when a site “feels right”” (Fife 2004, 163). He further describes the tourist’s experience of “aesthetic authenticity” as a “gut-level appreciation of an honest attempt at a “genuine” reproduction of another way of life” (Fife 2004, 163). Zennor, in the tourist’s eye, successfully combines these two forms of authenticity. Such signifiers of rational, linear history as the museum and the church, which invite visitors to dig deeper, and to try to find the “truth” behind what has lasted to the present day are situated within an immaculate, “old-world” setting. Visitors are able to say that being in the village is like having a “taste of history” because it satisfies those who have the education to look for academic historiographical markers while also satisfying their expectations that, due to their rational, academic understanding of the past, they should be able to recognise how the past should *feel*. Having consumed media depicting a fictionalised Cornwall, their education, and awareness of the difference between fact and fiction inures them against charges of romanticisation when they gaze upon Zennor and see what that media has led them to expect to see, and instead gives them the authority to believe that what they are looking at is accurate.

This sense of authority is, in fact, an important part of the character of many Zennor tourists. As mentioned above, Tony Farrell, as well as Bob Priddle, identified the tourists to Zennor as being predominantly middle-class, and well-educated. The very act of choosing to travel to Zennor can be seen as a deliberate decision to choose the authentic over the inauthentic: a display of the tourist's ability to discern one from the other. In describing my research with my respondents, I often told them that I would be travelling to Tintagel to speak with tourists there as well. Tintagel bears a theme park-like reputation, and saying this earned me some strong reactions. David and Elspeth from Gloucestershire, and Diana from Bristol, all laughed knowingly and rolled their eyes when I explained that I was looking to contrast Zennor and Tintagel, while Stuart and Jenny from Plymouth complained that Tintagel was too commercialised to be worth visiting. Isabelle and Steve, from Ontario, echoed this, saying that they had been to Tintagel and the nearby village of Boscastle as part of their tour of Cornwall, but had decided not to go to Boscastle's Museum of Witchcraft (now the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic),²⁶ saying "We don't do those things; they're everywhere." Others brought up the nearby attraction of Land's End, a site at the westernmost point of mainland England. Visitors can park in its vast parking lot, and, for a fee, pass through its gates into an arcade with food and games and, further on, cliffs, a sign stating the geographical extremity of the place, and a many-arrowed signpost with distances to various locations around the world. Bev and Michael, from Durham, said they had been there once, but would not go back as "you have to pay to get in." Joan and Margaret, from Helston, and

²⁶ The Museum of Witchcraft and Magic is the main tourist attraction in Boscastle, and often considered part of Tintagel's extended tourist landscape.

Ann, from Paignton, agreed, saying of Land's End, "it's a bit naff." With "naff" meaning "tacky," Land's End was deemed commercialised and not worth visiting, particularly in contrast with the perceived authenticity of Zennor.

In order to get a sense of what tourists to Zennor were truly talking about when they called it authentic, I asked a question which would identify what concept it was that they believed it to be authentic *to*. I asked everyone I spoke with whether Zennor was Celtic, Cornish, or English, and the answers were very telling. Twelve British people, and four non-British people said it was Celtic, and 26 British people, and three non-British people said it was Cornish, while only one British person and one non-British person said it was English. Indeed, while I received a range of explanations for what made Zennor Celtic or Cornish, the one response that unified nearly everyone I spoke with was that Zennor and the area were definitively not English. Often, upon asking whether Zennor was Celtic, Cornish, or English, the first response was "Definitely not English," or, in the case of Francesca, from Rome, but living in London, "Oh God, not English. Definitely not English." In total, eight people explicitly said before identifying what Zennor was, that it was not English, while another eleven identified it as some mixture of Cornish and Celtic, but did not say that it was English at all. In none of my interviews did anyone specify why Zennor could not be considered English. Instead, this seemed to be a visceral, gut-level interpretation of their surroundings, one couched in an aesthetic understanding of authenticity. To counter this, most people then went on to identify what Zennor actually *was*, and accompanied this with more in-depth explanations.

If a modernist approach to history and culture is based on the ability to classify the surrounding world, it is important for those with a modernist attitude towards heritage to

be able to categorise what they are looking at. There were some differences between those who labelled Zennor Cornish and those who labelled it Celtic, namely that the Cornish label was more often associated with empirical, historical interpretation, while the Celtic label had more to do with the region's atmosphere and belief systems, but the majority of respondents accompanied their choice with a reason for having chosen that label; as important to them as the label itself was the system from which that label was derived.

Those who identified Zennor as more Cornish than Celtic or English did so with varying degrees of certainty, and some of the most emphatic were those who explained their classification in aesthetic terms. Sinead, from West Cork, said it was Cornish because of the “grey stone and lichen and the soft light,” while Malcolm and Hayley, from Derby, said that it was Cornish because “when you drive along, on the coastal road, it just feels very Cornish.” Many simply stated that it was Cornish without elaborating further, as though the area's Cornishness should be self-evident. Tom and Margaret, from Truro, Cornwall, said Zennor was “just Cornish. Just Cornish, and nothing more to it than that.” Others, however, wanted to explain what it was that made Zennor Cornish, why it fit that classification. In two separate interviews, both Jim and Sue, from Grimsby, and Brian and Sylvia, from Surrey, said Zennor was “typical Cornish,” as though Zennor successfully contained all of the characteristics which typify what it is to be Cornish. Heather, from Rochester, deduced that Zennor must be Cornish due to its name, while Paul, Jan, and Douglas, from Norfolk and Croydon, emphatically stated that Zennor “typifies Cornwall” due to its granite buildings. John, from Plymouth, echoed this, saying that the slate rooves and random layout of the buildings confirmed Zennor's Cornish

character to him. The perception of a site's authenticity comes from its accuracy to a label, as understood by those who perceive it. For many who called Zennor Cornish, this accuracy was primarily an aesthetic one. However, many also used rational classifications to explain their belief in its accuracy. Thus, the "Cornish" label is one which marries aesthetic and rational authenticity.

Those who identified Zennor as predominantly Celtic had a slightly different approach to classifying it. One noteworthy factor is that while British respondents were more than twice as likely to label Zennor Cornish as they were to label it Celtic, non-British respondents were slightly more likely to feel Zennor was Celtic rather than Cornish. This appears to be due to the fact that the definition of Cornishness is one which is better known within the United Kingdom than without; those who did not have a pre-existing understanding of what it is to be Cornish, but understood the broader concept of Celticness were more likely to notice Celtic markers than Cornish ones.

The reasons people chose to call Zennor Celtic tended to have to do with ambience and spirituality, and were generally based on factors less tangible than those which influenced the people who called Zennor Cornish. Deirdre and Stewart, from Durham, said that Zennor was "Celtic, with the myths," while for Bev and Michael, also from Durham, Zennor was "Celtic, with the church." They further said that Zennor seemed "stuck in Celtic times." For Max, from Wales, Zennor was Celtic, because Celtic means "being with nature, and appreciation of tradition." Being from Wales, itself a part of the Celtic Fringe, Max was keen to assert the existence of a Celtic character. Finally, for Cheryl, from Somerset, John, from Plymouth, and June, from Bristol, the existence of the

mermaid legend made Zennor Celtic, while for Diana, from Bristol, the quoit, also part of the area's mythological landscape, made the area Celtic.

Amongst those who said Zennor was Celtic, there was frequently a caveat that they said so because they were, in the words of Francesca, from Rome, "not sure how to define 'Cornish.'" John and June, from Plymouth and Bristol, said that Zennor was Celtic because of the mermaid story, as mentioned above, but also because they did not "know enough about what it is to be Cornish, but [had] an inkling of what Celtic is." Similarly, Gerhard and Renate, from Germany, said that Zennor was either Celtic or Cornish, though it was hard for them to say as they were not from England. Those who were from the British Isles, and called the area Celtic often followed this with a discussion of what the accurate definition of "Celtic" was. When Elspeth, from Gloucestershire, said "It's all Celtic around here, isn't it?" her two travel companions launched into a debate about the definition of the term "Celtic," and wondered if the non-existence of native speakers of the Cornish language meant that the county could no longer call itself Celtic. Sinead, from West Cork, in Ireland, itself a "Celtic" country, was very aware of the difficulties in trying to define the Cornish and Celtic labels, and argued that both were too simple to truly capture the essence of Zennor or the area.

Conclusion

Sinead, perhaps, came closest to the truth: with so many interpretations available of Zennor, of the West Penwith Peninsula, of Cornwall, and even of what "Cornish" or "Celtic" means, it is impossible to definitively say that Zennor exclusively fits either of those labels. What asking this question achieved, however, is an insight into the thought

processes of tourists to Zennor. They predominantly have a modernist approach to history and heritage, meaning they look to more old-fashioned, authoritative institutions of historiography to tell them about the history of a place or topic, and that they want to find the “accurate” or “authentic” version of the story, believing such a thing to exist. However, like anyone, they have preconceived images of a place, often derived, at least in part, from media and mythology, and as such, visitors to Zennor very frequently experience the gut feeling that Zennor is authentic to “old Cornwall,” that it has “aesthetic authenticity.” While for some, this is satisfying enough, many do not feel comfortable saying that they find it authentic based on an aesthetic impression alone, until they have the confirmation of its authenticity which they can only derive from the existence of the museum, the church, and/or an exploration of what might be the “true” story behind the mermaid. So Zennor is successful not simply because it “feels” right, but because it allows visitors to believe they can “know” it is authentic through their consumption of traditionally modernist markers of heritage.

CONCLUSION

Zennor is a successful tourist site. As discussed in the previous two chapters, more recent incomers to the village have established good relationships with locals of longer standing, which has allowed them to present the village to tourists while maintaining their cultural integrity, and tourists by and large are satisfied by the sense of authenticity the village conveys to them. I argue that, fundamentally, this is due to communicative competence between the incomers in the village who work in the tourism industry and the people who come to Zennor as tourists.

As noted in chapter two, communicative competence is a crucial element of Richard Bauman's performance theory. According to performance theory, more can be learned from a performance, than from the actual text of what is being performed. Bauman, building on Dell Hymes' concept of 'communicative competence,' describes performance as having an "emergent quality;" performance has the ability to bring truths into existence (Bauman 1975, 302; Hymes 1966). He writes that, during a performance, "a transformation of the basic referential...uses of language" occurs, creating new understandings and new ways of communicating that understanding (Bauman 1975, 292). In order for a performance to be successful, however, the performer has a responsibility to the audience for "communicative competence," and the audience has a responsibility to evaluate the performer's communication (Bauman 1975, 293; Hymes 1966). Both of these two performance roles are bound up in ideas of authority and power: the performer has the authority of the textual expert, while the audience, in choosing to attend the performance, has the power to determine whether or not the performance will happen. It is equally essential that both performer and audience perform their roles well.

I argue that this is all highly relevant in the creation of *place*, and particularly in tourism, where the roles of performer and audience can be filled by a site's locals and visitors, respectively. No space has any innate meaning; meaning is created by the people who use it and gaze upon it. A tourism experience becomes a negotiation of those meanings, where locals are the experts, performing their understanding of the place, and tourists are the audiences, choosing whether to consume the version of the place they are presented. A successful tourist site is created if visitors deem that locals are exercising communicative competence in performing the site. If, however, the visions that locals and tourists have of a site do not align, the tourist site is not successful.

Taking all of this into account, Zennor is a successful tourist site. In heritage tourism, there is a great deal of potential for conflicting definitions of a place in locals' and tourists' understandings of its authenticity, so the fact that both locals and tourists feel they are able to experience the "authentic" Zennor is truly a triumph. The Zennor created by those incomers to the village who work in the tourism industry is a postmodern one, which pairs a romanticised aesthetic with points of access to modernist historiography such as the museum and the church, satisfying tourists' expectations. Not all Cornish people like that this is the version of "Old Cornwall" being sold to tourists, and, arguably, Cornwall as a whole is not a successful tourist destination, as tourists' desires are often in conflict with locals'. However, Zennor does succeed on this front, as the fact that the incomers in the tourism industry act as a buffer between tourists and locals means that the locals can continue to experience the same site that tourists do, and both can feel they are experiencing the "authentic" Zennor.



Figure 2.1. The village of Zennor.



Figure 2.2. Part of the portion of the South West Coast Path between St. Ives and Zennor.



Figure 2.3. Wayside Folk Museum and Trewey Mill, Zennor.



Figure 2.4. Exhibit in the Wayside Folk Museum and Trewey Mill, Zennor.



Figure 2.5. Working flour mill in the Wayside Folk Museum and Trewey Mill, Zennor.



Figure 2.6. Exterior of St. Senara's Church, Zennor.

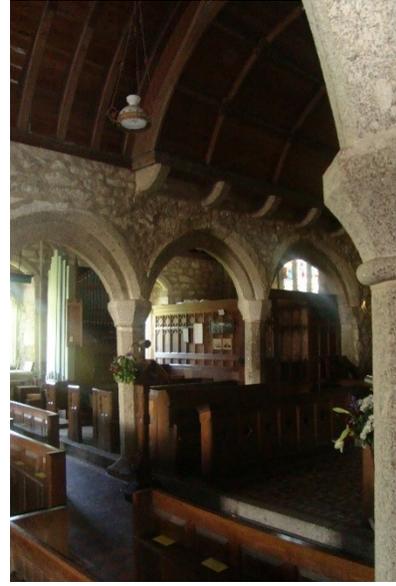


Figure 2.7. Interior of St. Senara's Church, Zennor (Photograph by Ilaria Alberti, used with permission).



Figure 2.8. Fifteenth-century carving of a mermaid in St. Senara's Church, Zennor (Photograph by Ilaria Alberti, used with permission).

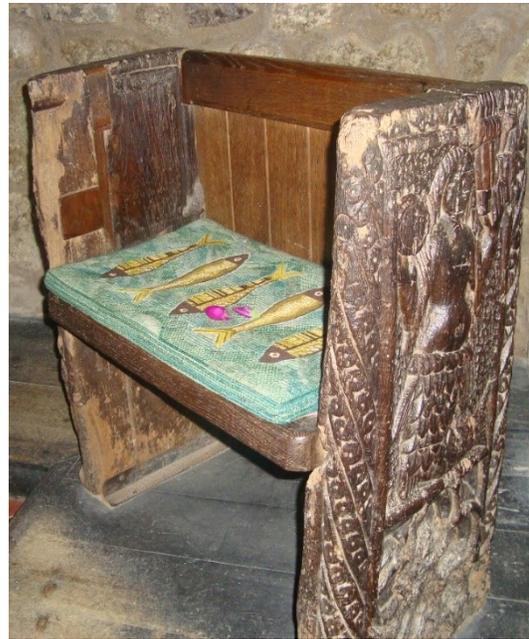


Figure 2.9. Bench end with fifteenth-century carving of mermaid in St. Senara's Church, Zennor.



Figure 2.10. Zennor quoit, a Neolithic burial structure.



Figure 2.11. Part of Levant Mine and Beam Engine National Trust



Figure 2.12. Men-an-Tol, a Neolithic stone monument.



Figure 2.13. Exterior of the Tinner's Arms Pub, Zennor.



Figure 2.14. Interior of the Tinner's Arms Pub, Zennor (Photograph by Ilaria Alberti, used with permission).

Figure 2.15. Interior of the Tinner's Arms Pub, Zennor.

Chapter Four: TINTAGEL

INTRODUCTION

The ruins of Tintagel Castle stand scattered between a mainland promontory and a rocky headland attached to it by a narrow isthmus (see Figure 3.1). Built in the first half of the thirteenth century by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, its site was chosen to capitalise on the Arthurian connections for which it was already famous. In the *History of the Kings of Britain*, written c.1138, Geoffrey of Monmouth had identified Tintagel as the place of King Arthur's conception, and whether Earl Richard believed the story to be true or not, he decided to build a castle there – one of his many – to associate himself with the great King Arthur and thereby help legitimise his claim to the area. Since the time of Earl Richard (after taking a slight detour as the setting of part of the story of Tristan and Iseult) Tintagel has relied almost entirely on its connection to the Arthurian legends for its existence (Batey 2010, 3). Today the castle is one of the most popular tourist sites owned and managed by English Heritage, with tens of thousands of tourists flocking to Tintagel Castle every year, hoping to see a piece of Arthuriana brought to life (Orange and Laviolette 2010, 86-7).

What could be more romantic than a castle crumbling into the sea, one where, legend has it, Merlin helped King Uther deceive Queen Ygraine into believing he was her husband and, using this deception, conceive Arthur, the greatest symbol of chivalry not only in Britain, but in all of Europe? There is a ruin, the legacy of Wordsworth making it far more appealing than any intact castle, a cave below the castle known as Merlin's Cave, a river called Camlann nearby which is easy enough to read as "Camelot," and, of course, the necessary setting in a part of the country which manages to be part of both

England and the Celtic Fringe. The presence of King Arthur should not be hard to find. And yet, reading any guidebook to the area will reveal a reputation not of romanticism and Mediaeval chivalry, but rather of tacky commercialism.

While the Lonely Planet website lists Tintagel as one of the top six must-see sights in Cornwall, its description of the site says, “The village itself isn’t terribly exciting, but if you’re looking for a cheesy King Arthur souvenir, you’ll find them in ample supply.” Even more scathingly, the Rough Guides guide book to Devon and Cornwall says about Tintagel,

The village of Tintagel is a magnet for visitors throughout the region on account of its fabled castle, whose scanty ruins stand on an outcrop of the nearby coast. Apart from this and a medieval manor house restored by the National Trust, the village amounts to little more than a dreary collection of bungalows, guesthouses and souvenir shops milking the area’s association with King Arthur for all they’re worth. It’s worth running through this gauntlet for the main attraction, but don’t bother to linger (Andrews 2010, 341).

As was discussed in the Zennor section, Tintagel has a reputation amongst tourists, derived in part from guidebooks, and in part from word-of-mouth, for tackiness and inauthenticity. It is seen as a theme park of Arthuriana rather than as true heritage site.

On my own first visit there, I was fully aware of this reputation. It was the last stop on a trip a good friend and I took around the British Isles, specifically targeting sites associated with our favourite writers, historical figures, and legends. Tintagel, we decided, would be a fun place to spend a couple of days; we would enjoy the campiness of the village, semi-ironically buy some Arthurian souvenirs, take photos at the castle, and, we had to admit, secretly hope that some feeling of connection to the “real” King Arthur might present itself. The friend I was travelling with was a great fan of the *Mists*

of *Avalon* books by Marion Zimmer Bradley, and the expectations she held of the castle had been shaped by what she had read in those books. The first chapter of the *Mists of Avalon* begins, “Even in high summer, Tintagel was a haunted place... Tintagel... there were still those who believed the castle had been raised, on the crags at the far end of the long causeway into the sea, by the magic of the ancient folk of Ys” (Bradley 1982, 3). So there were two Tintagels we hoped to see: the fun, theme park Tintagel, where we could play with the idea of Arthuriana and allow ourselves not to question what we were being told, and what we felt was the truer Tintagel, a romantic, mystical place where legends might just be true.

When planning my research in Tintagel, I did so with the assumption that tourists in Tintagel would be there purely for a fun experience. I believed they would be there either as MacCannell’s modern tourists, seeking authenticity, or as what John Urry would call “post-tourists,” entertained by the inauthenticity of the place, playing with it in an ironic way. What I found instead was an array of competing motivations for coming to Tintagel, some of which were far more bound up in expectations of authenticity than I had expected. I had anticipated that amongst those looking for a post-touristic experience, there would be some who felt dismayed by the commercialism of Tintagel Village, and who would have preferred a purely historical approach to Tintagel Castle, rather than one surrounded by King Arthur-themed gift shops and pubs, and mystical shops. However, while I did speak with plenty such people, I also encountered several people who had come expecting an experience which would be authentic to their own imagined Tintagel, one which they were aware was completely fictional. This desire for authenticity to a fiction was almost universally disappointed due to the

extreme idiosyncrasy of each tourist's imagined Tintagel. Taking the argument that a tourist site is successful if there is communicative competence between those in charge of the site and those visiting it, Tintagel must be considered entirely unsuccessful as there are simply far too many conflicting motivations for coming to Tintagel and understandings of what Tintagel is and should be for the site to match everyone's expectations. Only those few visitors who are truly post-tourists were satisfied with the site; those looking for either historical or fictional authenticity were disappointed.

KING ARTHUR IS “GOOD FOR BRINGING THE BUSINESS”: LOCAL CONSTRUCTION OF TINTAGEL

In Zennor, when I spoke with the locals involved with the tourism industry there, I had the sense that I was speaking about their experience of living in Zennor first, and their experience of working in the tourism industry second. Just as tourists to Zennor treated the village, with its sense of old-fashioned community, as the primary attraction, and the individual attractions as secondary, the locals put their membership in the community before their work for tourists. In Tintagel, however, tourists do not come to see the village for its coherent identity as a village. Rather, they come to see Tintagel Castle, and perhaps some of the other attractions, museums, and shops in the village. Accordingly, those who work in these attractions do not, for the most part, identify a sense of belonging to the Tintagel community as an important element of their experience there. Instead, they are there to work, and to help their individual sites attract visitors. Because of this, and unlike in the chapter about locals in Zennor, I will be focusing in this chapter on the local sites of interest in Tintagel more than on the people who run them.

The Castle

Tintagel Castle is the reason Tintagel exists as part of the tourist landscape of Cornwall (see Figure 3.1). According to the Tintagel Castle Guidebook which is sold at the entrance to the castle, the legend of King Arthur’s association with Tintagel was of little interest to people in the area between the fifteenth century, when the castle began to fall to ruins, and the advent of the Mediaeval Revival which began in the early nineteenth century. The writings of Malory, Sir Walter Scott, and Alfred, Lord Tennyson all sparked

a national interest in Arthuriana, and by the end of the nineteenth century, a local vicar in Tintagel had decided that the village could capitalise on this interest. The castle was restored, and Tintagel began marketing itself as a tourist destination. Tellingly, the village of Tintagel was, in fact, called Trevena until approximately 1900, when it was renamed Tintagel to connect it to the castle, and extend the Arthurian tourism area further (Batey 2010, 38).

Now, the castle continues to be the featured attraction in the Tintagel area. According to John Moore, Custodian of King Arthur's Great Halls, another attraction in the village, the tour buses that bring tourists to the village always direct people straight to the castle, leaving the rest of the village as an optional secondary activity if there is time. I was unable to arrange an interview with any of the managers of Tintagel Castle, unfortunately, but visited on several occasions, both to interview tourists, and to visit on my own. Approximately a fifteen-minute walk down a steep path from the village, visitors also have the option to be driven to the castle for a small fee. Though popular with the elderly and those with mobility impairments, this drive does not make the visit to the actual castle any easier: to explore the clifftop ruins, visitors must first pay the entrance fee of £7.20 (\$12.70 CAD) for an adult (£4.70 (\$8.30 CAD) for a child), and then climb hundreds of steep, wooden stairs (see Figure 3.3). Once there, they discover a few semi-intact stone walls, and a seemingly haphazard array of building foundations (see Figure 3.2). There are more sheep roaming the headland than there are signs explaining the various stone remains. What is there instead are a great many small, black squares labelled with numbers. It is only once they have made the strenuous trek up to this area that visitors realise that these numbers correspond to points in the £4.99 (\$8.80 CAD) guidebook they

have almost universally deemed too expensive to purchase on their way in. As I discovered when I spoke with tourists after their visits to the castle, most assume that there will be adequate information available on-site. I did purchase the guidebook, and while I was glad to have some interpretation of the ruins, it contained far too much information to read while wandering through the ruins that seem to be constantly in danger of tumbling down steep slopes and the cliffs that lead to the sea. Furthermore, as will be discussed in the chapter on tourists in Tintagel, the information contained in the guidebook is dryly written, and almost exclusively about the archaeological record of the site, rather than about its Arthurian associations. While it makes an excellent souvenir reference document, it does not add a great deal to the experience of visiting the castle.

In contrast to this is the gift shop located at the castle entrance and exit. When I was there, there was a café in the process of being built, but the gift shop was fully functional. It was divided into two halves, bisected by the admissions desk. On the left-hand side were gifts targeted towards children, and more traditional souvenirs: Tintagel and Cornwall-themed postcards, key chains, mugs, and tea towels, as well as toys of King Arthur, wizards, dragons, knights, wooden swords, and miniature trebuchets and, for some reason, cannons. On the other side was a seemingly more sober, serious selection: locally produced food and drink, Celtic-inspired jewellery, and reproduction Mediaeval goods, including small tapestries, chess sets, pewter tableware, and a £250.00 (\$440.00 CAD) “Avalon Replica Sword.” While both sections did have selections of books about the archaeology and history of the site, the overwhelming focus on King Arthur, mysticism, and Celticism contradicted the message sent by the archaeological fact-based interpretation of the castle.

While I was unable to interview the managers of the castle, the castle's place in the fabric of Tintagel was never far from the minds of those I spoke with. For both tourists and those working at other tourist sites in the village, Tintagel Castle is the clear focal point of the village. As I will discuss in the next chapter, nearly all of the tourists I spoke with were disappointed with the castle, whether because of the lack of interpretive historical material, or the lack of engagement with the legend of King Arthur. As such, the other sites and attractions in the village play a crucial role in rounding out visitors' experiences, often allowing them to experience some element of the Tintagel they had hoped to see. In all of my interviews with local site managers, the site in question's relationship with the castle, and its ability to appeal to tourists who had come to see the castle were the main focus of our conversations.

Tintagel Old Post Office, National Trust

The first formal interview I did in Tintagel was with Joanne McGillivray, the House and Visitor Services Manager of Tintagel Old Post Office, a National Trust site (see Figure 3.6). While the site was a post office for five years in the 1870s, the building is, in fact, a Mediaeval hall house which is over six hundred years old. McGillivray told me that the site sometimes struggles to convey to visitors that it is more than just an old post office, but that when it is successful, the house serves as a valuable place for visitors to access Tintagel's "authentic Mediaeval story," particularly if they have been disappointed by the lack of information available at the castle.

McGillivray explained that the Old Post Office's operations are closely tied to those of the castle: the castle closes during the winter, and stays closed until Easter, so for the

few weeks that the Old Post Office is open before Easter, their visitor numbers are very low. She also said that the Old Post Office is an attractive alternative for those who have travelled to Tintagel, only to realise that the castle is too inaccessible to visit.

Nonetheless, the Old Post Office is dwarfed by the castle. McGillivray estimated that the castle receives approximately 200,000 visitors a year, while the Old Post Office has approximately 46,000. The National Trust has tried to reach out to English Heritage to have the two sites work together and create a visitor package, or shared programming, and while there has been little response so far, McGillivray hopes that they will be able to work together to create a more integrated visitor experience in Tintagel.

King Arthur's Great Halls

The second site I visited in the village was King Arthur's Great Halls, the most obviously Arthurian of Tintagel's secondary attractions (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5). It is situated in a large Victorian house on the high street, two blocks further from the castle than the Old Post Office, but just as close to one of the major car parks. Currently managed by John Moore, who I interviewed, it was founded in 1927 by Frederick Glasscock, who made his fortune in the custard industry (Hutchinson n.d, 6-7). A passionate devotee of the chivalric legends of King Arthur, he poured a great amount of time and energy into converting the mansion into a vast, Pre-Raphaelite-esque vision of the Hall of King Arthur and his knights, complete with a soaring, barrel-vaulted ceiling, walls punctuated by lush stained glass depictions of each of Arthur's knights and several of their notable deeds, a throne, and not one, but two, round tables. Intended, and currently functioning, as the meeting place for the Fellowship of the Knights of the

Round Table of King Arthur, an organisation “based on the symbolism and ideals of the Arthurian tradition,” it also now houses a light show portraying some of the key tales from the Arthurian legend cycle (Hutchinson n.d, 24). Both this and the Hall are open to tourists, and, as I noted in my fieldnotes, the scale of the attraction, and its level of detail make it a “surprisingly impressive place,” despite its high potential for campiness.

According to Moore, the Great Halls are situated on a powerful ley line, or earth energy line, which runs from St. Michael’s Mount in the extreme South-West of Cornwall, to Glastonbury, another Arthurian site, in Somerset. This ley line attracts many visitors who come to connect with the energy that runs through the building; Moore told me about an Israeli couple who had arrived one morning before the Halls were open, and begged to be let in so they could have a moment alone with this energy, and about a man who could not go near the replica Round Table which sits directly on the line without becoming terribly ill. Local neo-pagan groups hold naming ceremonies and weddings in the Great Halls, and the funeral of Eron the Wizard, a very prominent member of Tintagel’s neo-pagan community was held there as well.

It is the Great Halls’ relationship to the castle which is particularly interesting, however. Moore told me, “Several people have said to me that they were disappointed with the castle. Not with the views or anything like that, but it’s the fact that it isn’t a castle. It’s ruins. It is stones, you know.” He went on to say that visitors want to have “the idea of what it might’ve looked like,” saying, “[t]hat’s why a lot of the buses bring the people here first, because they get the atmosphere of the inside of the halls, of what this man imagined the castle might have looked like, and then they carry...the story to the castle.” King Arthur’s Great Halls serve the important function of filling in the

imaginative portion of a visit to Tintagel. With so many tourists wanting to engage with the legend rather than the archaeological remains, the Great Halls provide all the pageantry and storytelling the castle does not.

St. Nectan's Glen

The final site I visited as part of the Tintagel tourist landscape was St. Nectan's Glen, situated approximately 3.5 kilometres by road or right-of-way walking path from the village. The Glen is approachable only by way of a twenty-minute walk from the car park, along a damp, overgrown forest path, and after paying a small entrance fee, visitors can walk down a slippery set of stairs to the kieve, a natural gap in a rock face through which a waterfall pours (see Figure 3.8). It was here that I met with Vicky Lowles, the manager of the Glen, and for the first time in Tintagel, had the sense that I was speaking with someone who had strong community ties in the area, despite having moved to Tintagel from outside of Cornwall.

The site itself has quite a storied past. It was near the site, according to Lowles, that a miracle occurred. The land belonged, in the sixth century, to Nectan, a renowned healer. Unfortunately, having something of an "eye for the ladies," Nectan took up with the wife of the local lord who was serving as his patron. The area then being wilder "even than Tintagel on a Friday night" now, in Lowles' words, the lord beheaded Nectan in retaliation. But having lived so closely off the land, Nectan had gained special powers, and was able to pick up his head and ride his horse to the kieve, where he finally laid down to die. Legend has it that his blood is the reason that, to this day, the stones in the stream at the bottom of the kieve are speckled with red marks. From the time of Nectan's

death, the kieve has been associated with a number of religious and spiritual beliefs, significant both to Christians and to Neo-Pagans. Lowles explained to me that the combination of the healing properties of the water, and the fact that it is situated on the Michael and Mary ley line, the same ley line which runs beneath King Arthur's Great Halls, have made St. Nectan's Glen a popular pilgrimage destination.²⁷ The stream below the waterfall is dotted with low stone cairns built by visitors, and the trees which overhang the stream are all tied with multicoloured ribbons and bells, some bearing inscriptions and prayers (see Figure 3.9). Lowles said, "People come for different reasons. You know, some people, they may want to, sort of, say goodbye, they might want to scatter ashes, they may want to come for the memory of a loved one passed, or if they had come, make a wish, make a blessing for something for the future, send something out to the universe, and because it is all so magnified here, it's the perfect channel for that to happen in."

When asked about its connection to King Arthur, Lowles said that there is some overlap due to the "Celtic atmosphere" of both legends, and that the magic of the glen enhances a trip to the castle, but that they are two separate attractions.²⁸ Nonetheless, she sees Tintagel as "one big entity," in which all of the attractions play off each other, and

²⁷ The Michael and Mary ley line, a rough line which can be traced across the landscape, and is said to carry great spiritual energy, runs from St. Michael's Mount to Glastonbury. It is so called because it touches many sites associated with St. Michael the Archangel, and churches named for St. Mary (Jacoby 2013). Marion Bowman further explains that the ley line is, in fact, believed to be two intertwining lines, representing the coming together of masculine and feminine energies (Bowman 2005, 178; see also Ivakhiv 2001, 22-28, and Hutton 1993, 121).

²⁸ While Lowles downplayed the connection between King Arthur and local Neo-Pagan beliefs, there is, in fact, a strong tradition of connection between the Arthurian legends and Neo-Pagan spirituality due to their connection under the umbrella of Celticism. For more, see "Arthur and Bridget in Avalon: Celtic Myth, Vernacular Religion and Contemporary Spirituality in Glastonbury" (Bowman 2007).

add to the overall experience of a visit to the area. Lowles clearly feels a strong sense of connection to Tintagel, and particularly its pagan community. She told me that all of the women who work with her at the Glen are her closest friends, and that they are all part of a larger network of Neo-Pagans, many of whom own and operate the pagan shops which line the high street of the village. She told me, “As a practising Pagan myself, of more than 25 years, me and my friends, we’re very blessed that we don’t have to hide what we are, you know?” She attributes Tintagel’s attractiveness to pagans to its energy, saying, “the energy is so much more here, and so pronounced, and it’s all magnified, because of just the geographical locations that, you know, when people do their crystal energy work, their healing, it’s given that lovely extra boost, you know?” Lowles told me that the whole village has developed a reputation for attracting free spirits, despite the commercialised reputation it has amongst tourists. Indeed, I had the opportunity to join Lowles and her many pagan friends in a shamanic drumming circle and pub night the evening after I interviewed her, in the nearby village of Boscastle. The group consisted of people from all over the United Kingdom, as well as a few who were only passing through, but who were clearly well known to one another already. With topics of conversation ranging from the dangers of driving home after working as a medium, to theories about Stonehenge’s layout, to funny stories from one woman’s recent trip to the Bahamas, this was clearly a group who had found a comfortable, nurturing home in Tintagel, and who valued the extremely strong feeling of community it allowed them.

Other Locals

What many in Vicky Lowles' group shared were origins elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The Tintagel Neo-Pagan community is very much a chosen community, composed of people who settled in Tintagel because of its perceived spiritual significance, and pre-existing Neo-Pagan population. Of course, though, not everyone living in Tintagel has chosen to live there for spiritual or tourism-related reasons. I spoke with Charley Howes, a man in his early twenties who grew up in Tintagel, and is currently studying tourism in Cornwall at Aberystwyth University. He told me that the past ten years have seen significant changes in the relationship between locals who are originally from the area, and the more touristy elements of Tintagel. Until he was twelve years old, the village held a "Battle of Camlann" for which the whole village would don costumes and re-enact the famous Arthurian battle.²⁹ Within the past ten years, however, this ended, car parks started charging more money, and the whole village shifted towards accommodating tourists. Howes told me that nobody who grows up in Tintagel stays there as there is no work in the area.

Others I spoke with were slightly more philosophical about the impact tourism has on Tintagel's patterns of life. Michael Parsons, Vicar of St. Materiana's Church, an early Norman structure that sits on the cliff between Tintagel Village and Castle, told me that, like in Zennor, locals have a love-hate relationship with the tourists (see Figure 3.7). He

²⁹ One of the great battles of Arthurian legend, this battle is said to have taken place between King Arthur and his treacherous nephew, Mordred (Dickinson, 15). In his 1946 pamphlet, *The Story of King Arthur in Cornwall: To which is appended an account of the Historical King Arthur*, L.J. Dickinson writes that the location of the Battle of Camlann is disputed, with some believing that it happened near the border of England and Scotland, while others cite local tradition and Mediaeval documents claiming that it happened on the site of the modern-day village of Camelford, near Tintagel (15-16).

said, “they are your lifeblood, you know, financially and for everything else. I suppose it’s like anything. I know, because we were in the bed and breakfast trade for quite a long time, and at the beginning of the season, it’s, ‘Ah, lovely, the visitors are back!’ By the end of the season, you’re going, ‘Oh, for goodness sake, I wish they’d go away.’” Visitors have an impact on the church itself. Parsons told me that in the winter, the church has a congregation of 18-20 people, and they have to move to the old school on very cold days as the church has no water and very little heating. However, in the summer, the congregation swells to 20-60 people, and the church is left open to visitors, and hosts festivals such as the village’s annual flower festival.

While this clearly points to visitors being interested in participating in the culture of the village, Parsons said that locals are far less interested in the legends that draw tourists there in the first place. He told me he shares the general local attitude towards the legend of King Arthur in Tintagel which is that “It’s good for bringing the business. It’s a nice legend.... Undoubtedly, there was something or somebody here in the Dark Ages. Who it was, I wouldn’t like to say. Is it not true to say that the Arthurian legend was brought about in the eighteen hundreds by somebody who wanted to bring the tourists down? And it’s worked a treat, you know.” The one group that is genuinely interested in the legendary and spiritual elements of Tintagel, the Neo-Pagan community, is one that Parsons considered somewhat separate from the main population of the village. He said, “I would say there were two different populations. Historically, of course, Christianity has taken over quite a number of the pagan festivals, but no, I would say that they’re two separate communities down here.” Despite this separation, and despite having very little overlap, the two populations seem to coexist quite comfortably. Parsons further said,

“Obviously, there is the paganism that we get round here. There is quite a lot of that. Um, although it’s not in your face or anything like that... But it is undoubtedly there, and there again, is it surprising? Yes, they’re still active. But, you know, on the other hand, who’s to say their beliefs are right or wrong, or my beliefs are right or wrong? We will all find out eventually—or may not, as the case may be.”

Vicky Lowles echoed this, describing in great detail how she and her friends relish the off-season because it gives them the opportunity to reconnect with their community. She did acknowledge, however, that she worries about her children’s prospects in the village. She feels that if they choose not to work in the tourism sector, they will have to leave Tintagel. Joanne McGillivray, on the other hand, said that the village struggles during the off-season. She told me that the shops want to be able to stay open, but they lose more money than they can make during the winter. Speaking about the Old Post Office, she told me, “We’ve tried to do Christmas weekends. We did weekends in December for two years, and you weren’t getting the locals even coming in. So, you know, we’re paying for a Christmas tree and decorations, and staff time, and it just wasn’t working for us.” McGillivray also pointed to difficulties connecting with the locals. She told me that some locals work in the mines near the village, but that most travel to larger towns in the area where they can find work in factories or big supermarkets. The National Trust owns the cliffs around Tintagel, and locals are apparently resentful of the Trust’s rules governing the use of that land. While McGillivray said that the Trust is currently trying to build bridges with the locals, efforts to have locals volunteering at the museum have, so far, been unsuccessful. Despite this, though, McGillivray said of the locals, “I think they know that without that story, we would be a ghost town completely. So yeah,

they know that we need that story to bring people here.” The locals’ grudging acceptance of the tourism industry in Tintagel makes for an uneasy alliance between those who have always lived in Tintagel, those who live there now in order to work in the tourism industry, and those who have come for the Neo-Pagan community. Unlike in Zennor, there is no sense of cohesion between these groups; while they accept one another’s existence, they do not work together.

The Tourist Experience

One complication of this lack of shared community means that not even the various tourist attractions work collaboratively to create a cohesive tourist experience. All of the tourist attraction managers I spoke with had some overlap in their understanding of tourists’ experiences of Tintagel, but also diverged in places as well. McGillivray’s impression of the tourists in Tintagel is one of tourists who most closely match the post-tourist profile: she is frustrated by the village’s inability to maintain any “upmarket shops,” and said that both the Old Post Office and Tintagel Castle have tried to put higher quality items in their gift shops, “but people want that plastic sword, and you know, the armour, and postcards, and little badges. That’s what they’re after, as a memento of Tintagel” (see Figures 3.10, 3.11, and 3.12). In fact, she has heard from some people who work at the castle that “some people, they’ll get distracted by the main street, all the shops there, and once they’ve bought a sword, and a postcard, they’ve run out of time, and they haven’t even got down to the castle!” On the other side of this is the attitude many of these tourists have to the King Arthur legend. McGillivray said, “I think they take it with a pinch of salt. Cause I work in the house on some days, and they’ll say [jokingly], ‘Oh,

King Arthur, you know, was he born here?’ And, I’ll say, ‘You know, read into it as much as you want.’ And they’ll have a bit of a giggle.” She said that most tourists seemed to simply be having fun with the idea of King Arthur.

At the sites connected to Arthurian legend and spirituality, the tourists seem to have a slightly more serious attitude. John Moore told me that they have visitors from “everywhere you could possibly think about. And because of the myth, the legend of King Arthur, people come here, like I say, from all over the world.... It’s the Celtic connection, and they all believe that in a roundabout sort of way, they are connected to King Arthur.” Moore told me that he is particularly delighted when visitors from overseas discover that Tintagel is not a completely fictional place, but a real village that they can “fall in love with.” Vicky Lowles also talked about working to make sure that visitors have a good experience of Tintagel. While, like anyone, she wished the village were not quite so touristy – every time she hears a new shop is opening, she hopes it will be “a beautiful greengrocers or a fishmongers or something, but no, it’s another crystal shop” – she said, “I think it’s our duty, if they’re saving up all year to come down for one or two weeks out of their whole year, it’s our job to make it as wonderful as it is. And if some say that, well, that means overcommercialising it, so be it.” She was careful, however, to create a slight distance between this commercialism and St. Nectan’s Glen, saying “I’d rather someone went away with a big smile on their face, saying, ‘Yeah, we had a really, really good time, and yeah, we enjoyed browsing round, like, the tacky shops, and I came away with plastic swords, and what have you.’ Not what I sell here, just get that on there, for the benefit of the tape recorder. [laughs] But it’s looking at giving the most positive experience, because then they will come back, and they will put more money into the

local economy.” Lowles further described St. Nectan’s Glen as an attraction which stands in counterpoint to the Castle and the village; an antidote to the “plastic swords,” which “works in harmony” with the other attractions to make a good, overall experience of the area for visitors.

Conclusion

As will be discussed in the next chapter, this cohesive experience is not one enjoyed by all visitors, due, in part, to the locals’ inability to demonstrate communicative competence by working together to perform one coherent vision of Tintagel. Unlike in Zennor, the local community is not a main point of attraction for visitors and, whether a cause or an effect of this, there is no strong sense of community amongst those who live and work in Tintagel. While the local Neo-Pagan community does share strong bonds, and have a firm rootedness in Tintagel, the locals not affiliated with the tourism industry keep their distance from the tourists and the attractions that bring them there, and those who have come to Tintagel to work in the tourism industry do not seem to interact a great deal with either the original locals or the Neo-Pagans. As such, to write of what is local in Tintagel is to write not of a community, but of a collection of attractions, all vying for the attention of visitors. Ultimately, this results in a much less successful tourist site, as the creation of a cohesive site requires the shared efforts of all involved, something which is not present in Tintagel. As will be shown in the next chapter, tourist expectations play a large part in this lack of coherency, and are perhaps even responsible for the siloed nature of the Tintagel attractions.

“NOT QUITE A QUAIN PLACE”: VISITORS’ CONSTRUCTION OF TINTAGEL

Tintagel is notorious. As discussed in the introduction to this section, and in earlier chapters, guidebooks about Cornwall, as well as many tourists who choose to visit the county, hold Tintagel in slight contempt, regarding it as a commercialised, tacky theme park of Arthuriana, seeing those who do visit the village as belonging to a more “downmarket” tourist population. As shown in the previous chapter, even those who work in the village, and depend on the tourist economy for their livelihoods, sometimes roll their eyes at the consumerism of the tourists. Having visited Tintagel myself on multiple occasions, and having enjoyed playing with the idea of what it is to be a “tacky tourist,” on my return, I expected a mixture of tourists who fit the post-tourist model, there to have fun experiencing the markers of old-fashioned tourism in a postmodern, ironic way, and tourists who, despite knowing of Tintagel’s tacky reputation, would express some dismay at its perceived inauthenticity.

What I found was, naturally, more complicated than this. Some were there for just those reasons and had just those reactions, while many others were as interested in the pursuit of authenticity as the tourists I spoke with in Zennor, but were aware that the authenticity they sought was derived from legend, not history. This added a fascinating, and unexpected, dimension to the tourists’ likelihood of being satisfied or disappointed with their experiences. The range of reactions the tourists I spoke with had to the presentation of Tintagel Castle, the interplay of the village’s various attractions, the commercialism of the village, and the conflicting portrayals of history and atmosphere resulted in a tourist environment that cannot be called a tourist experience, but rather the

location of many divergent tourist experiences. This array of expectations, and the various ways they were and were not met, produced an unclear tourist site with no unifying identity or definition.

Methodology

The methods I used to interview tourists were similar to those I used in Zennor. I asked many of the same questions, including why they had come to Tintagel, what appealed to them most there, and what their reactions were to the various attractions the village offered. I also asked them all whether they considered Tintagel Celtic, Cornish, or English, and why. Tintagel is different from Zennor in that Tintagel Castle, rather than Tintagel village, is the reason tourists visit the site. As such, rather than establishing myself in the heart of the village, or at a café, as I did in Zennor, I chose to focus my interviews at the exit from Tintagel Castle, a short distance from the village itself.

This proved to be effective, as the village is much larger than Zennor, and has a great many more places to eat and drink, making targeting people at any given spot difficult. Furthermore, due to the very high number of visitors and mainstream nature of Tintagel as a tourist destination, Tintagel has a much more anonymous atmosphere than Zennor does. While in Zennor, tourists were often happy to talk to me and to one another, as if to celebrate having found the place, tourists in Tintagel were more focused on having their own, personal experience of a site of mass consumption, and did not seem to engage with one another as easily. Thus, I decided to position myself at the narrow exit from the Castle, where it would be easy to catch people's attention as they left the site. At this spot, everyone I spoke with had their impressions of the castle, which was most often the

reason they had come to Tintagel, fresh in their minds, and most were willing to reflect on these impressions with me.

Why visit Tintagel?

One of the first things I asked tourists was why they had chosen to come to Tintagel. I was interested to know if they had heard of Tintagel's touristy reputation. If they had, was this what enticed them to the place, or did they choose to come despite it? If they had not heard this reputation, what did they know about the site beforehand? What led them to choose to visit?

As noted in the introduction to this section, Tintagel is considered an essential stop in any trip to Cornwall. The *Lonely Planet* website has it second on the list of "Top things to do" in Cornwall, while the *Frommer's* website says, "a trip to this region is incomplete without a visit to Tintagel Castle, linked with the legends of King Arthur, Lancelot, and Merlin" ("Top things to do;" "Cornwall Travel Guide"). Many people indicated, either explicitly or implicitly, that Tintagel being considered one of the must-see sites was why they had chosen to visit. Twenty people I spoke with gave simply being on holiday in Cornwall as the primary reason they had come to Tintagel, while another six specifically mentioned travelling to the site because they were instructed to do so by a guidebook to Cornwall. These people came from Britain, and from further afield: four of them were from the United States, and six were from Europe. Some had previously not been familiar with Tintagel; David and Susan, a middle-aged couple from Hertfordshire, were on a holiday in Cornwall, and while Susan had heard about the site from her mother, David said he knew nothing about Tintagel. Others were spending their holidays visiting local

attractions around Cornwall and had chosen Tintagel as one of those attractions because a particular element had stood out to them. Alice and Ian, from London, were in Cornwall for a surfing holiday, but had decided to take a side-trip to Tintagel because Ian liked castles, while Daniel and Min, from Washington DC, had a particular interest in British built heritage, and had become English Heritage members, leading them to hear about Tintagel as a site of significance.

The rest of the people I spoke with had made more deliberate decisions to visit Tintagel, usually either because they had been before and wanted to revisit the site, because they had long wanted to see the castle, or because they were interested in the legend of King Arthur with which the castle is associated. Beth, from Hertfordshire, had been to Tintagel as a child, and recalled having had a good time running around the island, away from her parents. Now in her twenties, she wanted to show the castle to her partner. Similarly, Russo, from Devon, was there with his wife and two daughters, and one of the reasons he gave for taking the family to Tintagel was that he had been there thirty years earlier as a child, and wanted to share the place with his children. Others, such as Alastair and Sharon, from Oxfordshire, and Doris and Norman, from Lincoln, had been to Cornwall in the past but had not made it to Tintagel, and decided to visit because they felt it was something they had missed.

Amongst those who said they had come specifically to see the castle, most still treated their visit to Tintagel as only one portion of a larger holiday. Nick and Ashley, and their young son Chris, from Kent, were in Cornwall for two weeks, and had come to Tintagel for the day because Chris wanted to see the castle. Similarly, Linda and Melvin, from Sheffield, were on holiday in Cornwall and, professing to know only a little about

the legend of King Arthur, said they wanted to see the castle. Two Australian-English pairs of vacationers traveling separately, Sue and Jessica, a mother and daughter, and Julia and Mark, a couple, were also there specifically to see the castle. In the case of Julia and Mark, they were travelling to the Glastonbury Festival in nearby Somerset, and stopped because Julia, the Australian, was intrigued by the castle, and Mark, who was English, recalled enjoying stories of King Arthur as a child. Finally, Cherry and Ralph, from Essex, were adamant that they had come to Tintagel to see the castle, and learn about its history as proven by the archaeological record, but had no interest whatsoever in the legend of King Arthur.

Many, of course, were attracted to Tintagel by the allure of its connection to the legend of King Arthur. Russo, mentioned earlier, wanted to show Tintagel to his daughters, but admitted that his interest in the site had been renewed by his love of media such as the *Game of Thrones* television series and the film of *The Hobbit*, which he had just received on DVD for Father's Day. He connected the aesthetic of Arthuriana with the high fantasy he enjoyed. Kevin and Veronica, from Nottingham, also said they enjoyed the romanticism of the Arthurian legends, saying that they did not believe in the legend, but that they were nonetheless there to see where the legend was set, and had always wanted to visit Tintagel. Cheryl and Brecca, a mother and daughter from Oklahoma, explained that as "minor Anglophiles," they had travelled to the United Kingdom three times together already, but that this, their fourth trip, was the first to take them to Cornwall. They had decided to visit Tintagel because Brecca was a fan of the *Mists of Avalon* series by Marion Zimmer Bradley cited earlier. These books are heavy in atmospheric Arthuriana. Similarly, Sonia, a British woman, and Laura, from Spain, were

showing Laura's parents around Britain, and wanted something to show them that would match the images they had seen in movies about King Arthur. Finally, two couples, Denise and Doug, from Northumberland, and Fred and Vincent, from the Netherlands, said that they knew only a little of the legends of King Arthur, but were intrigued enough to visit Tintagel in hopes of learning more, as part of their holidays in Cornwall.

When asked specifically about their knowledge of, and interest in, the legends of King Arthur, my informants had a range of responses. Some spoke of having learned the legends as children, while for others, the legends were new to them. Chris and Silas, a father and son from Kent, were divided on the importance of the legend in Tintagel; Chris, the father, was much more interested in learning about the history of the area, while Silas was fascinated by Arthuriana, and specifically stories about Merlin. Most people, such as Alastair and Sharon, from Oxfordshire, were drawn to Tintagel by their interest in the legend, but hoped to learn more about the history of the site, and often expressed a desire to learn about a history which would support or complement their understanding of the legend. It was on this point that many tourists I spoke with expressed disappointment. As will be discussed in the next section, the castle does not accommodate this desire, leaving tourists to attempt to renegotiate their understandings of the site.

Looking for a “real castle”: Visitor experiences of Tintagel Castle

When I spoke to visitors immediately after their visits to the castle, nine expressed that they had had a positive experience, while 26 people were disappointed with the site. Those who had enjoyed their visit to the castle most appreciated the atmosphere of the site: Denise and Doug, from Northumberland, enjoyed being inspired to think about the

history of the area, despite not having purchased a guidebook. Rudolph and Christine, from Germany, also did not purchase a guidebook, but as fans of the *Mists of Avalon* series, appreciated being able to step into a site with such a mystical atmosphere. Cherry and Ralph, from Essex, Petra and Christoph, from Germany, and Herbert, from the Netherlands, were all happy with the amount of history they had learned while at the castle. From the 26 people who were disappointed, however, there were a wide array of complaints and suggestions, ranging from general statements about the lack of information, or poor quality of what information was available, to suggestions that an audio guide or more active interpretation would be valuable. Despite her husband Herbert's satisfaction with the site, Anneke, from the Netherlands, was disappointed, having expected a "real castle." While that, of course, is unattainable, what all of these tourists shared was a very firm belief that the castle as a tourist site is inadequate.

One particular dimension to people's disappointment lay in the fact that the legend of King Arthur played no part in what information was available about the history of the castle. Doris and Norman, from Lincoln, were disappointed not only that most of the castle had fallen into the sea, but also that they learned more about the history than the legend while at the castle. Fred and Vincent, from the Netherlands, who had come to Tintagel specifically because they wanted to learn more about the legend of King Arthur, were "very disappointed" that the castle offered them no new information about it. In fact, not only do the legends not play a role in the castle's presentation of the site, but belief in the Arthurian connection is actively discouraged. Daniel and Min, from Washington, D.C., came believing that Arthur was conceived at Tintagel, but said of the castle, "they do a pretty good job disabusing us of that notion." Rather than feeling they

had learned something new about the site, which made it as interesting as it had been to them when they believed in its connection with King Arthur, they came away from the experience disappointed that more had not been explained about why the site was associated with the Arthurian legends.

Others who have studied the tourist experience of Tintagel have also remarked on this particular sense of disappointment. John Robb, writing in 1998 about a Tintagel which has not changed much in the intervening seventeen years, found that English Heritage acknowledged that the story of King Arthur was significant only insofar as it was the legend of his conception which inspired the building of the castle, an observation which still holds true today (583). Tourists who purchase the guidebook find a section elaborating on the history of the myth's connection to the site, but underlying it all, a strong assertion that Arthur never truly existed (Batey 2010). Hilary Orange and Patrick Laviolette conducted a more recent study in 2010, asking tourists similar questions to those I asked. They identified an "interpretive limbo" amongst the visitors they spoke to: most had arrived with one of a wide range of understandings of the legend of King Arthur, but all had their beliefs debunked (Orange and Laviolette 2010, 85). In place of those beliefs, however, no real alternative was offered (Orange and Laviolette 2010, 102). The sketchy knowledge of the site's history, as uncovered by archaeologists, was not a satisfying alternative to the place's legendary history.

To give some credit to English Heritage, they have a difficult task in presenting Tintagel to the public. Also the custodians of Stonehenge, they are no strangers to the difficulties inherent in interpreting an archaeological site with a diverse set of meanings (Bender 1998). Archaeologist and anthropologist Barbara Bender writes about the

conflict between archaeologists, guardians of the scientific, and therefore “accurate,” interpretation of history, who seek to preserve historic sites’ integrity, and those with any of the interpretations of the site which can be lumped together in the “alternative” category (1998, 121). Preservation is often deemed more important than use and access (Robb 1998, 580). At Tintagel, unlike at Stonehenge, visitors have a remarkable degree of access, with the only barriers being those put in place to prevent visitors from falling into the sea on windy days. Instead, the English Heritage-visitor conflict is an interpretive one. Bender writes of Stonehenge, “while the stones remained ‘open’ right through to the beginning of the century and people could come to them with their different understandings, they are now ‘closed’ and Stonehenge has become a museum which attempts to ‘sell’, not always successfully, a particular interpretation of the past’ (1998, 112). The same holds true of Tintagel. Robb writes that Tintagel Castle, as managed by English Heritage, is officially skeptical of King Arthur, and that this causes problems when people come with fleshed-out expectations about Tintagel based on information put forward by the world of “para-archaeology,” but which simply cannot be met by the official archaeological record (1998, 587, 581).

On the whole, the fact that Tintagel Castle follows a mandate to present as factual a historical record as possible dooms it to being a source of disappointment to tourists who would rather see it as part of an imagined, mythological landscape. Even those visiting purely for the history—and such people do exist—come away disappointed due to the simple inadequacy of information on offer. Linda and Melvin, from Sheffield, were disappointed both by how scant the remains of the castle were, and by the lack of the historical information being offered, saying “the information plaques are very poor” (see

Figure 3.2) David and Susan, from Hertfordshire, Beth and Tina, also from Hertfordshire, Adam and Frances, from Reading, and Alastair and Sharon, from Oxfordshire, all decided not to buy the guidebook because they decided it was too expensive. As a result, they all felt that they had missed the opportunity to learn about the site's history. Several of them said they would return home to Google the site. Others, such as Kevin and Veronica, from Nottingham, and Cheryl and Brecca, from Oklahoma, said that the site would have needed more imaginative interpretation to bring it to life. Cheryl suggested that instead of the basic information available, something like an audio guide would contribute more to the experience. While the history, rather than the legend, is what Tintagel Castle strives to present, most people I spoke with were unable to connect with this history, and came away from the experience feeling that they were missing important information.

It seems that had English Heritage chosen either to leave the castle completely open to individual interpretation, or to present a thorough interpretation of the site's history, it would have pleased at least some of the visitors. Instead, it provides just enough information to contradict those who believe in the legend of King Arthur, but not enough to allow those who are interested in the castle's history to learn anything new. The one major success Tintagel Castle does have is in visitors' appreciation of its atmosphere and surroundings. The ruins of the castle stand on a very dramatic promontory that has, since the time the castle was built, been slowly crumbling into the sea. From the castle site, visitors can see up and down a coast lined with rocky cliffs, and can look back towards the village, as well as the rolling farmland beyond it. Several people remarked on the natural beauty of the site, such as Julia, from Australia, who called the site "Instagood," delighting in how the evocative scenery would result in good photographs for the social

media platform, Instagram. Others specifically explained that the atmosphere of the site allowed them to see the Tintagel they had imagined in their mind's eye, even if English Heritage's heritage material did not engage with these images. Kevin and Veronica, from Nottingham, loved the "drama of the coastline," and said that looking down this coastline allowed them to imagine people having done the same "all those years ago." Cheryl and Brecca, despite having felt English Heritage could have done more to bring Tintagel to life, compared being there to being at the site of the Battle of the Little Bighorn in the United States, saying that only by actually being at a site is it possible to "understand how it all happens."³⁰ It is telling that Tintagel Castle's most unanimous success is in the element of the experience contained almost entirely in visitors' imaginations. When visitors are able to project their personal, imagined Tintagel onto the site, they are satisfied. When, however, they look for factual information about the site, as determined by English Heritage, they are either disappointed by its non-existence, or by the fact that it contradicts their pre-imagined understandings of the site.

The Tintagel heritage complex

Fortunately, while the castle does stand apart from the village of Tintagel, it does not stand alone. As discussed in the previous chapter, three other attractions, Tintagel Old Post Office, King Arthur's Great Halls, and St. Nectan's Glen, all help fill in the visitor

³⁰ The Battle of the Little Bighorn was fought in Montana in 1876, between the "warriors of the Lakota Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho tribes," and the "men of the 7th Regiment of the U.S. Cavalry" (National Park Service). Like Tintagel, the battle has legendary status, symbolising in the United States the "clash of two vastly dissimilar cultures," and resulting in the cultural martyrdom of General George Armstrong Custer (National Park Service; Venables 2017).

experience in Tintagel. Being able to choose to visit one or more of these sites in a way which complements their visit to the castle allows tourists to craft an experience which is tailor-made to confirm the pre-existing image they had held of Tintagel. In addition to these more traditional tourist attractions, the village of Tintagel itself stands as an additional attraction: its focus on commercialism and abundance of pubs, cafes, and restaurants named with puns on elements of the Arthurian legends make it a site which can be experienced in ways suiting both MacCannell's and Urry's types of tourists.

Because I spoke with tourists immediately after their visit to Tintagel Castle, which is the primary attraction in the village, most had not yet explored the village. Instead, I asked them if they had plans to see any other attractions in the area, and what they planned to do after walking back to the village from the castle. Two couples had no further plans. Alastair and Sharon, from Oxfordshire, had come straight from the visitor centre by the village's largest car park, and said that the "myth [of King Arthur] is the appeal," so they had no interest in stopping to see "the post office with the wonky roof." Fred and Vincent, from the Netherlands, were also in Tintagel to learn about the legends of King Arthur, so while they took photographs of the Old Post Office, they did not stop to go in. They further explained this by saying that they were "on a mad dash around [Cornwall], not lingering anywhere." Others, however, did want to have a more in-depth exploration of Tintagel.

Doris and Norman, from Lincoln, though disappointed that they had learned more about the history than the legend at the castle, were planning to learn more about Tintagel's history at the Old Post Office, as they were members of the National Trust, and would have free access to the site. Linda and Melvin, from Sheffield, and Cherry and

Ralph, from Essex, had all been disappointed by the lack of historical information at the castle, so they, too, were eager to visit the Old Post Office next, where they felt they would have a better opportunity to learn about Tintagel's past. They were also planning to explore the rest of the village. Kevin and Veronica, from Nottingham, said that they liked Tintagel, with the visitor centre, the Old Post Office, and the shops to round out the visitor experience. Finally, in addition to six people who said they were eager to return to the village only because they were looking forward to eating lunch there, two pairs of visitors, both from Europe, were looking forward to the aesthetic experience. Judith and Johanna, middle-aged sisters from Switzerland were planning to visit some of the smaller shops in the village, in hopes of finding some local pottery, to take home as a souvenir of their vision of Cornwall's aesthetic. Meanwhile, Anneke and Herbert, from the Netherlands, felt the village was beautiful, and Anneke in particular, who had been disappointed by the lack of "real castle" at the Tintagel Castle site, loved looking at the Old Post Office, calling it "so lovely, like a scene for a movie," and saying that they could have used it in *The Hobbit* film (see Figure 3.6). As with the castle, an important part of visitors' experience of the village is one couched in their aesthetic understanding of the place. This is something, however, which is sometimes challenged or interrupted by the presence of the high number of tourism-based commercial endeavours in the village and at the castle.

“Another dimension” to the castle experience, or not for “people like us”? Souvenir shops in Tintagel Village

This commercialism is a pervasive element of all tourists’ experiences of Tintagel, often from the moment they read about the village in a guidebook, until long after they have returned home with any number of souvenirs (see Figures 3.10, 3.11, and 3.12). The presence of souvenir shops, capitalising on visitors’ desires to take away a part of what they have seen, is a contentious issue amongst these visitors. Souvenirs are perhaps the most accessible entry into the ongoing debate about the nature of authenticity in tourism. One of the leading arguments of those who contend that, if authenticity exists, tourists cannot access it is that the commoditization inherent in tourism automatically renders the tourist-local interaction a commercial one, and therefore inauthentic (Bendix 1989, 133; Goldstein 2007, 172-173; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 149; Voase 2002, 8). Much like the anxiety around whether or not a cultural experience is authentic or not, some assert that souvenirs are more often than not the products of constructed authenticity—images of what the purchaser believes to be authentic rather than a true representation of the place (Swanson 2013, 64; MacCannell 2011, 141, 185). Andrea Peach, writing about souvenirs and art in Scotland, describes a classic example. Tourists believe “real” Scotland to consist of Highland culture, and buy the trappings of that culture to prove that they have made contact with it, even while many Scottish artists long to engage with forms of expression that have nothing to do with an imagined Highland heritage (Peach 2007). But when tourists create a market demand for symbols of the Highland life, things like the tartan goods they buy come to serve as a shorthand for all that is poor quality and touristy (Peach 2007, 249). That which the tourist believes to be real, but can be proven

not to be is devalued as “touristy,” which is, ironically, the last thing a tourist wants their experience to be called, as the “touristy” is used to symbolise the opposite of all that is authentic. Many of the visitors I spoke with were aware of this to some degree, and judged Tintagel accordingly, though some were willing to accept Tintagel’s commercial nature as an inevitable by-product of its dependence on tourism.

One reason my informants gave for not objecting to the presence of souvenir shops in the village was that they, in fact, added something to the experience. Chris, from Kent, who was visiting Tintagel with his son, said that they would look around the shops after their visit to the castle because “it’s nice to be able to take home a bit of memorabilia, especially for kids; great to be able to look at something in ten years’ time, and remember the place.” For Chris, souvenirs would allow a prolonging of the trip to Tintagel through anticipated memories triggered by the possession of a souvenir. Judith and Johanna, sisters from Switzerland, were, as mentioned earlier, looking forward to purchasing something unique which would remind them of the area, as were Adam and Frances, who specified that they like “unique things, not mass-produced ones.” Nick, Ashley, and Christopher, from Kent, were planning to look at the “trinket shops” in the village, as they felt their time in Tintagel needed “another dimension, because there isn’t much at the castle itself,” particularly for their young son.

Many people were, personally, not interested in the shops, but expressed various levels of acceptance of their existence. Adam, from Reading, said, “I’m a capitalist. I have no objection to commercialism.” For Alastair and Sharon, from Oxfordshire, the shops were of no interest, but they said they have “no objection” as “they’ve got to find a way to pay for it all.” They said that the shops had no impact on their ability to like the

atmosphere, as did Tina and Beth, from Hertfordshire, who said people should “expect shops in touristy places” and that they “neither add nor take away, as you can choose to go in them or not.” Kevin and Veronica, from Nottingham, however, accepted that “people have to make their money,” but said that the shops rendered Tintagel “not quite a quaint place.”

This idea that the commercialism of Tintagel affected its atmosphere was common. As has already been shown, tourism, especially to a place such as Tintagel, steeped as it is in legend and atmosphere, is deeply tied to the imagination and to the aesthetic sense. For many, Tintagel’s souvenir shops punctured the image of Tintagel they wished to have, reminding them that the place was a tourist site, rather than a place to see a legend come to life. Some of my informants expressed simple disappointment with the shops, while others explained that the type of tourism which interested them was a more authentic one than most tourists sought. Sue and Jessica, a mother and daughter from Australia and England, respectively, said that the shops “probably add to the experience of the busloads of tourists, but take away from it for people like us.” Similarly, Anneke, from the Netherlands, said that as long as they are in suitable buildings that match the village’s aesthetic, the shops are good for tourists in general, if not for her. At this, her husband, Herbert, pointed out to her, “You’re a tourist!”

The common feeling that the tourist shops damaged the atmosphere of the village was most clearly expressed by Cheryl and Brecca, from Oklahoma, who on previous travels had developed a term for places lacking authenticity. When they had gone to the Lake District in England to see the home of Beatrix Potter, they found something resembling a Peter Rabbit theme park, which they labelled a “Peter Rabbit village,” and

have since started using as a term to describe overly commercialised heritage sites. They said that the Arthurian theme park-like nature of Tintagel, which urged visitors to consume rather than view the place made it another “Peter Rabbit village.”³¹ For others, the shops ruined their personal understandings of Tintagel. Cherry and Ralph, from Essex, who had been interested exclusively in the area’s history, said that the shops “spoiled” the village because it was “annoying not to be able to see the old buildings as they’re obscured by all the souvenirs for sale.” For Julia and Mark, from Australia and England, respectively, the tourist shops, which were similar to those they had seen elsewhere, turned Tintagel into a generic village that was not unique. The crystal shops, in particular, were out of line with what they had hoped to see in Tintagel: Julia referred to their contents as “all that tacky shit.” Finally, there were people such as Denise and Doug, from Northumberland, whose understanding of Tintagel was very firmly based in the legends of the knights of the round table, but who did not find this understanding echoed by the shops in the village. They said that the village was nice, but that it had too many “out there shops” with “weird Merlin things.” The shops, they said, would be acceptable if what they sold had a more natural, subdued aesthetic, with more focus on what they considered the more accurate, Mediaeval legends of the Knights of the Round Table, and not the more fantastical stories of Merlin. All of these disparate reactions are telling as they tend not to be based in any concrete, fact-based criticism, but rather in disappointment that the village has failed to look the way they hoped it would look, or to sell the understanding of Tintagel they hoped it would sell.

³¹ For a study exploring a tourist site analogous to this, see also “Salem’s Ghosts and the Cultural Capital of Witches” (Marshall 2004).

Atmosphere and politics: Tintagel's Celtic, Cornish, and English identities

As in Zennor, the final question I asked my informants was whether they would describe Tintagel as Celtic, Cornish, or English. I received a more balanced array of answers in Tintagel than I did in Zennor, with 12 people labelling it English, 20 people labelling it Cornish, and 20 labelling it Celtic, though there were multiple people who gave it more than one of the three classifications. An additional six people, four from Europe, and two from the United States, were not sure how they would classify Tintagel, explaining that they had no clear understanding of the three categories.

Amongst those who labelled Tintagel English, the majority did so in a way which, either implicitly or explicitly, sought to claim Tintagel's story as part of England's history, rather than allowing it to belong to either the Celts or the Cornish, two populations which have historically stood as identity groups defined by their opposition to Englishness. Adam and Frances, from Reading, initially called Tintagel English, then decided it was, in fact, British "because we're more than the sum of our parts." Alice, from London, labelled Tintagel Cornish, but her partner, Ian, stepped in to say, "Don't encourage them. They're already nationalist enough." It was difficult to tell if he was being sarcastic or not. This concern about Cornish nationalism or separatism, and the fear that Cornwall might claim King Arthur as its own story, rather than one belonging to all British people, was expressed more subtly by Russo, from Devon, who simply said that it was English because the Arthurian legends are English, and by Beth and Tina, from Hertfordshire, who said that Tintagel is English because of its history. In fact, Beth and Tina agreed that Tintagel can actually be classified as all three of the categories, and in

addition to calling it English because of its history, they said its mythology made it Celtic, and the sense of local identity made it Cornish.

This idea of local identity being a marker of Cornishness was a popular one. Other than Mark, from London, who said he thought Tintagel was Cornish because he had learned in school that King Arthur was Cornish, those who labelled the village Cornish did so because of their awareness of Cornishness as a distinct identity. Kevin and Veronica, from Nottingham, echoed what many in Zennor said, saying that Tintagel was definitely not English, and that the Cornish simply have “more identity.” Nick, Ashley, and Chris, from Kent, said “I don’t think you can call it English, because everything about it is so embedded in Cornwall.” Similarly, Linda and Melvin, from Sheffield, said that it was Cornish because “the Cornish are always making out that they’re different from the rest of England,” and Alastair and Sharon, from Oxfordshire, said it was Cornish because “Cornwall’s a little country all of its own. [They have] all their own traditions, and they keep to them, don’t they?” Two visitors from outside of the United Kingdom, who were less familiar with the negotiations of identity within Cornwall, relied on more tangible markers in making their decision that Tintagel was best labelled Cornish. Daniel, from Washington DC, said it was Cornish because of the Cornish pasties being sold in many of the restaurants, while Laura, from Spain, said it was Cornish because many of the shops were selling the distinctive black and white flags of Cornwall.

In contrast to this, my informants who labelled Tintagel Celtic gave multiple reasons for doing so. This is, perhaps, due to the ill-defined nature of the term “Celtic,” and points to the fact that many visitors to Tintagel project their own understanding of what the place should be onto it, just as many do with the concept of Celticness. The first reason

given for labelling it Celtic, however, is grounded in very mundane reality. Multiple people commented on the souvenirs for sale in the village and at the castle, and how they presented a very Celticised Tintagel. Julia, from Australia, said that the shops selling fantasy goods and Celtic jewellery had made an impression on her, leading her to believe Tintagel was a Celtic site. Similarly, Denise and Doug, from Northumberland, said that the village had clearly embraced a Celtic identity, as evidenced by the Celtic souvenir shops. Finally, Daniel and Min, from Washington DC, described their confusion at the Castle, saying that Tintagel Castle's official interpretation presented it as a purely historical site, but that the gift shop was full of Celtic items. Min said that the souvenirs for sale in the gift shop made her feel that Tintagel was Celtic.

For some, however, this apparent contrast between accurate history and the Celtic was non-existent. Anneke and Herbert, from the Netherlands, had read about Tintagel's history at the Information Centre, and they said that this led them to believe that Tintagel had a distinctly Celtic history. For Cheryl and Brecca, from Oklahoma, the period in which Tintagel was built defined its character: they agreed that it was either Celtic or early Anglo-Saxon. The initial settlement of the headland was, in fact, during the early Anglo-Saxon period, though in an area well removed from the Anglo-Saxon sphere of influence. Finally, Cherry and Ralph, from Essex, believed that the age of the castle made it Celtic, as they believed that there was a pre-Roman settlement and trading port at Tintagel. While their understanding of the site's history is not entirely correct, this does illustrate the fact that for them, Tintagel is defined by its history, and not by the legends of King Arthur: of everyone I spoke with Cherry and Ralph were the most disappointed in the village's emphasis on the legends rather than the history.

As ever, atmosphere was a significant determinant of visitors' understandings of Tintagel, and this was reflected particularly strongly in their reasons for calling the area Celtic. As was mentioned, Beth and Tina said that the strong presence of mythology in the area made it seem Celtic to them. Laura and Sonia, from Spain, said that in addition to the village seeming Cornish because of the Cornish flags for sale, it was also Celtic, because of the "feel of it." Sue, from Australia, said that Tintagel was "Celtic, because it reminds me of the old days," while Julia, also from Australia, said that in addition to the impression given by the shops, the ruins evoked a sense of Celticness. While these last two comments appear to be drawing on the history of the area to determine Tintagel's character, they are referencing an aesthetic historicism rather than an interest in academic history. These informants were moved more by the feel of the remnants of Tintagel's past than by any formal interpretation of these remains.

Conclusion

The wide range of reactions and responses visitors had to their experiences of Tintagel makes it a difficult task to provide anything resembling a description of "the visitor experience" in Tintagel. Some were satisfied; some were not. Some appreciated the village's souvenir shops; some did not. Some wanted more information about the legends of King Arthur, and less about the castle's history; some wanted more information about the castle's history, and less about the legends of King Arthur. Amidst all this, what is very clear is that most visitors to Tintagel came with very strong pre-formed ideas of what they wanted to see in Tintagel, and the expectation that Tintagel would confirm their understanding of the site, and its history and legends. This is much

the same as the tourist experience in Zennor. Unlike in Zennor, however, tourists to Tintagel held a much more disparate range of understandings of the site, and had a number of conflicting expectations of its atmosphere and interpretation. With so many different, and often conflicting, expectations to meet, it is little wonder that most tourists I spoke with deemed Tintagel unsuccessful: the overwhelming majority of people I spoke with described having fun with, or enjoying, some portion of their time in Tintagel, but ultimately being disappointed with the place. So in fact, while post-tourism was a factor for some tourists, most hoped to find a site which was truly authentic to the version of it they had imagined, impossible though this proved to be in most cases. MacCannell's description of the "imaginary symbolic" rings true here: tourists are powerfully motivated by their imaginings of a site (2011, 141). If tourism "requires systematic efforts to shut down perception in the presence of an attraction," in order for the tourist's preconceptions to remain their foremost visions of the site, this becomes far more difficult when there are multiple, competing presentations of the site competing for the tourist's attention (MacCannell 2011, 185). While one presentation of Tintagel may confirm the tourist's pre-held vision of the site, there are several others ready to challenge it, and break the tourist from their imagination-based reveries, resulting in a muddled, unsatisfactory tourist experience.

CONCLUSION

Tintagel is a place which has successfully created an identity and an economy based on its status as a tourist site. It is not, however, a successful tourist site. As exemplified by the tourist experience of Zennor, communication is crucial in the making of an effective tourist site. Such sites are emergent, brought about by performance, which is not one-sided, but rather requires a communicatively competent interaction between multiple parties. Tintagel, unfortunately, does not succeed in this regard. This is partially due to the fact that the component parts of its tourist landscape – the castle, the shops, and the secondary attractions – do not interact with one another, or communicate with regard to their shared goal of making Tintagel a tourist destination. Underlying this, however, is an issue which is more difficult to address: the fact that the tourists who come to Tintagel are seeking dramatically different experiences, and, as such, can not all be accommodated by the same programming.

Interestingly, since the completion of my fieldwork, Tintagel Castle has sought to satisfy more tourists' expectations. For those who come to Tintagel seeking the atmosphere and setting of the Arthurian legends, there is a new carving of Merlin's face in the rocks below the castle, and a bronze statue of a Mediaeval king meant to evoke King Arthur installed within the castle itself. Both of these are steps towards validating those who believe in Tintagel's connection to King Arthur. Alternatively, tourists can visit a new outdoor interpretation installment which "explores the history of the Cornish castle and the role legends have played in shaping the site that visitors see today" ("What's New," *Tintagel Castle*). The Castle website further says, "[f]rom the exhibition and new interpretation, visitors can get a complete overview of Tintagel's history - from

the artefacts discovered there to the legends associated with it. A series of panels reveal 1500 years of Tintagel's past - from royal stronghold, to thriving trading port, to a castle of romantic legend” (“What’s New,” *Tintagel Castle*). This work the castle has done to enhance the visitor experience and provide more in-depth access to visitors’ various points of interest is, undoubtedly, appreciated by tourists to the area.

Despite even this new work, however, Tintagel is not, and perhaps cannot be, entirely successful. The installations of the Arthurian statue and carving were controversial: Mebyon Kernow, a Cornish independence party, has accused English Heritage of contributing to the “Disneyfication” of Cornwall, and the carving of Merlin has had its nose chiselled off (Long, “Disneyfication”). Additionally, while the castle may be working to reconcile its historical and legendary legacies, and to provide interpretation about both understandings of the site, the fact remains that many who visit believe very firmly in only one or the other, and that yet more have more interest in the commercial elements of Tintagel than in either understanding. Tintagel remains a site trying to satisfy tourists seeking two different authenticities and tourists seeking no authenticity at all. An extremely difficult task, it is little wonder that the village struggles to satisfy all visitors.



Figure 3.1. Tintagel Castle.



Figure 3.2. Ruins at Tintagel Castle.

Figure 3.3. One of two sets of stairs connecting the two sections of Tintagel Castle.



Figure 3.4. Interior of King Arthur's Great Halls.



Figure 3.5. Stained glass showing the future King Arthur drawing his sword from a stone. One of many panes of stained glass in King Arthur's Great Halls showing Arthurian imagery.



Figure 3.6. Exterior of Tintagel Old Post Office National Trust property (Photograph by Ilaria Alberti, used with permission).



Figure 3.7. Exterior of St. Materiana's Church, Tintagel.



Figure 3.8. St. Nectan's Kieve.

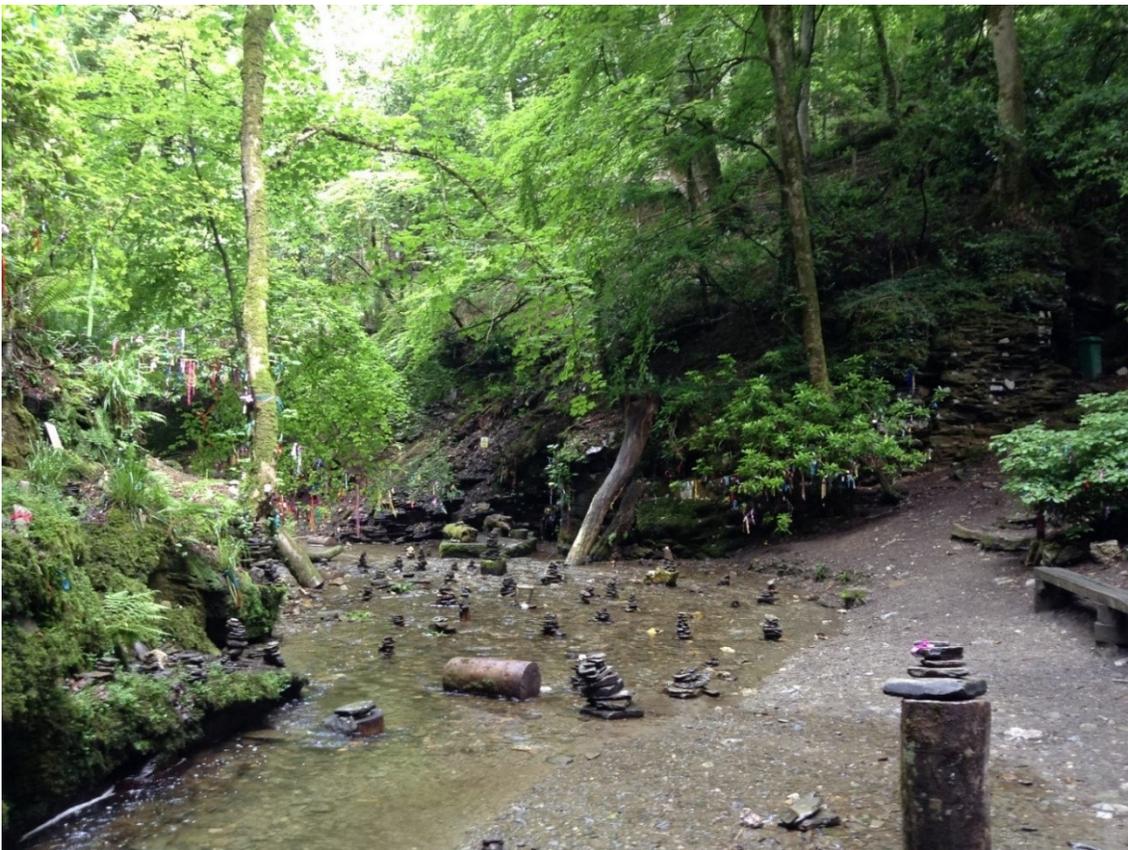


Figure 3.9. Prayer ribbons and rock cairns at St. Nectan's Glen.



Figure 3.10. Sign on a souvenir shop on Tintagel High Street (Photograph by Pauline Holdsworth, used with permission).



Figure 3.11. Sign on a shop on Tintagel High Street (Photograph by Ilaria Alberti, used with permission).



Figure 3.12. Plastic swords and other children's souvenirs outside a shop on Tintagel High Street.

Chapter Five: CONCLUSION

This thesis has presented the process of creating a tourist site as one necessarily depending on the dialogue between the site's locals and tourists. A site's success or failure rests upon the success or failure of this dialogue: where there is communicative competence between locals and tourists, or between performers and their audience, the emergent process of performance works, and a site is made. Where the locals and visitors cannot connect in this way, the alchemical balance is disrupted, and a location fails to gel into a cohesive tourist site. In researching and writing this thesis, I have found that the greatest determinant of whether communication between the relevant parties will succeed or not is the paradigm of authenticity in which the locals and tourists are acting. Chapter two presented several such paradigms: John Urry's concept of "post-tourism," Dean MacCannell's "staged authenticity," and Wayne Fife's parallel notions of "rational" and "aesthetic" authenticity. During my field work, I was surprised to find very few people who Urry would deem to be "post-tourists." The vast majority of my informants were, however, deeply attached to a variety of understandings of authenticity, making both MacCannell and Fife's theories highly relevant to the conclusions I was able to draw about the nature of tourism in Zennor and Tintagel.

As previously discussed, Dean MacCannell's concept of "staged authenticity" relies on the tourist's belief that, traditionally, tourism has shown people superficial versions of the site being visited, but that, as enlightened tourists, they know that there is a more authentic version of that site which exists below the surface. "Staged authenticity" is a presentation of a tourist site which, often, involves a process of revelation, which allows the tourist to believe they are seeing beyond the veil of tourism to the authentic site,

while, in reality, showing the tourist a site which is as fictional, or as invented, as that which would have been seen in modern tourism (MacCannell 1973). It is this act of revelation which allows the tourist to believe they have been allowed to witness something authentic. However, as the tourist is most often not aware that they are witnessing a performance, they seek additional proofs of a site's authenticity. MacCannell writes of tourists' "quest for authentic experiences," and writes that the tourist's understanding of what constitutes an authentic experience relies not only on the performed parting of a veil, but also on a tourist site's ability to match the version of itself already held in the tourist's imagination (MacCannell 1973, 593). It is here that Fife's concepts of "rational" and "aesthetic" authenticity become relevant. When the tourist preemptively imagines a tourist site, this is a deeply aesthetic experience, and thus, it is the real-life site's aesthetic which will have the greatest importance in determining whether the site will live up to the visitor's expectations. At times, however, a rational approach to the perception of authenticity becomes relevant: the concept of rational authenticity can act as a tool to confirm the meaningfulness of aesthetic authenticity for some tourists. If the tourist holds the belief that a veil must be parted, an apparently fact-based explanation of this parting can provide the persuasion necessary to believe that the veil does, in fact, exist.

Ultimately, the success or failure of a tourist site depends on the locals' or attraction managers' ability to understand the expectations of the tourists and, more importantly, to understand the paradigm in which the majority of tourists to their site perceive authenticity. In virtually all cases, the authenticity tourists see either is, or involves, performance; either that which tourists perceive to be authentic has been performed, or

the parting of the veil allowing tourists to see what the locals, too, understand to be authentic, has been performed. Thus, tourist sites must practice communicative competence with their tourists. Where there is no competence between the performers and audience, or locals and tourists, the site is communicatively unsuccessful.

The Introduction to this thesis presented a brief history of Cornwall, and its development as a tourist destination. Despite a history characterised by a fierce independence from the rest of the United Kingdom, today's Cornwall is heavily reliant on visitors from the rest of the country and, more importantly, its tourism industry is the product of well over a century's dialogue between the county and the rest of the country. As was discussed in the Introduction, the first non-Cornish group to claim possession over the county, as tourists would do, spiritually or metaphorically, centuries later, was the Normans, who, seizing upon the Arthurian legacy in the county, incorporated this history into their dynastic mythology. Already, Cornwall was the other within, or the "domestic exotic," and would continue to feature in Mediaeval courtly romances as a semi-mystical land (Kennedy and Kingcome 1998, 49). This carried on well into the time when, in Zennor, according to Mr. Wilson's notes, workmen were fending off wolves while they tried to gather supplies to build their church, and eke out a meagre, hardscrabble living on the coast. Equally difficult and divorced from the mystique of the romantic vision of Cornwall was the mining industry which formed a significant part of the Cornish economy from the Bronze Age onward, and which particularly flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the decline of the mining industry, however, Cornwall found itself needing an alternative activity to support its economy, and it was

here that it adopted, in Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's words, "a second life as heritage" (1998).

With a number of factors in addition to the closure of mines driving the development of a Cornish tourism industry, the newly built nineteenth-century railroads brought tourists to the county in droves. For some, a trip to Cornwall was an affordable beach holiday, while others came to experience the mysticism of the Arthurian landscape, and yet others came with romantic notions of the Mediterranean-esque fishermen's lives. Over the twentieth century, various trends and movements inspired people to visit Cornwall: the modern art movement, the Celtic movement – also known as the "Celtic craze" – and a trend of setting romantic and/or historical novels in Cornwall. By the end of the century, with mining having finally declined into non-existence, Cornwall's industrial past became, itself, a tourist attraction. What had, until recently, been something to take a vacation from, industrialism became the latest element of Cornish existence to be romanticised, as a hard and dangerous, but pure form of work and way of living.

Alongside this developmental trend was one of people from outside of Cornwall settling in the county as "permanent tourists." In the first half of the twentieth century, the most prominent such group was composed of artists and writers who sought to capture the county's spirit and present it to the outside world through artistic means (Symons 1992, 139). More recently, those from elsewhere who settle in Cornwall are predominantly engaged in the tourism industry. While many choose to open bed and breakfasts, or other small tourism operations, in order to fund their desire to live the Cornish life, they are in many ways not dissimilar to the earlier generations of artists and writers. Operating a

tourist site or accommodation is, in effect, a form of packaging and selling Cornwall to outsiders. It is this group of people who have, perhaps, the most important role in maintaining good and effective relations between tourists and the Cornish sites they visit.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's discussion of how an economically depressed area, such as Cornwall as its mining industry failed, can gain a "second life as heritage" engages with some of the dangers of adopting this second life. By turning their heritage and ways of life into a commodity, the "life world" of the site in question ceases to exist in the ways it once did (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 132). Closely connected to the idea of performed authenticity and its ability to alienate locals from visitors, the performed nature, or inauthenticity, of what is presented to tourists is a central concern both in tourism studies, and, often, for tourists themselves. The impact upon locals of the packaging and commodification of their home can be psychologically significant, rendering them actors or props in an elaborate heritage pageant. In undertaking my research, I hoped to learn about the impact of discourses of authenticity on both tourists and locals. For tourists, did perceived authenticity have an impact on their enjoyment of their visit? What did authenticity mean to them? For locals, on the other hand, what impact, if any, did it have upon them to see tourists perceiving as authentic something which they knew to be performance? Did they feel used, or that they were selling what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett would call "inalienable possessions" (1998, 149)? Or, instead, did they act with conscious autonomy, grateful to have a product to sell, even if this product was their traditional way of life?

In the section on Zennor, I discussed the unique solution I found to resolving these questions favourably for both tourists and locals. Having travelled there multiple times

myself, where I enjoyed a comprehensively authentic-feeling atmosphere of “Old Cornwall,” I expected other tourists to experience it much the way I had, while the locals worked hard to perform this authenticity. I further expected that the locals would feel either disdainful or resentful of the tourists; disdainful if they merely felt that the tourists did not recognise the performance involved, or resentful if they regretted having to perform for these tourists. Instead, I found a high degree of satisfaction for everyone involved. The locals who had been living in the area for many generations were able to continue their traditional ways of life virtually undisturbed by the tourists due to the fact that a second group of people, who tourists would consider locals, but who those long-time locals would consider permanent tourists, lived amongst the older locals, and almost exclusively operated the tourist attractions and accommodations. These permanent tourists functioned as a mediating body between tourists and locals. Furthermore, as incomers themselves, who had chosen to pursue their dreams of living in Cornwall, they were intimately familiar with the visions of authentic Cornwall favoured by visitors to that part of the county, having held them themselves.

This understanding enabled what, I argue, is the most critical factor in the creation of a successful tourist site: communicative competence (Bauman 1975). Knowing the Cornwall the tourists came to the county wanting to see, these permanent tourists could, in effect, speak the same language as the tourists, showing them what they wanted to see. In Zennor, what the tourists wanted to see was a Cornwall that was both aesthetically and rationally authentic (Fife 2004). There was no question that authenticity was desired; not a single tourist I spoke to could be identified as a post-tourist. Instead, the largely middle-class, well-educated body of tourists was heavily invested in the belief that they, better

than most tourists, could identify the authentic, and that in choosing to visit Zennor, they had actively chosen to visit a site of true authenticity. To many of these tourists, “true authenticity” was something they could immediately recognise in Zennor’s aesthetic, but which required confirmation through rational means, as, according to modernist historiography, rational proof of historical accuracy is both possible and necessary. In Zennor, those who work in the tourism industry work hard to create an aesthetic vision of Cornwall supported by institutions of rational authenticity for those who feel the need to support their belief in the site’s authenticity with perceived fact.

The section on Tintagel presented a significant contrast to the tourist experience in Zennor. As in Zennor, I began my research in Tintagel holding my own preconceptions about tourism to the area. Having visited multiple times, and knowing its widely-held reputation for tackiness, and a theme park-like atmosphere, I anticipated that tourists would be in the area more for a fun experience than for a desire to access site(s) of any authenticity. This was compounded by the fact that the heart of Tintagel as a tourist destination is Tintagel Castle, heavily associated with the legend of King Arthur. Given King Arthur’s legendary status, and the lack of scholarly proof of his ever having existed, I expected that people would not be as invested in the idea of authenticity, understanding that historical accuracy to a fictional past is impossible. Thus, I was surprised to find the extent to which a “quest for authenticity” was a major motivating factor in bringing people to Tintagel. This, too, was at the heart of the widespread disappointment with the site expressed by the people I spoke with. In Tintagel, those who came from elsewhere to operate the tourist attractions had neither a cohesive community amongst one another, nor any meaningful connections with the local community. As reported by Joanne

McGillivray, Visitor Services Manager of Tintagel Old Post Office, the tourist-oriented nature of the village has led to a certain amount of resentment amongst those locals who have seen their home become overtaken by this economy, but who must find work outside of the village. This, however, does not have a strong impact on tourists who, unlike those who visit Zennor, do not come to Tintagel to witness a traditional Cornish community, but are there instead to see a piece of Cornish mythology brought to life.

It is on this front that visitors frequently find themselves disappointed. The castle regularly fails to deliver the vision of Arthuriana visitors expect, and while the fact that there is no cohesive story told by the various tourist attractions means that, in fact, tourists can choose to visit other sites to complement their experience of the castle, the castle is the primary attraction, and the one, along with their experience of the village's high street, on which tourists' judgement of their visit is most often based. In Tintagel, there are two disappointing elements, and one successful one, all of which depend on a belief in authenticity, and on the importance of the imagination in tourism. Visitors to Tintagel Castle expressed an interpretive disappointment, having expected officially-presented information either about the archaeological history of the site, or about the history of the legends of King Arthur and his connection to the site. The lack of information was frequently commented upon by the tourists I spoke with as the main reason for their disappointment with the site. When speaking about Tintagel village's high street, in contrast, an atmospheric disappointment replaced the interpretive disappointment experienced at the castle. Nearly everyone I spoke with had come to Tintagel with preconceived understandings not only of what the Arthurian legends were about, but about what their atmosphere, or aesthetic, should be. Those who were

disappointed with the village found it either too legend-based, rather than historically oriented, or too focused on the mystical elements of the legends, or too commercialised, rather than focusing on the spirituality affiliated with the Arthurian legends (Bowman 2007). There is no objective failing in the village; instead, when it fails to simultaneously satisfy all of the various visitors' individual expectations, it is deemed a disappointment by each of those tourists. The only true success in Tintagel, one commented upon by most of my informants, is the aesthetic satisfaction many tourists feel at the Castle. Indeed, most of the guidebooks to the area say something to this effect: the castle is "spectacular," "standing aloof on a promontory to the north," a "fabled castle, whose scanty ruins stand on an outcrop of the nearby coast," even while these same guidebooks roundly criticize the village itself ("Tintagel," *Lonely Planet*; "Tintagel," *Rough Guides*; *Rough Guides Devon and Cornwall*, 341). Many of my informants spoke of their appreciation of the scenery and the visual impact of the ruins. From Julia, who said the site was "Instagood," to Kevin and Veronica, who felt that the appearance of the site allowed them to imagine Tintagel as it had been "all those years ago," the atmosphere of the castle allowed visitors to exercise their imaginations, and populate the site with their preconceived visions of what the site should be. MacCannell writes about the significance of the imagination in the way tourists see the sites around them, and it is clear that this has a strong impact on tourists' experience of Tintagel: where what they see is proscribed by shops and interpretive explanations, the imagination is constricted, and cannot fill the site with that which the tourists wish to see. Where, however, the imagination is free to project itself onto the site, tourists express satisfaction.

Directions for Further Research

While I endeavoured to speak with as many locals and tourists as possible during my field research, time constraints meant that I was unable to build up the network of contacts which would have allowed me to speak to more locals who were not involved in the tourism industry. Further research on this topic could certainly benefit from the inclusion of the voices of these locals, who would give a valuable perspective on both local understandings of authenticity, and on the impacts of heritage and cultural tourism on local self-identity. In addition to this, speaking with tour guides and tour bus companies which market both Zennor and Tintagel, and bring tourists to both sites, could provide additional insight into the ways in which both of these sites are marketed and understood within the broader tourism economy.

One population group I did not address in this thesis, due to a low sample size, is the heterogeneous group of Neo-Pagans who travel to Zennor and Tintagel, treating both regions as spiritual sites. Building on both Bowman and Hale, it would be very interesting to examine the relationship between faith-based travel and perceived and performed authenticity.

Finally, this thesis functions as a snapshot in time of my two research sites. As I have shown, however, tourism exists as an ongoing dialogue between tourists and tourism sites, and tourist sites are created through this process. Future studies examining communicative competence in tourism would benefit from undertaking research on a longer time scale. For example, as discussed, English Heritage has acknowledged tourists' desire to experience more Arthuriana in Tintagel than they were able to do during my fieldwork there, and has installed two sculptures and provided further King

Arthur-based interpretation for visitors. To truly understand the role of dialogue in tourism, a multi-year time frame would be most effective.

Final Research Conclusions

Zennor is a more successful site than Tintagel, because those who work in the tourism industry there recognise the dominant aesthetic of its visitors' imaginations, and mold Zennor to conform to those expectations, creating a seamless visitor experience. In Tintagel, whether or not the locals fully understand tourist expectations is effectively irrelevant. Tourists come to Tintagel with such a diverse array of expectations that it would be almost impossible to satisfy all of them at once. Where, in Zennor, locals and tourists are conversing fluently in the same language, in Tintagel there is a babble of many languages, each speaker struggling to connect with those who are speaking the same language over the din of the many others being spoken. At the heart of this issue is Bauman's notion of communicative competence. Locals' ability to understand what tourists believe the site should be is crucial to their ability to perform the site's authenticity adequately. The tourists are then responsible for recognising the vision of authenticity being performed to them. In Zennor, where the locals in the tourism industry were once tourists themselves, this understanding is almost instinctive, and is easily carried off, while in Tintagel, tourists' understandings of authenticity are too fractured to create a coherent performance. As such, Zennor is a highly successful tourist site, while Tintagel, despite its high visitor numbers, is not.

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APPENDIX A: Project Information Sheet



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Project Information Sheet

Title: Imagined Cornwall: Folklore and Tourism in Two Cornish Villages

Researcher: Emma Tennier-Stuart, Master's Candidate, Folklore Department, Memorial University of Newfoundland, ets272@mun.ca, 709-325-0556

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You are invited to take part in a research project entitled “Imagined Cornwall: Folklore and Tourism in Two Cornish Villages.” This page is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you.

Purpose of study:

The research that I am conducting here is a component of a project examining the ways in which folklore and history make certain areas appealing to tourists. For this project, I will be talking to locals and visitors in the villages of Tintagel and Zennor to determine which elements of the local folklore, history, and culture draw visitors' interest. Ultimately, I will use this research to produce a Master's thesis about the ways in which folklore has been, and continues to be, used in the tourist industry.

What you will do in this study:

You are being asked to participate voluntarily in an audio-recorded interview, in which you will be asked about your experiences, either as a visitor to the area, or working with

visitors to the area. More specifically, you will be asked about what makes this location appealing to visitors, and whether folklore, history, and/or culture are part of this.

Length of time:

The interview will last approximately 10-30 minutes.

Withdrawal from the study:

You are free to end the interview at any time, at which point, should you request it, the recorded interview will be deleted. You can decide to withdraw your interview from the study any time on or before December 31, 2015, after which point the researcher will not be able to remove your interview from the study because she will already be using it in her analysis and writing of the thesis. In order to do withdraw your interview, you must contact the researcher, at which point all digital copies of the interview, as well as written transcripts, will be deleted, and will not be used in the study. Withdrawal will have no negative consequences for you.

Risks, Confidentiality and Anonymity:

Although the interviews are not intended to touch on any sensitive material, you may be asked questions about the tourism industry to which your responses may not be in agreement with those of an employer, or with those of others involved in the tourism industry in your community. You are welcome to indicate on this consent form that you would prefer to be referred to by a pseudonym in the written thesis report, though the researcher cannot guarantee that this will be adequate to ensure full anonymity. If you do not indicate this now, you can also contact the researcher (contact information above) at any time on or before December 31, 2015, requesting that a pseudonym be used. This will have no negative consequences for you.

Recording and Storage of Data:

Interviews will be digitally audio recorded. Should you prefer not to have your interview recorded, the researcher will take notes on the interview. All written and audio-recorded records will be stored on a password-protected hard drive in the researcher's sole possession. Hard copies of notes will be kept in a locked storage unit in the Folklore Department at Memorial University to which only the researcher and her supervisor will have access. Data will be kept for five years, as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research, at which point it will be destroyed.

Reporting of Results:

The information collected during the interview will be used only for the research project described here. Contents of the interviews will be included in the form of both direct

quotations, and in summarized form. If your consent is given, your name may be associated with your interview. Publication of the results of this project may include a written thesis, academic publications, and conferences. The completed thesis will be publically available at the QEII library at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact the researcher, Emma Tennier-Stuart.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University’s ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Informed Consent Form

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation **during** data collection, any data collected from you up to that point will be destroyed.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw **after** data collection has ended, your data can be removed from the study up to December 31, 2015.

I agree to be audio-recorded	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I agree to the use of direct quotations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I allow my name to be identified in any publications resulting from this study	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your signature confirms:

- I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.
- I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.
- A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

Signature of participant

Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX B: Sample Interview Questions

These are sample interview questions, intended as a broad outline for the semi-structured interviews which will be conducted. Because of the nature of this interview technique, these questions are to be taken as starting points, leading to broader discussions of the themes outlined in the project proposal.

Sample Interview Questions - Visitors

Introduction

1. Please introduce yourself, including where you are from.
2. What brings you to Zennor/Tintagel? How did you hear about the area? Have you been here before?
3. Are you staying here overnight, or is this part of a day trip?
4. Are you visiting anywhere else on this trip? Where, and why?
5. How long are you planning to stay in Zennor/Tintagel?
6. Are there particular attractions you hoped to visit while here? Have you visited them? What were your impressions of the attraction(s)?
7. Do you feel you have formed a lasting impression of Zennor/Tintagel? What element of it stands out most in your mind?

Zennor-Specific Questions

1. Had you heard about the legend of the Mermaid of Zennor, or any other local legends before coming here? If so, how did you hear about them? What do you think of the legend(s)?
2. Had you heard about Zennor Quoit, or any of the local standing stones before coming here? If so, how did you hear about them? Do you have any ideas about their historic use?
3. If you have travelled elsewhere in Cornwall, or the United Kingdom, how does Zennor compare to villages of a similar size and age?

Tintagel-Specific Questions

1. Do you have a pre-existing interest in Arthurian legend?
2. Have you frequented any of the King Arthur-themed gift stores? What do you think of the village's King Arthur theme?
3. Have you been to any other sites associated with King Arthur (ie. Glastonbury)? In your opinion, how does Tintagel compare?

Sample Interview Questions – Heritage Industry

Introduction

1. Please introduce yourself. Are you from Zennor/Tintagel originally?
2. If you are not from Zennor/Tintagel, what brought you here?
3. Can you give me a brief description of the work you do here?
4. In your experience, what tends to draw tourists to this area? Do you have any sense of whether what they expect to find here matches their experiences here?
5. If you are from Zennor/Tintagel, has the area always depended on tourism? What is life like here during the off-season? How do members of the community who are not involved in local tourism tend to feel about the tourists who arrive during tourist season?
6. Do you find yourself talking to tourists about local folklore and history? Is it something which interests you personally, or something which visitors find more interesting?

APPENDIX C: Preliminary Emails and Introductions

Email invitation to Rev. Elizabeth Foot, Priest at St. Senara's Church, Zennor:

Dear Rev. Elizabeth Foot,

I am a Master's student in the Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and am currently working on research for a thesis project about tourism and folklore in Cornwall. Focusing specifically on the communities of Zennor and Tintagel, I am hoping to learn more about the ways in which community members and tourists understand local history and folklore.

Knowing that its remarkable age, architectural beauty, and fascinating "Mermaid Chair" all make St. Senara's Church a true attraction for tourists, I would love to have the chance to talk to you about the place of the church in the community, and the way it is received by tourists. I will be in St. Ives from June 5th to 7th, and in Zennor from June 8th to 14th, and would be happy to meet with you at your convenience.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Best,
Emma Tennier-Stuart
Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Email invitation to the Wayside Folk Museum, Zennor:

To whom it may concern,

I am a Master's student in the Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and am currently working on research for a thesis project about tourism and folklore in Cornwall. Focusing specifically on the communities of Zennor and Tintagel, I am hoping to learn more about the ways in which community members and tourists understand local history and folklore.

I have travelled to Zennor on multiple occasions, and have been deeply impressed by your museum at every visit. If possible, I would love to have the chance to talk the curator about the history of the museum, and how it continues to be received by tourists today. I will be in St. Ives from June 5th to 7th, and in Zennor from June 8th to 14th, and would be happy to meet with the curator at his or her convenience.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Best,
Emma Tennier-Stuart
Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Preliminary Introduction Script for Tourists

Contact with tourists will be made at tourist attractions. After an initial introduction and brief discussion of the relevant attraction, the preliminary interview script is as follows:

I am currently working on research for a thesis project in the Department of Folklore at Memorial University. I am looking at the ways in which those working in the tourist industry, and visiting tourists understand the local history and folklore of this community, as well as that of one other in Cornwall. Do you mind if I talk with you for a little while about your time in Zennor/Tintagel?

If yes: Thank you. I am hoping to conduct as many audio-recorded interviews as possible, but understand if you do not have the time for a formal interview now. Would we be able to find a time to have a sit-down discussion later? Alternatively, I would be happy to have a brief conversation with you now, which I would take notes on, but not audio record.

If a recorded or non-recorded interview is chosen to be conducted immediately: Thank you. Because the contents of this conversation may be used in my thesis project, I need you to fill out a consent form. Please read the attached information sheet before completing the form.

If a recorded interview is arranged for later, the consent process will be completed at the time of the interview.

See Appendix B for sample interview questions.