

**ON THE EDGE- PERIPHERAL COMMUNITIES AND MARGINAL
ANTHROPOLOGY.**

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PREFACE: People, Places and Marginal Anthropology.

This is a study of people, place, and cultural “identity” in two small parishes that are *geographically* on the periphery of the United Kingdom. Both are coastal parishes: one is in South-west Wales overlooking the Irish Sea and the other is one of the islands comprising The Orkney archipelago.¹ This is also a work of marginal anthropology (Fox, 1975) that discusses both conventional and more experimental “ways of telling” in an attempt to *interpret* human social behaviour.

The small social groups studied by ethnographers are often assumed to demonstrate a degree of stability: some people leave, others join, most remain, producing kinship systems, centres of influence, a “sense of place”, and a common cultural identity (Barnes, 1954; Cohen, 1986). There *are* other types of group, which apparently engender the same sense of loyalty, and common identity which are less stable, and which grow up voluntarily as forms of social protest (Plows pers.com. and unpub. ms.: she is studying camps protesting “green” issues). There are others involving varying degrees of coercion which Goffman (1972) has called “total institutions”. Some have such little organization that Yablonsky (1967) has referred to them as “near-groups” which are transitory and lack any sense of belonging (he was studying violent New York gangs). There are others again such as St. Kilda in its later years (Maclean, 1998; Steel, 1981) and the Ik of Uganda (Turnbull, 1974), which are best described as “failed” communities.

It is the first type that ethnographers have often referred to as “communities”. It is a difficult concept and one which has often been discarded because of its normative connotations or the tendency to isolate the “local” from the wider social structure (Bell and Newby, 1971). However, despite very real difficulties with the concept, “community studies” are still being made and justified (Day and Murdoch, 1993). Some people still feel themselves as part of the “local”, as belonging to “place”, and even if “community” is a “folk” label (Strathern, 1984) it might still be relevant to the

¹ The two communities have been re-named Tre-bryn and Langamay to retain some sense of anonymity.

ethnographer, and still useful as a concept in trying to describe and analyse some forms of social group.

Some recent ethnographers have preferred to move from the “local” to the “global” and to concentrate on flux- the refugee camp, the airport lounge, or large-scale migration; to locate the “local” as a form of post-modernist “bricolage” (Palsson, 1993); or emphasise the fact that people can be bi-cultural (Wassmann, 1998). There may have been an over-emphasis on movement but any study of local groups must take on board “globalisation”, the fact that:

“ The last few decades have...witnessed extraordinary growth in global industrial and agricultural productivity, with profound social consequences. Among these have been migration and urbanization that in turn have upset traditional household structures and gender roles”. (The Commission on Global Governance, 1995)

Social groups are not something unique to Homo sapiens (see Omark’s useful overview: The Group: A Factor or an Epiphenomenon in Evolution? 1979). To a biologist they are typical of many *phyla*, *order*, or *species*. Within the primates most groups are “closed” to outsiders, despite occasional exchange between members. The ethologist and anthropologist Reynolds (1968, 1976) has contrasted the typical “closed group” of primate species with that of the chimpanzee which often appears to have an “open group” structure: “there seemed to be no boundaries separating the population of different places, indeed there was a continuous traffic of small parties...” (1968, 211). There is evidence that this is not always the case with chimpanzees (Goodall, 1991) but this process of “openness” seems to have evolved further and been “firmed up” in human groups through the conceptualisation and labelling of relationships which Reynolds (1976) sees as a key adaptation of the hominids. The role of gift exchange to facilitate inter-group movement has been discussed in classic works of anthropology by Malinowski (1964) and Mauss (1954). Other disciplines such as archaeology also speculate on the importance of cultural exchange and the establishment of entrepot sites, which facilitated trade in prehistory (Renfrew, 1973; Cunliffe, 2001). Whatever the criticisms of “community” it is refreshed by approaches such as these from outside the discipline. In particular, recent work by biologists, economists and mathematicians

using “games theory” in the understanding of reciprocal altruism² place the small human group (a.k.a. “the community”) as central to their analyses (Ridley, 1996; Sigmund, Fehr and Nowak, 2002). Sociologists and social philosophers Morris Ginsberg (1962) and Titmuss (1973) also suggest that there is room for the consideration of a non-reciprocal form of gift giving in social relations involving outsiders.

Any contemporary work of anthropology has to be aware that the nature of theory and practice has changed radically over the last thirty years. The rules of the game have changed; indeed in anthropology’s post-colonial search for a new identity it sometimes seems that there are no rules at all (Nencel and Pels, 1989). Geertz (1983), Clifford (1988) and others have shifted the discipline away from a natural science model towards one which has closer links with the humanities and literary criticism. Geertz emphasises the “blurring of genres” between disciplines.

Two aspects of this “blurring” are considered here. It may still be possible to distinguish between an academic social anthropology and a social anthropology as popular culture but the division is rather artificial. The former retains a series of signifiers which are found in the written monograph, the latter is a post-modern mix of safari holidays, travel writing, novels, Discovery Channel documentaries, the “tourist gaze” and post cards of the “exotic”. A more fruitful stance, however, might be to accept a “blurring of genres” which gets rid of any form of hierarchy between the popular and the academic. On the one hand much of the academic writing about rural “communities” is just another literary form of the Pastoral discussed by Raymond Williams (1975), on the other, many novels and other popular works illuminate the human condition in a manner not that dissimilar to the ethnologist. Penelope Lively’s novel SpiderWeb (1998) for instance is as good a description of contemporary conceptions of “community” and the role of the anthropologist as you could wish for. The short stories of George Mackay Brown (e.g. 1989) provide a sociology and history of Orkney using a mythic form. Rather than see anthropology as “privileged”, it might be better to see it as just one form of documentary. (Raphael Samuel, 1994 has made a similar point in historiography, and

² Dawkins (1976) has referred to this as “*mutual back-scratching*” (198) and sees it as an important part of the evolutionary process.

Holtorf, 2002, is producing fascinating work on the boundaries of archaeology which looks at archaeology as both popular culture and fine art as well as a science.)

One can go further. When Geertz talks of “blurring of genres” he is usually referring to written texts and not the visual. Film and photography have played small- and debated-roles in the development of anthropology³. Here they will be treated as equally important, not just as “another way of telling” (Berger and Mohr, 1989) which they are, but because they have played a major part in contemporary discussions on the nature of anthropology (e.g. Rollwagen, 1988). They also provide a space for experimental approaches to ethnography, which have explored the boundaries of the discipline (Edwards, 1997; Loizos, 1997; Charity and Pinney, 1995).

Given these trends towards globalisation and the exciting, if confusing, changes in the ways in which anthropological stories are told (Wolf, 1992), any attempt at describing rural society must be cautious of concepts such as community and the tendency found in early studies to isolate” the local” from the wider society. It will also require a variety of approaches and voices. Thus the chapters, which follow, differ both in their tense, type of fieldwork, and use of media. There is first-person reportage based on field notes, more “academic” critiques and sociological analyses, and photographic essays; occasionally individuals are quoted at length and one chapter is a lightly edited version of parish minutes. Newspaper accounts and extracts from novels are also considered as central to research. It is felt that this approach approximates the demands of contemporary anthropology for plural authorship and readership (Part One, chapter 3), but as Clifford (1988) recognises, the ethnographer always remains the final arbiter of the material.

Both communities are *geographically* peripheral to the U.K. and share many of the problems of such areas: poor transport, unemployment and outward migration of young people; there is also inward migration by those escaping urban society or looking for a holiday cottage; to this extent they are also *socially* peripheral (Cloke, Goodwin, and Milbourne, 1997). Despite these changes fieldwork suggests that they remain viable at

³ A large number of works, which have contributed to this debate, are found in the bibliography. An early example is Thurm (1893). More recent discussions of photography are found in Morphy and Edwards (1988), Edwards(1990) and Faris (1993) . Crawford and Turton (1992), Loizos (1980), and Banks and Morphy (1997) cover film.

present as communities participating in national and global changes but still retaining a distinctive culture. If a concern with concepts, narrative structure and ethnographic practices is emphasised in Part One it is only to provide a background to what follows. Parts Two and Three concentrate on Langamay and Tre-bryn. Neither community has the drama associated with the ethnography of distant places, the psychopathology of Scheper-Hughes' County Kerry (1982), or the dangers of Jarman's Belfast (1997). Their intrinsic decency makes up for the lack of the bizarre, and their past and present will be described here. In particular, these descriptions illuminate and critique theoretical conceptions of community by:

- Stressing the continued usefulness of the concept of “community”, despite its use by ethnographers as part of a discourse of the Pastoral (Part One, Chapters 4 and 5). It will be emphasised that there is a need to seriously qualify the concept because of contemporary social changes and the growth of electronic technology (Part One, Chapter, 4).
- Placing the study of the “local” within a national and “global” context. This is explored particularly in Part One, Chapter 1.
- Describing a “sense of place”, and examining the usefulness of Cohen's (1986) model of cultural identity. This will be based on both academic and “popular” writings, and first-hand testimony (Parts Two and Three).
- Exploring stability and change, both historical and contemporary, within the communities, through the use of Census returns, Government reports, social surveys and direct observation (Parts Two and Three). This is primarily a work of ethnography but the study of the communities to reveal social and cultural change also requires a diachronic approach. Stoklund (1982) describes an interdisciplinary field of “historical anthropology” and concludes:

“To the ethnologist the relationship between history and anthropology is not a question of “either-or” but a matter of “both-and”.” (27)
- Suggesting tentative hypotheses, initially proposed by Mansperger (1995) in relation to tourism, which explain the openness of these communities to incomers (Part Four).

At some point in their fieldwork ethnographers are always strangers, and the very existence of anthropology is proof of some degree of porosity in social boundaries, and the existence of “open groups”. The anthropological convention of anonymity towards both person and place has been followed, although there is little that might be construed as offensive in the documentation, and the disguises are pretty thin anyway. Tre-bryn is a large sprawling parish in West Wales bounded on the west by the Irish Sea; Langamay is one of the northern isles in the Orkney archipelago.

Tre-bryn has been my home for seven years, which does mean that I have had to edit out certain events which would betray confidences, and it has seemed politic to place a greater emphasis on the past. In Tre-bryn the ethnographer had the dual role of community member and observer, and information (and gossip) was gathered in everyday conversations. At one stage I was involved in protests against the planting of G. M. crops, which form the basis of the first chapter. I am relatively sanguine about participating in “insider research”. As Plows (unpubl.) argues there are more methodological *pros* than *cons* in that trust and shared values can be taken for granted, the danger is partisanship. One has to be self-critical, but fortunately a large literature in contemporary anthropology provides for such a *reflexive*⁴ stance which should be stock-in-trade for the ethnographer (Douglas, 1998). In Part One, chapters 4 and 5 “insider” Welsh ethnography is criticised for its partisan, “romantic” documentation, my own analysis of the community appears negative by comparison.

Langamay was visited six years out of ten during the last decade for periods ranging from two to six weeks. On two occasions I was accompanied by groups of students who did fieldwork training in film, photography and interviewing techniques, mainly involving themes of natural history and landscape. This provided the initial “pretext” to islanders for being there and a wealth of video taped material. The subsequent method of inquiry has been “participant observation”. I was not a member of the community, but have made a number of good friends whom I like to think welcomed the annual visits. This has been supplemented by more formal interviews on Langamay and an occasional attempt at video interviews, although Orcadians are very shy of being filmed.

⁴ Hastrup and Olwig state of *reflexivity*: “Instead we may take our point of departure in the various ways in which people represent what they perceive as their culture. These representations need not be in agreement, but will often reflect contested ideas of local culture.” (in Olwig and Hastrup, 1997, 10)

It has been mainly a matter of talking to people at the roadside, in the shop, the pub, or wherever- but I have to admit not the W. I. or the church. A stills camera or video camera was carried at all times on Langamay, and islanders were well aware that some sort of visual documentation was taking place. As Collier and Collier (1986) suggest, a camera is a good rationale for wandering around observing social life.

CONTENTS

PART ONE.

Chapter 1. A New Rebecca? G.M. Crop Protests 2001. Pp. 16-32

Chapter 2. Visual Aspects of the G.M. Protest. Pp. 33-36

Chapter 3. The Ethnographic Habit. Pp.37-55

Chapter 4. From Community to the Internet: the study of the local in a *global ecumene*.
Pp.56-81

Chapter 5. Yr Etifeddiaeth: Welsh Ethnography and Welsh Film. Pp. 82-97

PART TWO

INTRODUCTION Pp. 98-99

Chapter 1. A Small Event in the Long History of a *Peedie* Island: Orcadian Identity and a Sense of Place. Pp.100-121

Chapter 2. Telling Tales About Orkney. Field notes made in July and August 1998.
Pp.122-141

Chapter 3. Visual Aspects of Langamay. Pp.142-150

Chapter 4. Stability and Change on the Island of Langamay. Pp. 151-182

PART THREE

INTRODUCTION p. 183

Chapter 1. Landscape, History and Culture: a Sense of Identity in North Pembrokeshire.Pp. 184-196

Chapter 2. Introduction to Tre-bryn. Pp.197-203

Chapter 3. Lane, Cemetery, and Common: Civic Inertia and Occasional Action In Tre-bryn Parish. Pp.204-223

Chapter 4. Stakeholders in Tre-bryn .Pp.224-249

Chapter 5. Visual Aspects of Tre-bryn . Pp.250-255

PART FOUR

Peripheral Communities in an “Age of Globalisation”. Reflections of a Marginal Anthropologist. Pp.256-273

BIBLIOGRAPHY Pp.274-302

LIST OF TABLES.

Part One:

Chapter 1. Table 1. Telephone area codes of those offering active support in G.M. crop protest.

Chapter 5. Table 1. Women's activities portrayed in film.

Table 2. Men's activities portrayed in film.

Part Two:

Chapter 1. Table 1. Orkney Census 1921-1951.

Table 2. Population of selected Orkney parishes 1951 and 1981.

Table 3. The Orcadian 24/12/98.

Table 4. Contents of The Orcadian July 16th. -November 26th 1998.

Chapter 4. Table 1. Population of Langamay, 1787.

Table 2. Occupations on Langamay, 1787.

Table 3. Dwelling houses, Langamay, 1787-1791.

Table 4. Livestock on Langamay, 1787.

Table 5. Population of Lady parish, 1801-1831.

Table 6. Born outside Orkney, 1841.

Table 7. Shipwrecked Germans, 1861.

Table 8. Population of Langamay, 1861.

Table 9. Place of origin within Orkney, 1861.

Table 10. Place of origin, born outside Orkney, 1861.

Table 11. Place of origin of married couples, both born Langamay, 1861.

Table 12. Place of origin, at least one of couple born outside Langamay,
1861

Table 13. Population of Langamay, 1891.

Table 14. Place of origin, Lady parish, 1891.

Table 15. Place of origin of couples both born Langamay, 1891.

Table 16. Place of origin, at least one of couple born outside Langamay.

Table 17. Occupations on Langamay, 1957.

- Table 18. Utilities on Langamay, 1957.
 Table 19. Commonest surnames on Langamay, 1997.
 Table 20. Surnames on Langamay, 1841- 1997.
 Table 21. Housing stock, 1985. After Lamb.
 Table 22. Persons per household, 1957-1997.
 Table 23. Resume of population, 1841-1998.

Part Three:

- Chapter 1. Table 1. Welsh or English. After John, 1972.
 Table 2. Welsh or English. After John, 1972.
 Table 3. Anglican graveyards. After Mytum, 1994.
 Table 4. Nonconformist graveyards. After Mytum, 1994.
- Chapter 4. Table 1. Overview of population of Tre-bryn, 1841-1991.
 Table 2. Place of birth, Tre-bryn, 1841-1881.
 Table 3. Place of birth, Tre-bryn, 1881.
 Table 4. Couples born North Pembrokeshire, 1881
 Table 5. One or both of couple born outside North Pembrokeshire, 1881.
 Table 6. Householders in Tre-bryn, 1881.
 Table 7. Farmers in Tre-bryn, 1881.
 Table 8. Heads of Household: The Harbour, Cas, Tre-bryn village, 1881
 Table 9. Heads of household Tre-bryn, excluding farmers, 1881.
 Table 10. Farm employees, 1881.
 Table 11. Farm Occupancy, 1841-1931.
 Table 12. Election to parish council 1894-1946.
 Table 13. Farms represented on parish council.
 Table 14. Farmers represented on parish council.

LIST OF FIGURES:

Part Two:

- Chapter 1. Fig.1. Components of the “Orkney Norm.”
 Fig.2. The Orcadian front page, July- November 1998.
- Chapter 4. Fig. 1. Occupations in Kettletoft.
 Fig. 2. Voluntary organisations on Langamay, 1957.
 Fig. 3. Voluntary organisations on Langamay, 1974.

Fig. 4. Voluntary organisations on Langamay, 1998.

Fig. 5. Activities on Langamay, July-August 1998.

Part Three:

Chapter 1. Fig.1 Characteristics of the Landsker.

Chapter 4. Fig.1 A farm household in 1881.

Chapter 4. Fig.2. The first council.

Fig.3. Farms represented on the council.

Fig.4. Farms represented on the council.

Fig. 5. Council members.

Fig. 6. Council members.

Fig.7. Community councillors.

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Part One:

Chapter 2. Twenty-four photographs which document the G.M. crop protests in the spring of 2001. They begin with the demonstration on April 28th., include photographs of Gaer farmhouse, Deffro Rebecca, pamphlets circulated, and the lane outside the crop site, and conclude with the bike ride by Rebeccas' Daughters and a tractor demonstration on May 7th.

Part Two:

Chapter 3. Sixty-five photographs which document my response to the island of Langamay. Most were taken in 1998 although there are five black and white photographs of contemporary Langamay, and one colour photograph of a seal, taken by Rosa Caballero and Louise Beddow in 1994 (these were re-photographed by me at an exhibition in the island community centre in 1998). The old photographs have been re-photographed by me from those exhibited by K. Foubister at The Belsair. Photographs 52-54 document the drying of *tangles* on *steethes*, photograph 58 is a *plantiecrue* once used for the growing of cabbages.

Part Three: Chapter 5. Thirty-seven photographs which document social change in Tre-bryn by concentrating on cottage renovations and signage associated with tourism. Some aspects of an older Tre-bryn are also included.

PART ONE.

Chapter 1. A New Rebecca? G. M. Crop Protests 2001⁵

In the spring of 2001 the normally tranquil parish of Tre-bryn in North Pembrokeshire became the scene of peaceful protests against the sowing of genetically modified (G.M.) maize in a field close to the village. Figures dressed in “traditional” Welsh costumes walked the narrow lanes, or stood silently at the crossroads. Ribbons, flags, placards, and a corn dolly adorned the blackthorn hedges beside the site. Scientists of international repute spoke at meetings and local people became activists. For a short time the main road was closed by a rally of some three hundred people carrying balloons and banners. “Telephone trees” were set up with the intention of organising immediate opposition should an attempt be made to sow the seeds. The name of the nineteenth century protest movement, Rebecca, was invoked. For one of the few times in its history, the local council became active. There was a low profile, but very obvious, police presence in the area, and rumours of a private security firm guarding the site. Television crews became a regular presence in the public house. A local protest achieved regional, national and even international attention.

The autumn and winter of 2000 was one of the wettest on record in Pembrokeshire and the problems of farming were highlighted in the press. In February 2001, the local media began to cover stories of Foot and Mouth disease in Cumbria, the West Country and the Welsh borders. Fortunately Pembrokeshire did not suffer from the disease but it became a major topic of discussion and all footpaths including the long-distance Pembrokeshire Coast Path were closed with serious effects on the tourist industry.

I first heard about the intention to sow G. M. modified seed on April 3rd :‘locals’ in the village pub at Tre-bryn discussed the fact that I.T.V’s Grass Roots programme had announced that government-backed experimental trials of G.M. maize, Chardon LL,

⁵ The following account is based on observations made whilst participating in a protest against genetically modified crops. It is partly based on a journal kept whilst events unfolded. The use of the first-person singular has been retained. See Wolf (1992) and Gusterson (1998) for similar approaches.

would be carried out on fields at a nearby farm, The Gaer.⁶ Chardon LL is produced by the French agro-chemicals giant Avantis. No notification had been given to the County Council, the National Park authority, the community council or the local press. The site chosen for planting the maize lies on gently rising land besides the headwaters of the Western Cleddau; the Irish Sea is visible in the distance. The Gaer is one of the more imposing local farmhouses and belongs to Davison's, a limited company owned by Linda Smith and James Turner, the latter an ex-Conservative M.P. Apart from farming, Davison's is involved in barn and farmhouse conversions and employs a sizable workforce of skilled craftsmen and labourers locally. The particular parcels of land had been leased to Williams Bros., part of a large farming 'dynasty' in North Pembrokeshire. Dafydd Williams is a prominent figure in the National Farmers' Union at both local and national level.

Wednesday April 11th: The Western Telegraph. Previous editions had been devoted to Foot and Mouth restrictions, the crises in local farming and the threat to the important tourist industry (particularly 'green' tourism) caused by statutory footpath closure. Today I read a new agricultural story:

'Farmers, politicians and environmentalists have united in the battle to stop genetically modified crops being grown in Pembrokeshire. Fury erupted at the Department of Trade and Industry's announcement last week...'

The Western Telegraph immediately took a bold 'No to G.M. Crops' stance and it highlighted the threat to organic farms and tourism. It stressed the lack of consultation with A.M. and M.P., the County Council and the National Park and described a broad coalition with Friends of the Earth, West Wales ECO Centre and the Farmers' Union of Wales. A photograph showed a Friends of the Earth petition being signed in the County town of Haverfordwest (fifteen miles distant). Space was also given to Dafydd Williams, the G.M. maize farmer, who argued that there was *'no danger to humans and livestock'* and emphasised that the trials would be overseen by Professor C. Pollock of the Institute of Plant Breeding at Aberystwyth, and added that *'the tests are aimed solely at evaluating the impact of herbicide tolerant crops on local wildlife.'*

G.M. protestors met minister of State, Paul Murphy who was visiting Pembrokeshire to discuss an unrelated issue.

⁶ The names, addresses and businesses of some protagonists have been changed and much is left unsaid due to the wishes of individuals. Most real names are included if they are in the public domain.

Monday April 16th: Bank Holiday Monday. 7.30 p.m. at Tre-bryn community hall. A large crowd of around three hundred people met to listen to speakers organised by local resident, Christine Samra Tibbetts and an organic farmer, Gareth Waters. The agenda read:

Chairman's Opening Address by Brian John, Chairman of Trustees, West Wales Eco Centre.

Information on G.M. Crops by Julian Rosser, Friends of the Earth, Cardiff.

The Political Situation by Jill Rowland, organic farmer.

Tourism by Ian Panton, Chairman of the St. David's Peninsula Association.

The Chairman, Doctor Brian John, is a well-known interpreter of Pembrokeshire culture and landscape (See Part Three) and the meeting was characterised by a coolness, clarity and reasonableness of argument which frustrated a few in the audience who would have liked more discussion of direct action. A list of possible activists was compiled, residents were urged to write to the Welsh Assembly and a young solicitor, Moira Charles who is a member of a local farming family just outside the parish, volunteered to give her services *pro bono*. I looked around for local people: a number of community councillors were present, as were some villagers, but Tre-bryn village residents were conspicuous by their absence - as they were to be throughout the protests.

Leaving the meeting at about 9.15 p.m. I noticed a tall, silent figure clad in traditional Welsh female costume in the darkness outside the hall.

Wednesday April 18th: The Western Telegraph. The lead story reverted to Foot and Mouth disease but a front-page photograph was headed “ *G.M. Protest Gathers Pace*”. The Telegraph again backed the campaign stating that six local organic farmers could lose their status. Jackie Lawrence, the local Labour M.P. had also launched a petition.

Wednesday April 25th: The Western Telegraph reported that a phone-in that it had organised had received 468 callers and that nearly 96% supported the campaign. The National Union of Farmers (N.F.U.) acknowledged a conflict of interest; nationally the N.F.U. supported the trials but such trials in Pembrokeshire were ‘very unfortunate’. Pembrokeshire N.F.U. president, Tim John of Pen Cnwc farm, lives in the parish.

Also on April 25th the Community Council chaired by local farmer Jill Morgan of Carnachen-wen wrote to Michael Meacher, Secretary of State, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (D.E.T.R) making the following points:

- Lack of consultation and the way in which the trial were announced.
- The superficiality of the scheme.
- The lack of an environmental audit.
- Is the herbicide G.A. harmless to plants, animals etc?
- The possible run off of G.A. into the Western Cleddau and the nearness of a Site of Special Scientific Interest three miles down- river.
- The need for information regarding safety assessment.

Additional points included the fact that the council believed that there was no statutory provision for compensation and concerns over public order: *'It seems clear that direct action against the G.M. trials is being planned by some of the more extreme environmentalists. It also seems likely that some local people who fear that their livelihoods may be at risk will take action which may threaten public order.'*

Apart from the genuine concerns raised, I was told that a small group of professionals in the village conceived this as a ploy to delay planting by raising such procedural issues.

Saturday April 28th: Whilst in Fishguard, I was surprised to see one small notice advertising a demonstration against G.M. crops at Tre-bryn crossroads at 10.45 a.m. that day. (It became obvious that most of the co-ordination was done through e-mail; there were very few posters at any stage). By 11o'clock some 300 people (according to newspapers, I counted less) were gathered. An H.T.V news crew and stills photographers were filming banners and balloons and the crowds spilled on to the main "A" road stopping traffic, so that better footage could be achieved. Welsh flags, Welsh costumes and men dressed as Rebecca were all in evidence. Another local folk heroine dressed in "Welsh" costume joined the group – 'Jemima Nicholas' of French invasion fame.⁷ A number of police and a dog handler kept a very low profile. In general it was a very good-natured crowd and many of the older people referred back to other protests they had been involved in during the 1960s and 1970s.

⁷ Tradition has it that the ill-fated French attack on Fishguard in 1797 was thwarted by Welsh women in "traditional" dress who were mistaken for Redcoats. Jemima Nicholas is reputed to have rounded- up twelve Frenchmen on her own. See Carradice, P. The Last Invasion, 1992.

This group was largely the same make-up as at the village hall meeting, people having turned up from a wide area of North Pembrokeshire as well as local farms and cottages – but not from Tre-bryn village. Few knew the exact location of the field and it was left to a local activist to organise the march. The peaceful demonstrators marched unsupervised by police along the narrow lane to The Gaer where a part of the crowd dashed into the drive and up to the farmhouse, knocking on windows, chanting and tying balloons to branches. Within minutes a number of police cars arrived and the crowd slowly dispersed the way it had come.

It might be added that during the previous week I had seen ‘odd’ figures in the parish dressed in women’s/Rebecca’s clothes. They remained silent but had attached ribbons to trees near the site, some bearing the slogan in Welsh, ‘*Rwyn dawel er mwyn ni cael ein clywed*’ and in English, ‘*I am silent so we can be heard.*’ A corn dolly, a Christian text, and rooks’ feathers added to the slightly eerie scene. In connection with this The Western Telegraph reported on May 2nd Rebecca’s silent protest: ‘*A Welsh social uprising, Mexican revolutionaries and surrealism all fuelled the imagination of a small group of protestors.*’ These were Deffro Rebecca (Wake up Rebecca) The newspaper photograph shows two men and a woman all wearing dresses, one in a traditional Welsh costume but with balaclava over the face and a pipe in the mouth which were intended as a reference to Mexican rural protestors, the *Zapatistas*. The second wore a frock, bonnet and carried a large spoon and the third wore a long dress with apron, bonnet, and large sunglasses and had a scarf hiding the face. The Telegraph article ends with, ‘*Anyone wishing to contact this enigmatic band of “artists and individuals” can e-mail them...*’

Wednesday May 2nd/3rd: It is evident that considerable effort was being made by a couple of the villagers to provide evidence to brief a deputation which was going to see Michael Meacher. In part this was conceived as a way of delaying the planting of the crop, which was fast approaching a deadline. (They do not wish to be identified and no further details will be given here.) On May 3rd I visited the site where a twenty-four hour vigil had commenced. This was a watching brief with the intention of alerting others by mobile phone if seeding began. Individuals were left to their own devices as to what to do should an attempt be made to plant the crop. One person did have a length of chain and a padlock, which would have been used to lock one of the gates, a car always blocking the second gate. A Dutch organic farmer from nearby Solva intended to

chain herself to the gate. Given the lack of experience and the legal problems involving coordination it seems unlikely to me (I spent a considerable time thinking about the problem whilst at the site) that it would have been possible to stop sowing, as there are three gates to the field.

Five young eco-protestors had come down from Bangor with a few *agit-prop* ideas and joined the vigil. A documentary filmmaker accompanied them. One of them was researching for a Ph. D. on direct action. The site now had banners in English and Welsh, a Welsh flag and other tokens. An H.T.V⁸. cameraman and reporter were present.

At the same time a well-briefed delegation was meeting with Secretary of State Meacher in Whitehall. The delegation was comprised of Jackie Lawrence, M.P. and Community Council Chair, Jill Morgan, a *'local organic farmer, a beekeeper, a scientist and a lawyer.'* (Try-bryn C.C. Chairperson's summary report May 7th.) Meacher was apparently impressed by their presentation and it was hoped that there would be a 'stay of execution' and that Aventis would postpone the trials. (County Echo report on May 4th based on a mobile phone call from Jackie Lawrence in London.) However a mobile telephone call from the site to Aventis ascertained the fact that the company had no intention of pulling out of the trials.

I detected a certain amount of friction in the village. It was less to do with the *pros* and *cons* of G.M. crops than the belief that one of the local activists, who had taken over leadership of the demonstration at The Gaer on April 28th, was claiming too much credit, and that the procedural/legalistic approach was more fruitful than slogans. It was also argued by some that at least Davison's employed a sizable workforce in the area.

Friday May 4th: The Welsh television channel, S4C, approached a number of village people in the pub hoping to get an interview in Welsh. Nobody would oblige although the evening news did include interviews in Welsh with local residents Kathy Harris and Tom Charles as well as organic farmer, Gerald Miles. The same evening, farmers in North Pembrokeshire were invited to a meeting in St. David's addressed by prominent geneticists (see earlier.)

⁸ The commercial television channel serving Wales and The West of England.

Saturday May 5th: I again visited the site where two Dutchmen were ‘on duty’, one a visitor, the other a local organic producer. A neighbouring smallholder was clearly agitated at having a trial site so close to her newly planted herb garden, which she intended opening to the public. She had had a bitter confrontation with Linda Smith. In the afternoon a public meeting took place in the nearby village of Letterston at which approximately 150 people listened to a talk on genetics, which focused on horizontal gene transmission. Speakers included the local M.P., A.M. and M.E.P. The Rebecca/Zapatista was again silently present. It was very much a repeat of the rational, cool arguments of the meeting that exasperated a small section of the audience and there was some heckling of the local M.E.P.

Sunday May 6th: Both Tre-bryn Post Office and the local garage displayed signs about a rally in community hall. The only anti-G.M. crop poster in the village was in the window of my cottage. A large banner has been placed at the Tre-bryn crossroads. There was a strong ‘green’ tinge to the large number of visitors at the rally and once again villagers were conspicuous by their absence. As one of the few villagers who regularly attended the meetings, and was obviously depressed by events, ironically told me: the rally consists of *dynion duerth* – strangers. However he argued that villagers have said that they do not know enough about the subject or “don’t like to put themselves forward”.

Monday May 7th: A number of posters appeared in the village. Whilst on the 5.30-8.30 ‘shift’ at the site I spoke to one of the local police who have been patrolling the area. As with others spoken to he is friendly; a previous policeman had been rather indiscreet in his positive attitude towards the protest (again discretion suggests that nothing should be documented); however it was believed (unattributable pers. comm.) that at least 14 policemen were on standby should they be needed. A visit to St. David’s later in the day elicited impassioned support for the campaign with comments from shopkeepers such as ‘*any crops planted will be destroyed.*’ and ‘*it’s who you know that matters*’ A cycle ride by a group calling itself Fydd Merched Beca, Rebeccas’ Daughters, set off from Efail-Wen⁹ to arrive at Tre-bryn village green in the afternoon. The poster with a picture of Rebecca beside a bike had the accompanying text: “*we hope to take the spirit of*

⁹ Twm Carnabwth led the first attack on a tollgate at Efail-wen on Monday, May 13th. 1839 to initiate Rebecca-1. See Molloy, P. (1983)

Rebecca and her daughters from its beginnings, Efail-Wen to a new site of social injustice, Tre-bry .” Unknown to me, and many others involved, local farmers had organised their own, very specific protest and the peace of a delightful Bank Holiday afternoon was broken by some thirty tractors plus Land Rovers and trailers chugging up Tre-bryn hill and parking on or around the village green. They had met some miles away at Croesgoch and a convoy had driven to The Gaer via Jordanston to Tre-bryn. Many were Welsh speaking and most known to come from surrounding areas. The solicitor, Moira Charles, comes from a farming family in a neighbouring parish and her contacts appeared to be crucial (pers. comm. unattributable.) A little later, Rebecca’s Daughters arrived on a variety of bikes and in a wide array of costumes. There was a carnival atmosphere. Even dogs joined the convoy for the 22-mile ride via the Gwaun Valley. After resting at they cycled on to The Gaer.

Tuesday 8th May: There was an ‘incident’ overnight. Gates were opened at Penrhyd Farm, and cattle escaped onto the roads. Unfortunately, a different branch of the Williams family owns Penrhyd. There is no support for this action, which is correctly seen, as dangerous.

This is one of the few intimidating actions that I have been able to discover. The other is the sending of matches through the post. This appears to have originated a few weeks earlier during an unrelated dispute when a local cheese-maker dependent on tourism had argued in the press that farmers should move cattle away from the coastal paths so that the Foot and Mouth ban could be removed and the paths reopened. He received an envelope containing a leaflet that was widely circulated in which farmers thanked the general public for their support during the Foot and Mouth crisis. Attached to the circular were five ‘live’ matches. I have no description of the contents of letters sent to Smith/Turner and the Williams except to say that matches were included.¹⁰

It was reported that one of the organic farmers had contacted all seed contractors in the area – none of whom were willing to sow the crop. During the day members of Friends of the Earth were at the site and I relieved them for the 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. shift. A press statement announcing that the crop would not be sown was released at 7 p.m. I knew nothing about this until a B.B.C. news reporter and cameraman, together with a number of activists arrived at approximately 9.15 p.m. There was considerable elation in the

¹⁰ I assume that this is a symbolic reference to the burning of “second homes” in some parts of Wales during the 1970s. See Osmond, J. (1984)

darkness of the lane which continued at the village pub where many organisers gathered although there is one sour note related to personality differences in the village and differences of opinion over the tactics used.

Wednesday May 9th: All the protest banners and posters have been removed. A B.B.C. radio car was parked in the village. I achieved fifteen seconds of fame on H.T.V. as “a local resident”. There was still a feeling that certain personalities claimed too large a role.

Thursday May 10th: A number of villagers expressed their delight at events and sought me out for information. One of the original organisers tells me that her experience is that most villagers were against G.M. test trials, even if they did not attend meetings or protests. The Western Mail stated that the leaders intend to carry on the organisation in case of further attempts at planting.

There are those in the village pub who still feel animosity towards one activist in particular – it is mainly a matter of personality plus old grievances. There is some feeling that at least Smith/Turner provide work for a number of craftsmen and labourers and therefore a reluctance to discuss the issue. It is rumoured that Dafydd Williams believed that there has been intimidation against his family.

One fascinating piece of gossip received by one of the organisers was that some protestors had intended to enter the site and build a *Tŷ Unnos*. In Welsh tradition if a crude house could be built in one night, and land de-limited by the throwing of an axe or a stone, squatters' rights would be secured.

Friday May 11th: A small piece in The Times stated that Ben Gill, President of the N.F.U. had called on the Home Secretary to protect farmers intimidated by G.M. protestors. No reference was made to but considering the gossip the evening before and Williams' closeness to the N.F.U. it would seem to refer to Tre-bryn. A joint press release from Davison's/Williams had front-page coverage in the County Echo. The County Echo has won considerable praise for its balanced coverage whereas The Western Telegraph boldly took an anti-G.M. stance from the beginning and may include some exaggeration. The County Echo however gave a good summary of events: *'By the Tuesday morning any suggestion that opposition was restricted to only a tiny minority became a nonsense with packed public meetings and other well supported events*

proving the very real levels of public concern, and particularly in the farming community itself.'

Saturday May 12th: A party was thrown at the community hall to celebrate the successful conclusion of this stage of the campaign. It is now too late to conduct trials this year. Food, a bar, music and fireworks were provided. It was a well-attended, good-humoured affair at which once again villagers are largely absent....and there are only two farmers from within the parish present.

Late May/June: The 'organisation' is to remain active. Other protest groups in the United Kingdom have contacted the Tre-bryn group for support. A meeting is held in a local organic farm to discuss the future. Local organic farmers are producing a G.M. news bulletin on the Internet. The action has created a loose alliance of local interest groups intent on publicising the planting of G.M. crops elsewhere in U.K., and foreign developments.¹¹

Analysis:

As with so many rural parishes, Trebryn has had a "quiet" history in recent centuries and the Parish Council minutes from the 1890s to 1945 concentrate on concerns over water supplies, road and lane improvement together with the occasional contingencies of history: a Royal wedding or funeral and the First and Second World Wars. Nothing much happened locally and the council, dominated by local farms did very little except pass resolutions that moved backwards and forwards to and from the County Council (see Part Three, Chapter 3). There have been 'alarms' however. The parish is just south of Pen Caer and Strumble Head, the site of a farcical and half-hearted French invasion in 1797 which gave rise to the folk tale of Jemima Nicholas of Fishguard who together with other local women in Welsh costume gave the impression to the drunken and bemused French troops that British redcoats had arrived in the vicinity. Jemima Nicholas was '*a tall, stout Amazon, masculine woman who worked as a cobbler in Fishguard*' (John B, 1984; Carradice, 1992). A modern "Jemima" added colour to the early protest.

¹¹ The most recent newsletter was received in April 2002, stating that there will be no trials in Wales but that the local group will support action in other parts of the U.K.

D. J. Jones in his study of Rebecca-1 (1989) notes that detachments of soldiers and policemen were stationed in Tre-bryn village in the winter of 1843-44 during protests over tolls, and Efail-Wen, one of the original flash points of the toll-gate riots is only 22 miles away. D. Jones (1976) describes a second Rebecca protest along the River Wye and adjoining rivers from the mid nineteenth century that *'continued with some interruptions until the 1930s'* (32). Although Jones concentrates on the Rhyader/Llandrindod Wells area of mid and East Wales he does refer to similar protests over fishing rights in the Cardigan-Cilgerran area, some twenty miles from . The drama of Rebecca contributes to the maize protests of 2001.

Of more significance, Pretty (1989) describes Tre-bryn as a staunch centre of union activities during attempts to form the agricultural labourers union in the early twentieth century, under the leadership of the local headmaster, D.T.Lewis. In a biographical index, Lewis is described by Pretty as a *'one time executive member of the Pembrokeshire Conservative Association, turned Labour in 1918. Secretary and later Chairman of the local NUAW¹² branch. Secretary of the Pembrokeshire Labour Party 1920'* (Pretty, *ibid* 263). Also in this branch there were three agricultural labourer brothers: John Lloyd, a Labour Party and Union activist, and Parish Councillor, William Lloyd a *'prominent NUAW activist ... because of persecution forced to seek work at Blaengarw Colliery'* (*ibid* 263), and Thomas Lloyd.

Both D.T. Lewis and John Lloyd were parish councillors but none of their trade union activities are mentioned in council minutes. The hegemony of local farmers however meant that Labour activists were victimised and both John and William Lloyd lost their jobs. In North Pembrokeshire generally, the Reverend T.E.Nicholas travelled widely addressing labourers. The Farmers' Union was particularly opposed to schoolteachers, *'retired sea captains'* and ministers *'who knew nothing about agriculture'* (94). The occupations may differ but a new intelligentsia played an important role in recent events.

Other critical, 'bolshie' figures in North Pembrokeshire/South Cardiganshire history include the writer Caradog Evans of Rhyd Lewis whose savage depiction of village life

¹² National Union of Agricultural Workers.

enraged Wales¹³; the Fishguard schoolmaster D.J. Williams who together with Saunders Lewis and the Reverend Lewis Valentine set fire to the R.A.F. bombing school at Penyberth on the Llŷn Peninsula (*Y Tri Llanc*, the Three in the Fiery Furnace)¹⁴; the anti-bureaucrat writer and journalist Roscoe Howels, and the man who popularised self-sufficiency in the U.K., John Seymour (1978). The area around Newport and Preseli is a stronghold of “Green” politics, particularly those relating to organic food.¹⁵ At the present time the writer and publisher Brian John has played a central role in organising and interpreting a variety of environmental issues and protests as well as writing generally about Pembrokeshire (see Part Three).

It is not the intention here, however, to suggest an underlying continuity of radicalism in North Pembrokeshire. Present events have occurred in a very different, devolved Wales that is part of a post-modernist, multi-national, ‘global’ world in which the Internet, e-mail and the mobile phone have had an impact. The Welsh now vote for a Welsh Assembly, a British and a European Parliament, each of which has been implicated in the present crop trials. The power of multi-national companies and the plight of Third World agriculture are important issues that were discussed during the protest. If there is no ‘grand tradition’ of radicalism however, previous ‘battles’ have been evoked, given visual and dramatic form by the use of “folk heroes and heroines” and other imagery, which energised protest.

Using the analogy of nineteenth century Chartism, the Pembrokeshire protests can be very crudely divided into ‘moral force’ and ‘physical force’ (Williams, D. 1969). Fortunately the crop will not now be planted (at present) and ~~rational~~/moral force remained uppermost but more dramatic, active and even ‘physical force’ elements were present. At the very least the more dramatic elements gave the media copy and visual stories. Undoubtedly, had the crop been sown, the balance would have swung towards more physical means of expression were being planned.

At the end of the protest Davison’s Ltd. and Williams Bros. issued a press release (7p.m. Tuesday 8th May 2001): *‘As a result of a deceitful and distorted campaign of*

¹³ See Part Two, Chapter 4 for details.

¹⁴ Williams, G.A. *When was Wales?* (1985)

¹⁵ Williams, J. and Caplan, P have studied the importance of organic food in this area. Paper read at Anthropology Wales conference, 1998.

mis-information, many conventional farms have been wrongly led to believe that the value of their commercial crops and livestock products could be put at risk by proceeding with the trial of G.M. maize. Such a prospect is totally false. However, given that these concerns and the added distress that they may cause, it would be unfair to proceed at this time.

There are a number of points worth making about this statement. Landlords have often lamented that outsiders mislead a loyal workforce! The interim nature of the success is made evident in the last sentence. At a private meeting of farmers, the previous Friday (May 4th) they had had a thorough briefing from leading geneticists Professor Brian Goodwin and Doctor Mae-Wan Ho. A participant informs me that farmers were not misinformed but that scientific evidence is complex: wild statements about automatic loss of organic status were untrue. Nevertheless, a local potato farmer was '*shitting himself*'; worried that Tesco would pull out of buying local potatoes because of the bad press associated with G.M. crops.

The press release continues: '*These are government-sponsored trials and it is the government's responsibility to supply such positive information as is necessary to sustain public confidence.... This the government has woefully failed to provide with Cabinet Minister Mowlem giving every encouragement whilst Michael Meacher has done all he can to undermine the scheme – a shambles on the threshold of seeking re-election*'. In this they are correct. The British government has underwritten such trials. Secretary of State Meacher however seems to have only got seriously involved following a delegation from Tre-bryn on May 3rd where he appears to have been annoyed at his civil servants for not keeping him informed of the relevant procedure (pers. comm.. unattributable).

Further the press release states: '*As European law allows, commercial G.M. crops will be grown in Wales – unfortunately they may not now be adequately tested.*' Again the statement is correct and one of the most interesting constitutional aspects of the case is that both the Welsh Assembly and the British Parliament have no powers to stop planting. The G.M. maize trials are purely voluntary. **However, the Welsh Assembly is on record as declaring its desire that Wales should be G.M. free.**

The link between Welsh heritage, artefacts, tourism and nostalgia has been pinpointed by Jenkins, J. (1992); he refers to the Welsh National Costume as a “sacred cow”. “Invented” aspects of Welsh tradition are discussed by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983). Stoklund (1982) traces the link between the romantic notion of folk culture and nineteenth century European nationalism. This is very different from the usage here where a wide range of iconographic and other elements were trawled up from historical protests and Welsh ‘folk’ culture to be used with some flair. Here they were being utilised as a form of social protest.¹⁶ These elements include:

- Rebecca – a figure derived from Welsh agrarian/turnpike protests of the nineteenth century.
- Jemima Nicholas, personified by Yvonne Fox, has been used since the Bi-centennial celebrations of the French attack on Fishguard to open fêtes and more significantly also headed a protest to stop the dumping of nuclear waste at an armaments depot at nearby Trecwn.
- Welsh flags, daffodils, banners in English and Welsh. The ribbons, rooks feathers, corn dolly and a Christian statement concerning the Resurrection that gave a religious/pagan nuance to the site.
- The possible building of a *Tŷ Unnos*.
- The light-heartedness of the protest on April 28th when balloons were attached to trees in the grounds of The Gaer, and windows and the door of the farmhouse were rattled. It is reminiscent of nineteenth century community sanction- the *charivari* (Jones, R., 1991)
- The envelopes containing matches – a symbolic representation of house burning incidents in the 1970s. The more sinister event of letting cattle loose which relates back to much primitive social protest and mischief-making in Wales and elsewhere (Jones, R., 1991)
- The farmers’ tractor demonstration, which included a vintage tractor, was visual evidence of solidarity within the farming community. Although there was possible stage-management by individuals close to the protest organisers.

¹⁶ See Jarman (1997) for the use of “traditional” imagery in the more dangerous context of Northern Ireland.

What is an ethnologist to make of all this? In some ways the muted support of villagers fits nicely into earlier studies of Welsh rural communities particularly that of Frankenburg (1990) whose research in the North Wales of the 1950s noted: *‘In the organisation of committees Pentre people employ devices in order to avoid thrusting the responsibility of open schism upon themselves. This responsibility is forced upon either outsiders or other “strangers”’* (65) However it must be stressed there was a large local presence but not from the village itself. There is something of a dispute here because others close to the organisation of the campaign note general support in the village. However my analysis, based on the telephone numbers of those who came forward to offer *active* support at the initial April 16th protest meeting, suggests a different story: this was at the very least a Pembrokeshire protest.

| | |
|----|--|
| 14 | Tre-bryn/ Fishguard numbers (“local”). |
| 15 | Cardigan/St. Dogmaels/Newport/Boncath. |
| 15 | Haverfordwest. |
| 1 | Carmarthen. |
| 2 | St.David’s. |
| 1 | Cardiff (Friends of the Earth). |
| 1 | Bangor. |
| 5 | Mobile phones. |
| 1 | Angle. |
| 1 | Narberth. |

Table 1. Telephone area codes of those offering active support in G.M. crop protest (I am indebted to Chris Tibbetts for the source information).

Many of the coordinators were Welsh speakers and/or prominent interpreters of Pembrokeshire’s history and culture. Equally there were a large number of non-Welsh ‘green’ incomers. Cohen (1986) has argued that a sense of community identity becomes apparent during conflict. Here there was a wide range of iconography but rather than Tre-bryn parish being strengthened it was a wider “network of interest”, centred on North Pembrokeshire generally and green issues specifically, which has been

strengthened. It was e-mail and the Internet, rather than face-to-face communication that co-ordinated action. The village itself remained largely mute although many now feel that Tre-bryn has been ‘put on the map’ but there are also rifts within the community that have been further opened up by the protest. Olwig and Hastrup (1997) have argued that although rich ethnographic studies are still central, ‘place’ has to be seen more dynamically, *‘it has not necessarily been confined to studying those relations that are circumscribed by these localities. If space is practiced place, then relevant space will often cut across boundaries; in practice East and West, North and South may be one*“(8). Ethnography today may be less about locality than a wide field of relations.

The whole event is a good example of global issues being worked out at the level of local action— a major international company impinged on local affairs, and some local people responded; most wished to stick to a highly legalistic intervention which they claimed was of crucial importance; some were considering “direct” action; the figure of Jemima Nicholas pulled out of the campaign after the rowdiness of the initial demo at The Gaer. The generally low involvement of villagers could be because of their having little knowledge of the environmental issues and an unwillingness to participate in an unfamiliar discourse. Alternatively there were employment factors to be considered

In conclusion, the description and analysis discussed here is based on a professional interest in social change in ‘peripheral’ communities and a belief that, in particular, Welsh community studies have placed too much emphasis on traditional elements of Welsh culture (e.g. the Aberystwyth school. See Part One, Chapters 4 and 5). It is argued that there is no seamless tradition of ‘folk’ culture or Welsh protest but a re-invention, a pick-and-mix to suit particular circumstances¹⁷

.This documenting of the G.M. incident was a good example of ethnographic serendipity: the fortuitous presence of the ethnographer in the parish because of illness, the crassness of a multi-national company, and the willingness of a few farmers to test G.M.crops in an area where “green issues” and organic farming are important. It raised

¹⁷ Icons do not remain fixed – consider how the Cuban revolutionary José Martí has been used by both Fidel Castro, and anti- Castro forces in Miami (Rough Guide to Cuba, 2000) In this instance a sound, rational, scientific and procedural approach was complemented by the dynamic, dramatic re-invention of folk culture. See Samuel (1994) for a general discussion of the “uses” of history.

a whole range of issues relevant to contemporary ethnography that will be explored in the following chapters:

- Does the concept of community still have relevance and how should it be re-thought in the twenty-first century?
- How should “folk” and traditional aspects of culture be interpreted?
- What is the relationship between the “local”/peripheral and the “global”/central/metropolitan?
- The importance of the visual as well as the spoken and written texts.
- How should one communicate the results of fieldwork- by conventional text or in more visual form?
- Can one participate and still be an ethnographer?

From my point of view, an “outsider” account could not have captured the depth of concern, the well-organised actions of protestors, or the excitement of the visual demonstrations. It is true that the views of the G.M. supporters are not fully explored.

As Plows (undated) has emphasised in her research which involved her direct involvement with the “Donga Tribe” at Twyford Down in 1992, a collective identity based on shared meanings and action grew up amongst a disparate group of activists; it was not unlike the sense of identity which Cohen (1986) describes as growing up in communities faced with conflict from the outside. This protest was a hybrid: here were some “locals” and many outsiders sharing a collective identity. *It was rooted in the locality but involved a wider network of interest.*

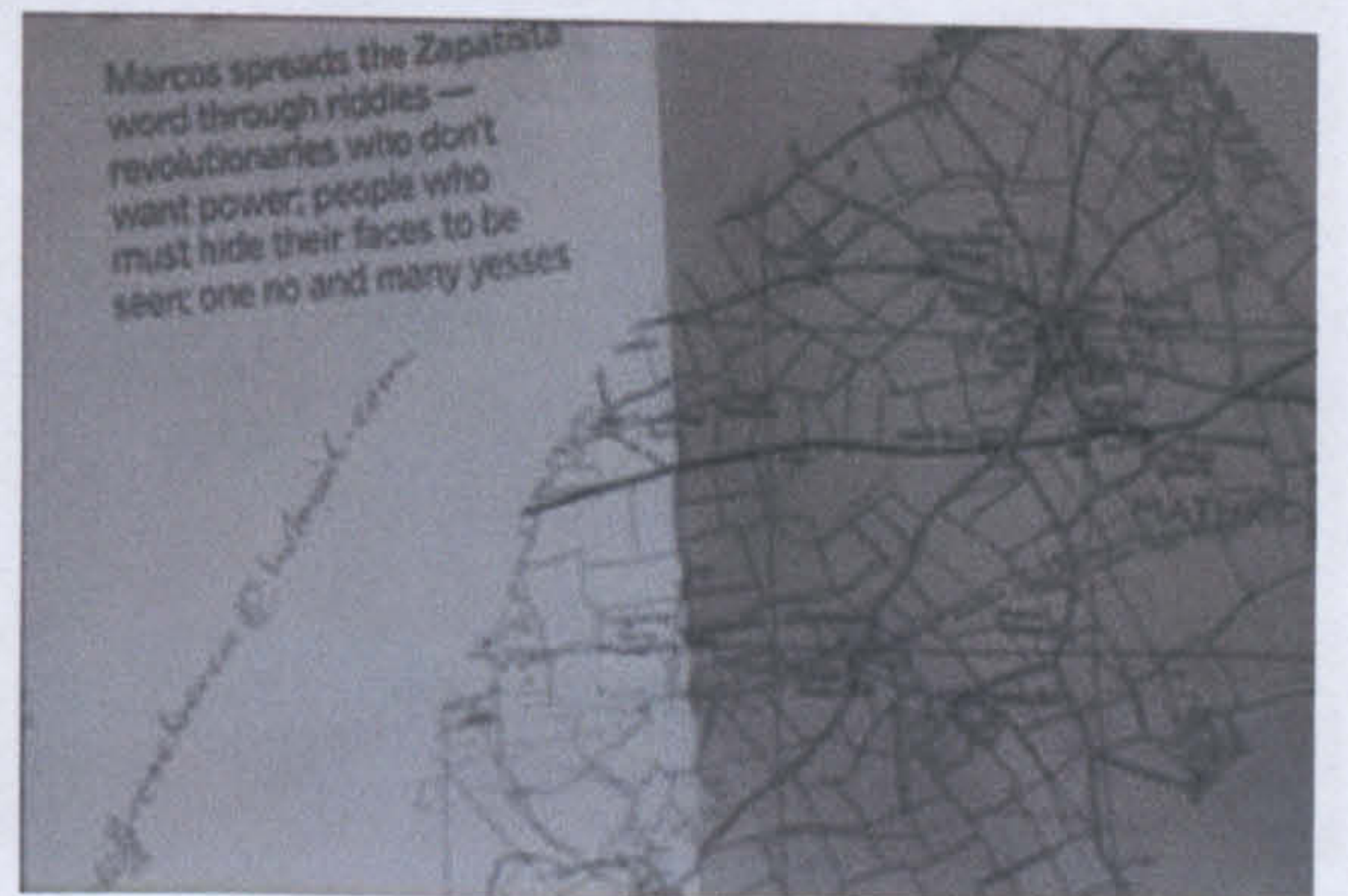
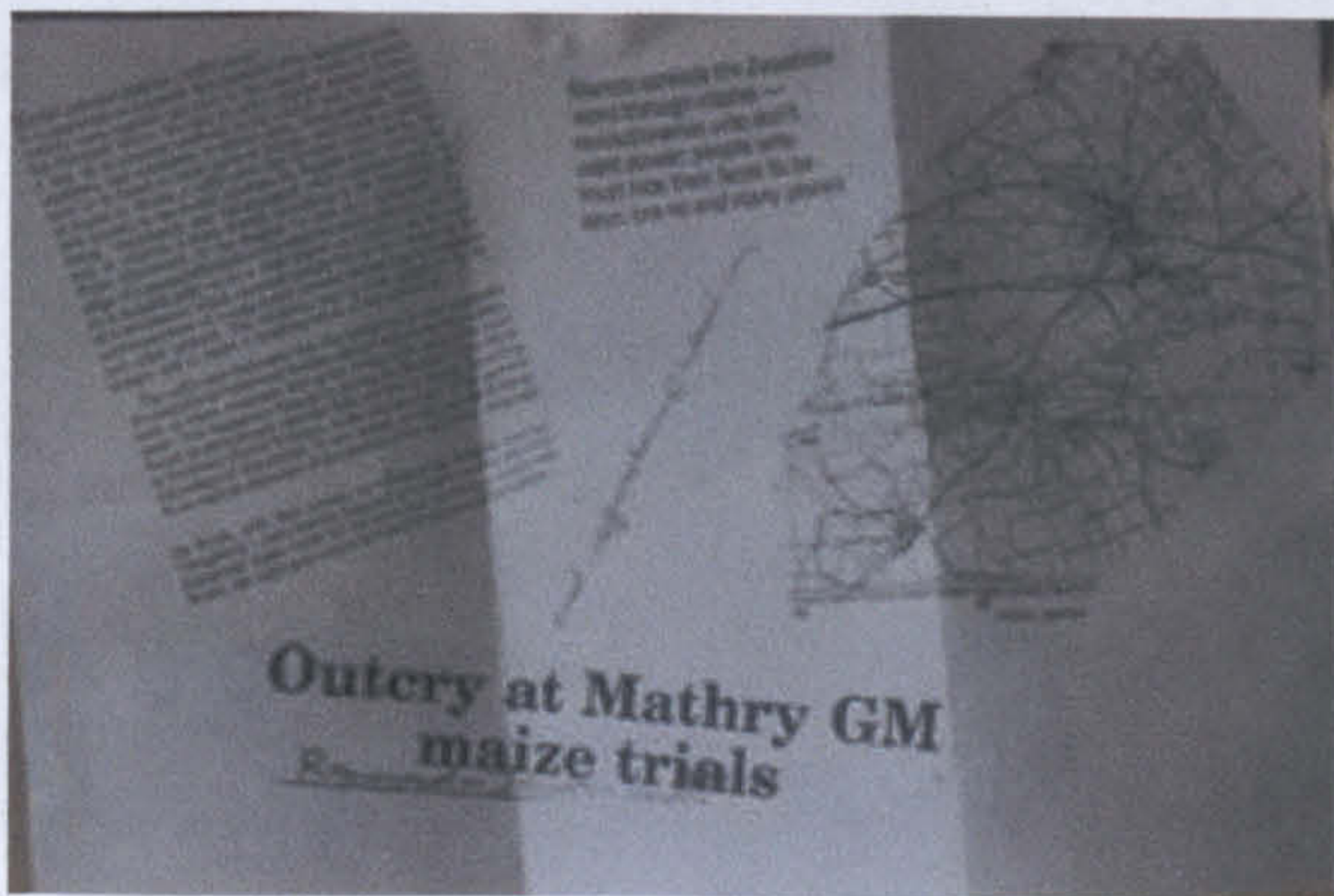
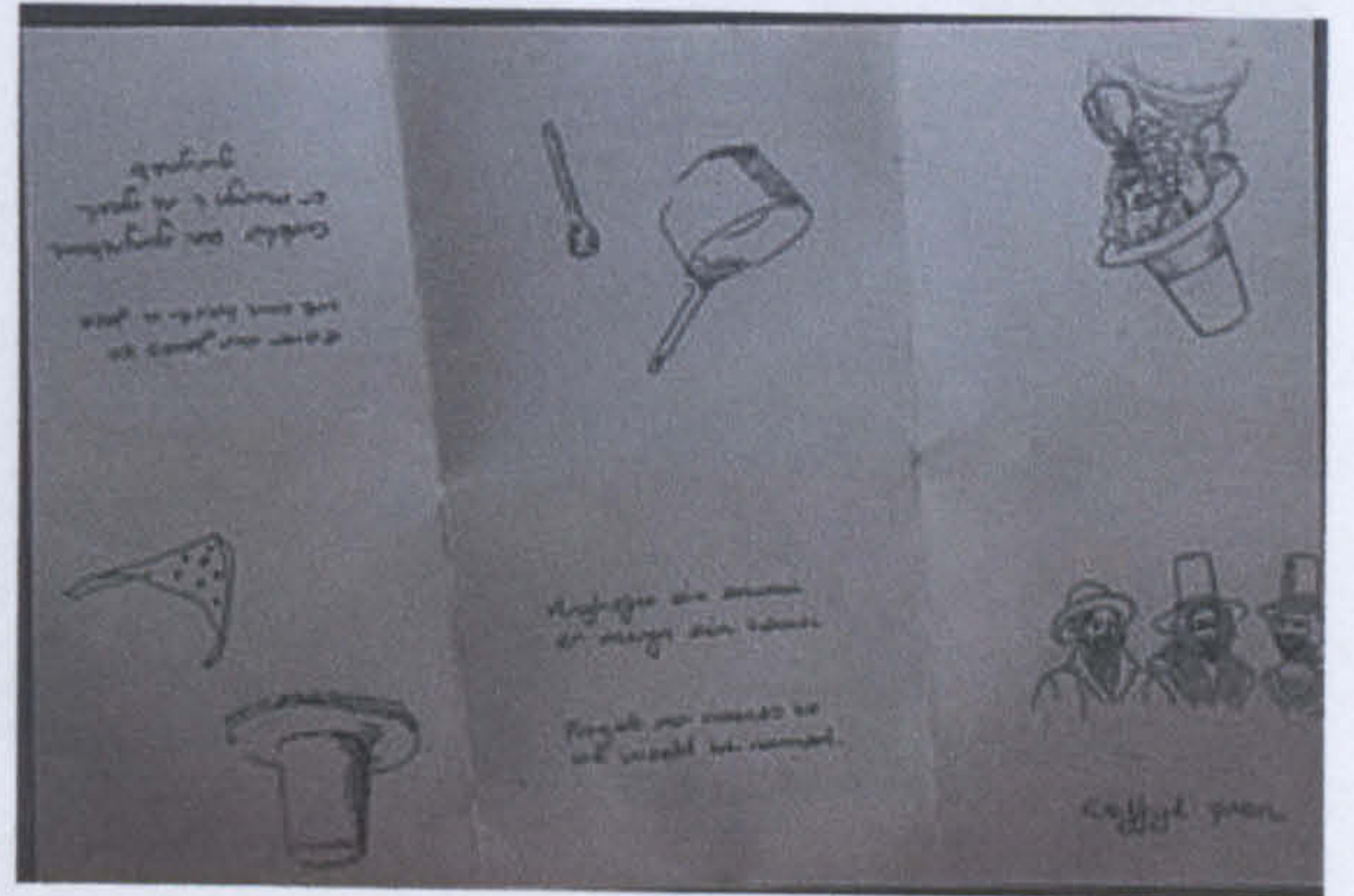
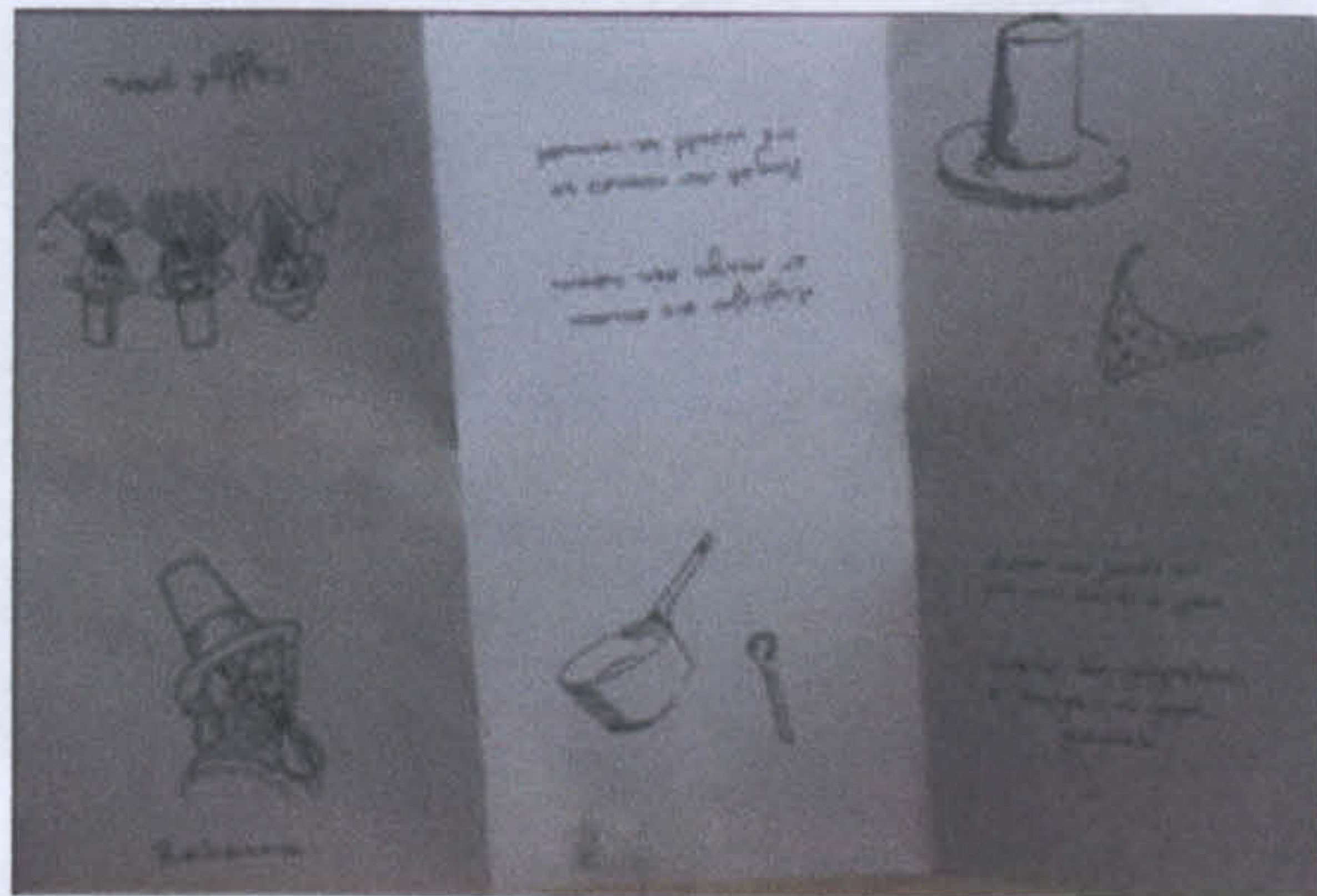
The whole concept of “local” and “global” was turned inside out. Here was a North Pembrokeshire group demonstrating against “progress” in the form of G.M. crops, receiving support from international pressure groups and geneticists with international reputations. They were “Luddites” using e-mail, the Internet and mobile telephone to communicate and co-ordinate action. Complementing this was a wide range of imagery drawn from traditional Welsh culture and social protest. Eventually the Tre-bryn group took centre stage in national protests-the local had become the global- at least in one limited arena. These are inter-connecting themes which will be explored in the following chapters.

Chapter 2. Visual aspects of the G.M. protest.

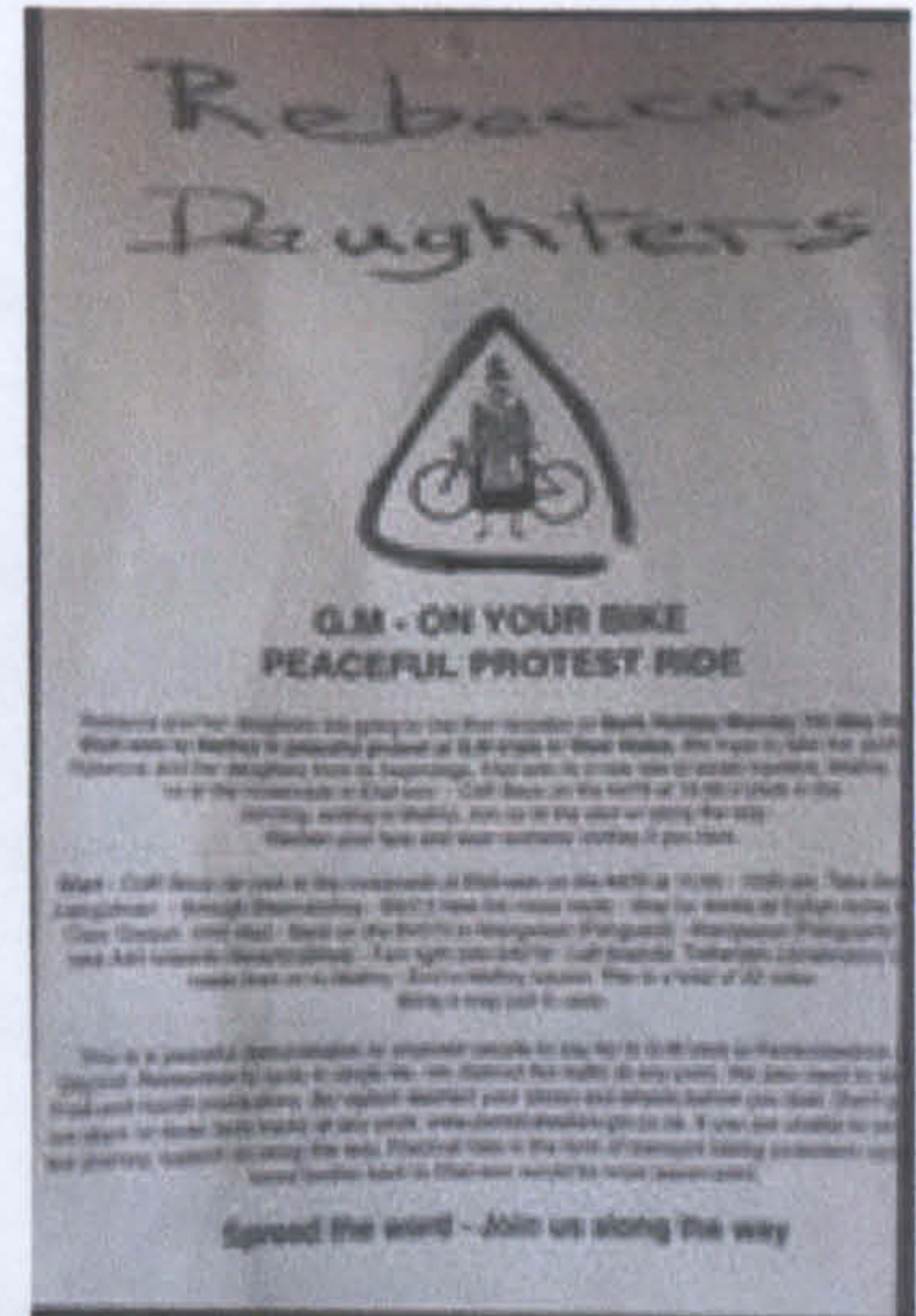
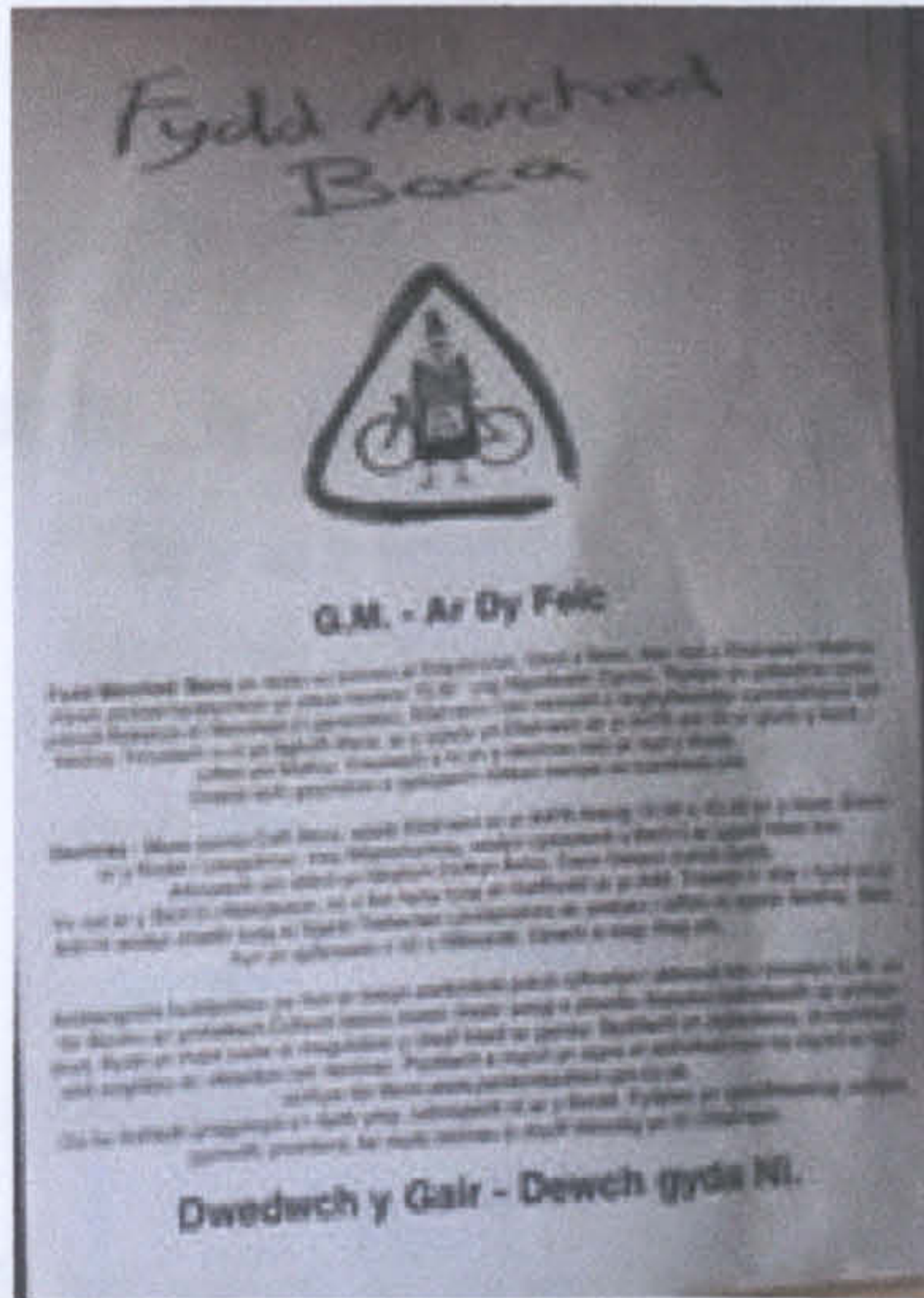
The following series of photographs was taken between April 28th and May 7th 2001. They are intended to demonstrate the more active and visual aspects of the protest. The imagery includes an eclecticism reminiscent of Rebecca, the *ceffyl pren* and the more light-hearted *charivari* (see Jones, 1991; also Jarman, 1997 for the use of photography to capture aspects of a march or protest).

It is doubtful that the costumes or pamphlets of Deffro Rebecca could be described adequately in words. On the other hand, the planning of the protest, and the use of e-mail, would be hard to document using still photography. It would have been useful to have obtained video coverage of such activities but this would have betrayed confidences.

No captions are included as it is hoped that the photographs as a series tell their own tale.







Chapter 3. The Ethnographic Habit.

The American novelist and travel writer, Paul Theroux, responded to English criticism by writing in The Kingdom by the Sea:

“They are funny, the Yanks! And I crept away and laughed to think that an English person was saying such a thing. And I thought: They wallpaper their ceilings! They put little knitted bobble hats on their soft-boiled eggs to keep them warm! They don’t give you bags in supermarkets! They smoke in buses! They drive on the left!.... Mustn’t grumble was the most English of expressions. English patience mingled with despair.” (1984, 15).

The book provides a “popular”, biased, but incisive account of the U. K. and people’s eccentricities during the Falklands War.

The English writer and journalist, Daniel Jeffreys, wrote of the U.S.A.:

“ Leaving Dallas from Fort Worth Airport, I made the journey to Birmingham, Alabama. It was a typical flight. Every seat was full and the air stewards were way beyond being just miserable. It was easy to understand why these poor men and women appeared suicidal. Bulky garment bags, far larger than the overhead lockers where they had been jammed, fell on them at regular intervals. There would follow a fight with some irascible businessman who had been trying to keep his polyester suit neat...”
(America’s Back Porch, 1998,16)

Jeffreys’ intention is to peer into the more bizarre aspects of American life. In a second essay, his description of an Appalachian snake-handling sect is a neat piece of writing on the sociology of religion.

Theoretically both writers share an Anglo Saxon culture and the English language. In practice, both are outsiders looking in on cultures as strange as any. What they share is an acute ability to see the minutiae of everyday life and to write about it. Despite “globalisation”, groups sharing Western culture can still be very different.

A static camera is held on shop fronts and houses in Reading, England. There is a close-up of a drinking glass lying in grass, with a ladybird crawling on it. A shot of the H. M. V. record shop in Friar St. is accompanied by a narration:

“Our first outing was to a record shop in Friar Street, where Adam Ant was making a personal appearance. The music industry is one of the U. K.’s most successful and brings in more money from abroad than motor manufacturing, its products often characterized by sexual ambivalence and a traditional English contempt for petit-Bourgeois England. Robinson had once taught at the art school where Adam Ant was a student.” (Keiller, 1999, 8).

The quote comes from the film, Robinson in Space, by Patrick Keiller, which was made just before the British General Election of 1997. With its use of static shots and close ups, its witty, obscure narration by Paul Schofield, its conceit of using the travel writer format and a fictitious observer, Robinson, it becomes both a devastating critique of Thatcher’s Britain and a witty exploration of the nature of documentary film.

Nick Broomfield produced a series of documentary films including: Tracking Down Maggie, Aileen Wonours, Heidi Fleiss, and Kurt and Courtney. He may not get interviews with his protagonists, but the tracking down gives fascinating insights into people’s lives and culture. Broomfield becomes the “star” of his own documentaries and the processes of documentation are made explicit (Dovey, 2000).

The Magnum photographer Ian Berry’s The English (1978) was a collection of black and white photographs which capture the facial expressions, posture and dress of a people living in a society which does not seem to have changed much since Priestly made his English Journey in 1933, and George Orwell wrote The Road to Wigan Pier (1937).

In Saints, Scholars, and Schizophrenics (1982), the American anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes, describes the *anomie* of rural life in the West of Ireland, which is characterised by mental illness, particularly amongst the sons of farmers. At around about the same time another American, Henry Glassie, was documenting the vibrant oral culture of Ballymenone, in the border country of Northern Ireland (Glassie, 1995).

All the above are documenting humans. They all employ the “ethnographic gaze”, although only the last two are accredited anthropologists. They use different media. All have used the rhetoric of their craft to provide fascinating insights into what it is to be a human being in society. The filmmakers in particular also provide insight into the mechanics of documentation.

The purpose of this chapter is to place ethnography firmly in the humanities by discussing its literary devices, by emphasising narrative structure as central to both the activity of fieldwork and monograph, and by employing the concept of “ethnographic gaze” to a cognate group of documentary practices, including the visual. It will be suggested that there is considerable inter-textuality between a variety of documentary forms ranging from the ethnographic monograph to the travel book, the government report to the documentary photograph, and documentary film to the tourist experience. All these forms will be utilised later in this work and are considered of equal value in understanding human social behaviour.

Glass’s comment that community studies were the “poor sociologist’s substitute for a novel” (quoted Lewis, G. 1985) marks a low point in the standing of such fieldwork. Community studies emphasised the unique, rather than seeking more general social processes; used qualitative rather than quantitative data; and were often “idealistic” in outlook. However, Frankenberg’s Communities in Britain (1966) demonstrates that general social theory may be derived from qualitative studies; Cloke et al’s Rural Wales (1997) did use quantitative data; there are many studies of small communities, which are far from idealistic (e.g. Scheper-Hughes’ study of County Kerry, 1982). “Community” will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, here more emphasis will be placed on the last word in the quotation from Glass, “novel”. Since the 1960s ethnographers have placed less faith in models from the natural sciences for an understanding of human behaviour. In Geertz’s phrase there has been “a blurring of genres” (1983). The rhetoric of the ethnographic monograph has more in common with that of the novel than once supposed; some works such as Lewis’ La Vida (1969) can be read as a “realist” novel¹⁸; classic monographs such as Malinowski’s Argonauts of the Western Pacific (1964), despite his attachment to the methodology of natural science,

¹⁸ See also Wolf (1992) and Gusterson (1998) for use of first-person reportage in dramatic ethnographic accounts.

are far from “objective”. Conversely, some novels provide a wealth of sociological insight, as does the popular travel-writing genre¹⁹. Glass’ criticism of community studies using the word “novel” is not quite as straight forward as it seems to be.

It is suggested that ethnography is a “broad church” that includes a range of studies from the most descriptive to the most general. The problem for Glass is the purely descriptive nature of many community studies. But generalisation does not necessarily make “good” science. Andreski (1974) in his sweeping attack on the social sciences “as sorcery” criticises the work of Levi-Strauss; he states of Les Mythologiques:

“practising scientists as well as philosophers of science agree that a proposition deserves a serious consideration as scientific only as far as it can be validated directly or indirectly...Only the poets and the novelists are regarded as exempt from this constraint. By the criteria of evidential support or even potential testability, these volumes fall under the heading of fiction or surrealist poetry rather than science.” (89)

The same could be said of Malinowski’s work: it is not “science” in the sense discussed by Popper (1966), but that does not make it bad ethnography. Geertz (1983) goes some way towards solving the problem: ethnography is a mixture of what he calls the “experience-near” and the “experience-far”. Of his own work, he suggests:

“In seeking to uncover the Javanese, Balinese or Moroccan sense of self, one oscillates restlessly between the sort of exotic minutiaeand the sort of sweeping characterizations...”(69)

It is a form of hermeneutics, and the generalisations do not necessarily conform to the natural science model.

One can go further. If the realist novel and travel writing are largely descriptive, they normally include generalisation in the form of the authorial voice, choice of subject and direction of the narrative and may not be far removed from ethnography. If this is allowed then another sort of documentation may be included, the densely descriptive documentary photograph and film. Both have been criticised as useless to ethnography for this reason, their apparent density of description precluding ethnographic generalisation (Hastrup, 1992), but both are now accepted as a sub-discipline of

¹⁹ Levi’s The Hill of Kronos (1980) and Leigh Fermor’s Mani (1985) are good examples, as are those texts quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

anthropology (visual anthropology, ethnographic film). Once again, generalisation is present, at its most obvious in the “voice over” narrative in documentary film but more subtly in the choice of shots, camera angle, the editing of shots, and the production of a “photo story”.

Just as Geertz argues for a pendulum-like swing between the “experience-near” and the “experience-distant” in the work of an individual ethnographer, so too, it may be said of the corpus of work, which may be entitled “documenting humans”.

In his essay, Anthropology as a Vocation, Fox (1975) re-asserts the central tenet of anthropology to “investigate the nature of man”. He is less sure about the role of fieldwork within social anthropology, which he argues has become an obsession that has led to stultification and decline within the profession. (Interestingly, Raphael Samuel, 1994, has made a similar remark about historians relying on limited types of evidence). Fox is quite clear:

“Perhaps the best that can be hoped for is that the centre will not hold, since the centre is a hollow reed anyway, and that those who really care can return to anthropology as a vocation and quit the nonsense about professionalism. There can be mad amateurs foraging in the dawn of new discoveries. They can have strange ideas and indulge in unprofessional conduct...sit around the frontiers like intellectual barbarians....”(15).

Fox demands “marginal anthropologists”. An even more trenchant attack on the discourses of social science has been put forward by another of its licensed exponents, Andreski (1974) who writes:

“What is particularly dismaying is that not only does the flood of publications reveal an abundance of pompous bluff and a paucity of new ideas, but even the old and valuable insights which we have inherited from our illustrious ancestors are being drowned in a torrent of meaningless verbiage and useless technicalities.” (11)

It is part of an onslaught on the practices and epistemology of anthropology that has occurred during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Anthropology has imploded and it is major figures within the discipline that have been involved. Geertz (1983) notes:

“there has been an enormous amount of genre mixing in intellectual

life in recent years...analogies drawn from the humanities are coming to play the kind of role in sociological understanding that analogies drawn from the crafts and technology have long played in physical understanding.” (19).

This blurring of genres is further described by Clifford (1988). He argues for an alliance with avant-garde art and culture. There are several ways of telling in which a “*poet like Williams [William Carlos Williams] is an ethnographer*” (9). Activities such as collage, juxtaposition and estrangement, are examples of modernism shared by anthropology and the arts. But why stop here: if major anthropologists such as Clifford can include Conrad’s Heart of Darkness in their work, why not Apocalypse Now? Turner (1982) even entitles his discussion of society: From Ritual to Theatre.

Indeed, it is in the visual arts that some of the most interesting writing/production of anthropology has occurred. The photographer and art historian Ian Walker (1997) has shown the close link between French ethnography of the 1930s and Surrealism, suggesting that contemporary concerns with *reflexivity* can be traced back to surrealist activities of that period. Edwards (1997), in her review of anthropology and photography describes a number of photographic practices that are closer to Fine Art – although she does acknowledge them to be “beyond the boundary”. In the same volume (Banks and Morphy, 1997) Loizos discusses experimental ethnographic film, and Gifford links fictional cinema and ethnographic film (as does Rony, 1996, in a more critical fashion. See also Russell, C. 1999).

The historian Carlo Ginsberg seems to be playing a similar game of mixing genres. In his essay “Clues: Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes” (1990) he argues that a new paradigm has emerged in the social sciences. In a wide-ranging review which includes hunter/gatherer trackers, art historians, psycho-analysis and detective fiction he appears to be arguing for an interpretative social science based on the observation of apparently insignificant clues.

If “armchair anthropology” of the kind practised by Frazer (1987, 1996), and pseudo-Darwinian studies of the nineteenth century, were replaced by Malinowskian field work and structural functionalism in the twentieth century, and later Geertz’ hermeneutics and cultural critiques, it is difficult to see where the centre of anthropology lies. This is

made explicit in the report of the symposium held at the University of Amsterdam, Critique and Reflexivity in Anthropology, which reached the following conclusion:

“... the conference can be described as a gathering of fragmented identities. The fragmentation became apparent in the paradoxical attempts of many critical anthropologists to use reflexivity against the loss of authority and identity caused by being reflexive.”

(Nencel and Pels, 1989, 87)

Apparently a pessimistic conclusion that suggests that all that might keep the discipline together is a reliance on a series of signifiers, the monograph and participant observation. But as Fox suggested earlier perhaps it doesn't matter if the centre does not hold.

The position is not unlike that which faced Art History and Fine Art in the early Twentieth Century when accepted standards of representation were removed, and more recently when even the use of brush and canvas were (possibly) superseded by video and other media. The conventions of European perspective were broken by Picasso's Demoiselles d'Avignon, itself a cross-fertilisation with non-Western cultures; the exhibition of Duchamp's Urinal de-sacralised the art-object; conceptualism even did away with the object altogether. (See for instance: But is it art? Tighlman, 1984; The New Art History, Rees and Borzello, 1986)

Third World and Feminist Discourse-the “usual suspects”- undermined the white male artist and the parallel with anthropology is very close indeed. However, Fine Art continues to prosper albeit with a different content, method and theory. Something similar has happened in anthropology, which has produced its own Damian Hirsts and Tracy Emms. A list might include (most of them licensed anthropologists):

- Tom Harrisson and Charles Madges' Mass Observation of the 1930s with its alliance of poets, photographers, writers, and laypersons. Carpenter (2002) describes that Harrisson's earlier field methods in Borneo were to “go native, get drunk with the aboriginal people, sleep with their women, and experiment with their drugs” to produce “splendid eccentricities” (39).
- Bateson and Mead's Balinese Character- a fusion of film, photography, and written text (1942; but also see Jacknis, 1989)

- Brody's Inishkillane (1973) in which considerable use is made of Irish literature; also Maps and Dreams (1986) with its alternating testimonies.
- The essays of Clifford and Turner referred to above.
- Post-colonial work in Oceania (Wassmann, 1998).
- Edwards' Gargoyles and Graduates (Banks and Morphy, 1997).
- Reflexivity in ethnographic film (See Crawford and Turton, 1992 and others in bibliography).
- Chris Marker's film Sans Soleil-a stream of consciousness reportage of culture.
- The photographic essays of Berger and Mohr (e.g. A Seventh Man, 1975)
- The Impossible Science of Being. Dialogues between Anthropology and Photography. An exhibition at The Photographers' Galler (Charity and Pinney 1995) which re-sites Victorian ethnographic photography and explores contemporary experience.
- Granada Television's Disappearing World series of anthropological films many of which emphasise multivocality.
- Lesy's Wisconsin Death Trip (1973), which includes newspaper reports, fictional local history, sociological essays and photographs (some of which, have been manipulated) to document the experience of late nineteenth century farmers.

Where does one step over the line or when does one fall onto the "cutting edge"? Edwards (1997) describes recent experimental photography as "beyond the boundary" of ethnography but nonetheless Banks and Morphy's volume on visual anthropology includes her examples, and include many other examples of experimental work. One can only follow Fox in his requirement that anthropology be turned over to the marginal in an attempt to gain greater understanding of what it is to be human.

All this sounds like an invitation to professional anarchy, but following Fox, Andreski, Geertz and others this may be no bad thing. If the "centre doesn't hold" then Orwell's two short essays Shooting an Elephant and A Hanging become ethnographic accounts of British colonialism; George Mackay Brown's stories and novels of Orkney provide a corpus of Orcadian ethnography. Rony (1996) has criticised the "ethnographic gaze" of W. A. S. P anthropology, but there is also the "tourist gaze" (Urry, 1990), the novelist's

gaze and the gaze of the documentary filmmaker and photographer. There are significant differences, but also similarities; all are firmly in the humanities. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

And it doesn't matter unless the *dicta* laid out, but not always followed, by Malinowski are adhered to. In Argonauts of the Western Pacific (first published in 1922) he is critical of what now might be called the "tourist" or "colonial" gaze, emphasising the need for a professional anthropology based on structural functionalism. Andreski (1974) has suggested that as well as its intellectual attractions structural functionalism fitted British Colonial policy of treating tribal groups as "wholes", to be governed by indirect rule, keeping intact native cultural practices. More benign than other forms of colonialism it tended to lead to a cultural relativism in which every cruel custom was explained away. Malinowski demands an "objective, scientific view of things" (ibid, 6), and it would be crass indeed not to acknowledge the importance of his work both in its description, methodology and generalisations but it is not "objective" in a sense understood by a natural scientist. Nowhere in his published account does he acknowledge his own prejudices towards his subjects; he keeps this for his personal diary (published posthumously as A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Word, 1967). This is not *argumentum ad hominem*, merely an acceptance that observation of human behaviour involves a range of subjectivities- often more ethnographic "daze" than ethnographic "gaze"- and makes *reflexivity* a crucial part of the enterprise.

This is hardly a novel idea but it does suggest that what the ethnographer required was not only Notes and Queries but also Goffman's Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life (1978) had it been available. Malinowski does not question the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, "white guest" and "native". A performance is involved, there is a "front", an ethnographic actor is interacting with another actor. All fieldwork is based on micro-sociological interactions, and there is no guarantee that the academic is better at this than the sensitive layperson. This is not a downgrading of ethnography from a "science" but rather its re-situating as a humanity. It is what Fisher (1985) has referred to as the hegemonic struggle between *logos* and *mythos*, an attempt to move from Baconian-Cartesian approaches that culminated in logical positivism, to a more inclusive approach, which includes *poetics*.

The conclusion of Geertz's paper Deep Play: notes on the Balinese cockfight (1973) suggests the fruitfulness of the interpretative approach:

“There are enormous difficulties in such an enterprise, methodological pitfalls to make a Freudian quake, and some moral perplexities as well....But to regard such forms as saying “something of something”, and saying it to somebody, is at least to open up the possibility of an analysis which attends to their substance rather than to reductive formulas.....” (29)

Ethnography as a humanity does not make it an easy option. If the interpretative approach of Geertz is accepted, there are still serious problems of accountability. This becomes obvious if one returns to Carlo Ginsberg's examples. Sherlock Holmes was able to solve cases on the basis of clues overlooked by Lestrade or Doctor Watson. Luckily for Holmes he was never proved wrong, and if he had been a real-life figure a judge and jury would have had to assess his evidence.²⁰

We can assume that the art historian called in to authenticate a painting on the basis of insignificant details (as suggested by Morelli) is accountable to the art gallery director or the owner of the painting. Large sums of money are involved. Equally if a hunter misinterprets the tracks of an animal he may be killed or the tribe goes hungry.

Freud is the most interesting case, and also the most worrying. Whatever Freud's standing as an observer of symptoms, and as an interpreter of the human psyche, his work has not stood up well to criticism, at least by those outside the closed circle of initiates. Even a maverick “insider” such as Masson (1985) has exposed serious “cover ups” within his psychoanalytic approach (see also Malcolm, 1986).

Cohen (1983) is aware of the problems of the interpretative approach to meaning. He argues that, ultimately, much depends on the *sensitivity* of the observers and their professional honesty. Exactly.

²⁰Pierre Bayard (2000) has analysed the case of an equally famous fictional detective- Hercule Poirot- and argued from a re-reading of the text that Poirot got the murderer of Roger Ackroyd wrong: there was a far better candidate. (This is not some silly game but rather an example of Barthes' emphasis on the text and its creative interpretation by the reader. Barthes, 1984).

Narrative is central to both the documenting of human behaviour but also the experiencing- whether the “investigator” is an ethnographer, travel writer or tourist (Holtorf, 2002, has made a similar comment about the “underground” quest of the archaeologist). It is a structure that is at the heart of literature and life- the journey with a beginning, middle and end. The narrative structure is best exemplified by Propp’s structure of the Russian fairy tale (1925) and Campbell’s work on myth and the hero (1984); it is also Turner’s three stages of the liminal- separation, transition and incorporation (1982). For instance, the ethnographer goes through a number of stages:

- A subject culture is chosen.
- The ethnographer prepares. There is a mentor.
- Arrival and first contact.
- Vicissitudes. Trials and tribulations. Guides.
- Rites of passage.
- Gradual understanding. The key.
- Departure.
- The writing of the monograph.
- Possible *hubris* and possible punishment by critics in that the key interpretation is not accepted.

There is little to choose between the structure of the hero myth and the ethnographic experience. It is no coincidence that that one of the Twentieth Centuries’ favourite Hollywood heroes is the archaeologist/anthropologist Indiana Jones. The vicissitudes of the ethnographer may not be articulated in the monograph- these are left to the popular account (Turnbull, 1974; Barley, 1983; Malinowski’s private diaries, 1967), although it is argued here that such “trials” should not be left to a “travellers’ tale” but made explicit as reflexive ethnography to help the reader, whether professional or lay, to assess the work. Geertz (1973) provides a good example of a rite-de-passage in his piece of professional writing on Balinese cockfighting. Treated as a non-person on arrival in Bali, unsure of what to do, the chance visit to an illegal cockfight is a test. The police raid the cockfight and the anthropologist, along with other spectators is forced to flee and find a hiding place with a local family. He is teased by “locals” but is now “in”.

Of equal importance, the cockfight and the experience provide a key to understanding of Balinese culture.²¹

“it put me very quickly on to a combination emotional explosion, status war, and philosophical drama of central significance to the society whose inner nature I desired to understand.” (4)

In outline the experience runs as follows:

- Arrival. Vicissitudes: malaria, diffidence, ignored by local people.
- The Test. Illegal cock fight, police raid, detection, helped by local people.
- Acceptance. Centre of attention and gentle teasing.
- The “getting of wisdom”. The analysis of the cockfight and its relation to other aspects of Balinese society.

This is far removed from the natural science model, but is still open to accountability—either through close re-reading of the text, general or specific knowledge, or through further study by other ethnographers, who may differ from Geertz in their interpretation of Balinese culture.

There is a variation on the above which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter: those ethnographers who have studied their own culture, and describe themselves as practicing ethnography “from within”. They fit the above to the extent that even if they speak the same language as their informants (English or Welsh), and come from the same locality, they will have moved away spatially and academically. There is a sense in which they are re-discovering culture. A different literary analysis is necessary here: that provided by Raymond Williams (1975) in his analysis of the Pastoral. These are members of a community re-affirming rural traditions which are perceived as disappearing. Others fit a third literary form, “the Gothic” in which village life becomes decidedly “creepy” (Scheper-Hughes’ *County Kerry* (1982), Lesy’s *Wisconsin* (1973) and the short stories of Caradoc Evans (1987))

Although intended as a literary and cultural analysis of *The American West*, Fiedler’s (1972) categories of literary genre fit, in part, the above discussion. His main interest described in the title of his book—*The Return of the Vanishing American*—is a good

²¹ My discussions with J.W. concerning dramatic events on an Orcadian island (Part Two) provided similar insight.

description of what was the dominant ethnographic pursuit. Of the Western novel or film he writes:

“The heart of the Western is not the confrontation with the alien landscape...but the encounter with the Indian, that utter stranger for whom our New World is an Old Home... he escapes completely the mythologies we brought with us from Europe, demands a new one of his own.” (19)

and:

“The Western story in archetypal form is, then, a fiction dealing with the confrontation in the wilderness of a transplanted WASP and a radically alien other, an Indian- leading either to a metamorphosis of the WASP into something neither White nor Red...or else to the annihilation of the Indian...” (22)

And annihilation of the Indian need not be genocide but the museum diorama, the glass case of arrowheads, the monograph, Boas or Curtis, the Hollywood Western or Berger’s Little Big Man.

He refers to the “Southern” as *American Gothic*, which requires a haunted house at its centre. In the U.K. it becomes the rural village of Hammer films and the archetypal film: The Wicker Man (Robin Hardy, 1973). The “Northern” is low-key, domestic and involves a harsh environment: a good description of the ethnography of Orkney included here. The “Eastern” is a return to Europe, or at least a flirtation with European values: the return of an anthropologist from the U.S.A. to conduct fieldwork on a European community?²²

It is not only the “soft” social sciences to which notions of narratology may be applied. Indeed, it was Landau (1984) who gave the lead by first applying Propp’s (1925) structural analysis to accounts of human evolution. She demonstrated how the various studies of the “descent of man” follow the narrative structure of the hero- variously named hominids descend from the trees, suffer trials and tribulations on the savannah, gain humanity (and perhaps suffer from *hubris*). Landau could have taken her analysis further in the direction taken here- most palaeontologists describe travelling to strange lands (time as well as space), the toil of the search, the discovery (pithecanthropus,

²² The study of a small Irish community does not sound like Henry James and it is admitted that the parallels are not exact, but at least anthropology may be situated within literary theory.

robustus, habilis, “Lucy”), the monograph presenting the key to human evolution, *hubris* and possible downfall of a theory (Richard Leakey and Don Johansson for instance).²³

A framework for documenting humans: “the ethnographic gaze”.

A discussion of “gaze” allows an attempt to be made to draw back from the professional anarchy described above. Again, Argonauts of the Western Pacific seems an important starting point. It is full of delightful vignettes, native accounts, concrete observations and sociological generalisations. It also includes highly prejudicial references to “native mentality”. Malinowski refers to the tribulations of being suddenly set down from a boat “alone on a tropical beach” (4), although there were, of course, native peoples. Although he provides a methodology, and an organising framework, he never really resolves the dilemma of science versus art. In chapter five he writes:

“A canoe is an item of material culture, and as such it can be described, photographed and even bodily transported into a museum...[But] the ethnographic reality of the canoe would not be brought much nearer to a student at home...(105)

Something needs to be added:

“...to the native his cumbersome, sprawling canoe is a marvellous, almost miraculous achievement, and a thing of beauty...He has spun a tradition around it. It is to him a powerful contrivance...there can be found deep love..” (106)

There can be no objection to this, but it is a sociological *sensitivity* and *empathy* rather than “science” which provides this insight, together with a persuasive rhetoric. This is made clear a little later:

“..if an investigator, speaking the natives’ language and living among them for some time, were to try to share and understand these feelings, he will find that he can gauge them correctly, soon he will learn to distinguish when the natives’ behaviour is in harmony with his own, and when, as it sometimes happens, the two are at variance.” (107).

Malinowski’s writing has a filmic quality to it. He uses “establishing shots”, close ups, long shots, chunks of native lore, general “voice over” abstractions. The title of the

²³ Gould (1990) has also criticised evolutionary science for its use of the iconic “March of time” imagery which suggests seamless progress towards modern Homo sapiens.

book refers back to the ancient Greek narrative of the epic voyage. The reader/viewer has embarked on an adventure, albeit a relatively sober one, in which we learn and live through the exotic. There are passages of great beauty in which a story is told based on observation and hunches. To the extent that the “hero” has gone through a *rite de passage* new meaning is discovered, to the extent that he only sees the “native” or “the average man” meaning remains incomplete. There is a great similarity to documentary film. He writes elsewhere:

“..walk around the village. In doing this, again we would come across much, which to a trained eye, would reveal at once deeper sociological facts”. (55).

Here, literally and metaphorically, is the “ethnographic gaze”. In the last forty years cultural historians, anthropologists and others have developed a critical discourse surrounding “the gaze”. It is a tool with which to understand institutionally engendered inequality. At its most scathing, Rony (1996) has dismissed the whole anthropological enterprise as a W. A. S. P. derived ethnographic gaze. She is not alone in this view of conspiracy by the white male. In Fine Art the male artist’s depiction of the female nude is central to Berger’s Ways of Seeing:

“One might simplify this by saying: men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at.” (1987, 47).

Sontag (1979) has suggested that the act of taking a photograph involves a power relationship in which the camera is a “predatory weapon”; the anthropologist, Faris (1993; also Ryle, 1982) describes photography as a form of fascism. Mulvey (1989) has used the concept of *Scopophilia* in her feminist critique of Hollywood film: the visual pleasure taken by the male in looking at the female star. At its most vicious, this is the theme of Michael Powell’s notorious film Peeping Tom, in which the filmmaker literally impales his female subject on a camera tripod.

It is a powerful form of analysis, and as Andreski noted above, Malinowski’s ethnographic gaze, his “trained eye”, was influenced by British Colonial policy. But there is a way out of the dilemma, which Rony (1996) refers to in the title of her book as The Third Eye. Rony describes her own response as a female Indonesian reading or viewing Western anthropology:

“With another eye I see how I am pictured as a landscape, a

museum display, an ethnographic spectacle, an exotic.” (17).

For Rony white anthropology and the white male are unredeemable. She, however, is able to respond by “open resistance, re-contextualisation, parody...” (17). But if this response is open to the marginalized female it should also be available as an intellectual programme for the W. A. S. P. male employing *self-reflexivity*, as, indeed it is (particularly in ethnographic film). Berger also allows that his analysis does not include the work of the “exceptional” male artist who was never trapped by the structure of the “male gaze” (he gives the example of Rembrandt). Further grounds for optimism come from Fiedler (1972), who, following D. H. Lawrence, suggested that in confrontation with the Native American, the white man could become a New Man (archetypically the relationship between Chingachgook and Natty Bumppo). However, one would have to admit that Malinowski was both an exceptional anthropologist and trapped by the male, colonial “gaze”. He keeps his *self-reflexivity* for the privacy of his diaries. Luckily it is open to the reader to re-contextualise the work, recognise its shortcomings and still see it as a fine piece of work-but not “objective” science.

There is another side to “the gaze” which is made clear by Orwell in his essay Shooting an Elephant (1982). He records the discomfort he felt as a Colonial policeman watched by a large crowd of Indians as he tried to deal with a rampaging elephant. He did not wish to kill the animal, there was no need to kill it, but the eyes of the crowd were on the solitary Englishman and they wanted the elephant dead. In the essay Orwell employs irony against himself and the British Raj- they are the rulers but also the puppets. It is also a device used by tribes-people when they mimic Western filmmakers (see, for example, Granada’s Disappearing World films about The Mursi).

This discussion has already suggested that “the gaze” is an organising device which begins to link a range of documentary and fine arts pursuits, and makes the “blurring of genres” intellectually respectable. The gaze has also been central to studies of the “flaneur”- that Modernist male figure of Parisian street life- and may be extended to the contemporary travel writer. Urry (1990) introduces the “tourist gaze” and makes a number of points, most of which are common to tourism and ethnology. The “tourist gaze” involves:

- Leisure rather than work.
- Movement from one place to another.
- It is short term.
- It is outside the ordinary.
- It involves an ideology of looking e.g. Romanticism
- It involves the collection of signs: a semiotics of place.
- It is pleasurable.

Ethnology and travel writing are forms of work, and may or may not be pleasurable. Ethnology is obviously more theory driven than either tourism or travel writing. The travel writer Paul Theroux covered the same area of Melanesia as Malinowski in his book The Happy Isles of Oceania (1992): it includes good descriptions of social change but no theoretical generalisation. Whereas Malinowski keeps his anxiety about native girls and European suitors to the private diaries, Theroux is explicit about the breakdown of his marriage. The “tourist gaze”, however, reduces the gap between professional and amateur: in an age of international travel, wildlife and ethnographic films on television, and the accompanied safari and cruise, there is a sense in which “we are all anthropologists now”. Raphael Samuel (1994) makes a similar point concerning history as a social form:

“...historiography should not be the work of the individual scholar, nor yet rival schools of interpretation, but rather the ensemble of activities and practices in which ideas of history are embedded or a dialectic is rehearsed....Still more pertinent would be an attempt to follow the imaginative dislocations which take place when historical knowledge is transferred from one learning circuit to another-as, say in screenplay adaptations of literary classics, where the written word is translated into imagery....”(8)

The documentary discourse of sobriety: *Scopophilia* and *epistophilia*:

The theorist of documentary filmmaking, Bill Nichols (1992) suggests that it belongs to a discourse of sobriety, which also includes ethnography and natural history. They are all motivated by *epistophilia*- a sober desire for knowledge. Documentary film is considered a “junior” member of these sciences. The previous discussion suggests that there is considerable blurring between these genres and that it might be preferable to

talk of a generic discourse of documentary which includes *inter alia*, ethnography, natural history, documentary film and photography, travel writing and the travel experience. There is some doubt about the sober nature of contemporary documentary film as Dovey has pointed out in Freakshow (2000) where entertainment has become uppermost in television documentary- it would seem advisable, therefore to add *scopophilia* or visual pleasure as a second motivator. There has also been a strain towards the arts and aesthetics in many documentaries- Bunuel's Land Without Bread, and the work of Humphrey Jennings (Winston, 1995) for instance.

It is now possible to outline some of the links between genres:

- A number of practitioners have crossed boundaries between film/photography and ethnography: Marey, Regnault, Curtis, Flaherty (Rony, 1996, Winston 1995,). Grimshaw (1997) has linked Haddon and Lumiere, Malinowski and Flaherty, Radcliffe Brown and Grierson.
- There is a filmic quality about Argonauts of the Western Pacific. Atkinson (1990) comments of Evans-Pritchard: "The written texts thus have a particularly vivid quality and constitute the textual equivalence of a magic lantern presentation." (27). Pinney (in Charity and Pinney, 1995) goes even further; he has suggested that as interest in photography amongst anthropologists declined in the early twentieth century, paradoxically field workers duplicated the technology of photography, their bodies taking over the function of the negative; after exposure during fieldwork, the positive was provided in the form of a monograph.
- British documentary films of the 1930s and Mass Observation, in which the anthropologist Tom Harrison played a major role (Winston, 1995) linking with Orwell's The Road to Wigan Pier (1966) and Priestley's English Journey (1994). A more aesthetic approach to working class life is found in the films of Humphrey Jennings (e.g. Spare Time)
- Granada television's Disappearing World and the role of the anthropologist as researcher or director (see for instance Hancock, 1975; Loizos, 1980).
- The contemporary concern with *reflexivity*, which is a feature of contemporary anthropology (Atkinson, 1990), documentary film, and visual anthropology.

- Ethnographies such as Lewis' La Vida (1969) and the realist novel. Atkinson (1990) comments: of the "Chicago School" of sociology and ethnography:
 - “ ...the sociologists were grappling with the task of writing persuasive and plausible descriptions of social reality. This was not their sole task, but it was the bedrock on which their “scientific”, scholarly reasoning and synthetic generalisations rested”. (33)
- The photographic essays of Berger and Mohr, which use text and edited sequences of photographs to document immigrant workers (A Seventh Man, 1975) or Savoyard peasantry (Another Way of Telling, 1989).
- Recent examples of *experimental* filmmaking and photography in Visual Anthropology (Banks and Morphy, 1997), The Impossible Science of Being (1995), and particularly, Russell's Experimental Ethnology (1999).
- The seriousness of much travel writing (Byron, 1981; Levi, 1980; Leigh Fermor, 1985) and the light-heartedness of popular accounts by anthropologists (Barley, 1983).
- Weidiger (1986) has analysed the nineteenth century ethnography Woman: An Historical, Gynaecological and Anthropological Compendium as a form of *scopophilia*.

To conclude, the marginal anthropologist meets the peripheral community and uses a variety of research methods and strategies to *sensitively* and *reflexively* interpret human action, and to communicate through a variety of literary and visual means of expression. The next two chapters will build on this discussion to explore the concept of community both generally and in the Welsh context, and to examine examples of Welsh ethnographic film. It will be suggested that because of the influence of the Pastoral an opportunity was missed to document social change in both the monograph and ethnographic film.

Chapter 4. From Community to the Inter-net: the study of the local in a global ecumene.

This chapter will return to the concept of community now that the difficulties of using the concept in attempting to understand rural protests in have been acknowledged (Chapter 1). Community has often been seen as a “good thing” (always, according to Raymond Williams, 1984) in the sociological and anthropological literature; it has normative connotations, not only when used by the layperson, but often by the professional (Bell and Newby, 1971). It has even re-entered the discourse of Conservative politics recently as an antidote to street crime (e.g. Letwin, L. The Times, 9.1.2002; Marrin, M. The Sunday Times, 13.1.002). For many years it was discarded as a useless concept, but has now been reintroduced by some ethnographers (e.g. Lewis, G. 1985). It has been closely related to “place” (Day and Murdoch, 1993), and the erection of symbolic boundaries against outsiders, which produces a form of identity (Cohen, 1986). None of this seemed relevant to a generation of social scientists involved in a world that had gone “international.” (Palsson, 1993, Goddard *et al.*, 1994). The refugee camp, the transient world of the airport lounge, and “creolised” cultures were advocated as the new hunting grounds for the anthropologist; small rural communities could be left to their marginal slumbers and the outdated perspectives of the folklorist; we now live in a global *ecumene* (Hannerz, 1993). No one would deny the conceptual difficulties and the romantic resonance of “community” (Bell and Newby, 1971) but it does seem to mean something to people and the boundary-less connotations of “the global” now seem hopelessly optimistic (Boissevain, 1994)²⁴. This renewed interest in the small group is backed up by mathematicians and biologists interested in games theory (e.g. Ridley, 1996; Sigmund, Fehr, and Nowak, 2002) who suggest that human altruism evolved through the reciprocal face-to-face relations typical of small communities.

²⁴ The positive side of globalisation is emphasised in The Report of The Commission on Global Governance: Our Global Neighbourhood (1995) which spells out a vision of world interdependence although it is also aware of the dangers of Balkanisation: ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and Rwanda, for instance. A more negative aspect is quoted by Hastrup and Oldwig (1997): “the world should be viewed in terms of a global space, which is characterised by hierarchical relations and power constellations....”(7).

In this context it is worth quoting a number of newspaper articles and anecdotes from my own research:

The Guardian. 23/4/99. Tony Blair speaking to N. A. T. O leaders with regard to the war in Serbia:

“he launched a sweeping call for a new post-cold war approach to international crises....Mr. Blair told an audience in Chicago that the world and its international institutions had failed to respond quickly enough to a succession of economic, political, and humanitarian crises across the globe including Kosovo.

A new “doctrine of international community” was required.... a framework not just for Britain or Europe, but for the entire globe.

“We are all internationalists now, whether we like it or not”, he said. “We cannot ignore new political ideas in other countries if we want to innovate. We cannot turn our backs on conflicts and the violation of human rights within other countries if we want to be secure.”

The apparent oxymoron, “international community”, could just be rhetoric, but to the extent that it was genuine, it is grist to the sociological mill and it may flag a new socio-political sensibility at odds with the parochialism (figurative and actual) of many community studies.²⁵

From real-politic I turn to my own fieldwork:

Sunday, August 1997. Tre-bryn, West Wales:

I am sitting at the bar of The Farmer's Arms, midday. A young man enters the bar:

“Well, it's a sad day boys.” “Why”, we ask. He explains that he has just heard that Princess Diana has been killed in a car crash in Paris. I manage to stifle a rude remark about Royalty, which is just as well when I realise that the four people at the bar are genuinely saddened. Here, in a Welsh-speaking part of Wales, where the expression “bloody sais” is often used jokingly against the English, there is grief for an English aristocrat.

²⁵ The rhetoric of the “local” is also found in the title of the book: Our Global Neighbourhood (1995).

Friday, August 1997.

I am seated in the small lounge of a ferry making its way from Kirkwall, the main port and town of Orkney, towards the northern isle of Langamay. As it is a Friday evening in term time, schoolchildren are returning home to spend the weekend on the island. The television is switched on, and the children are noisy. At 6 p.m. the Queen gives a speech recording her sadness at the death of Diana. There is immediate quiet, and children and adults listen intently to her words. Previously, in Kirkwall itself, I had seen mounds of flowers heaped in commemoration; there were shop signs stating that they would be closed on the Saturday of the funeral. Langamay is usually quiet but on this Saturday there is little sign of human activity. Orkney likes to see itself as separate from “doon Sooth”.

The point is a rather obvious one. However parochial, however marginal, these two parishes were participating in a wider British ritual of mourning.

The Sunday Times. 14/10/2001. A reprint of an article written by the historian Samuel P. Huntington, in 1993:

“ World politics is entering a new phase, and intellectuals have not hesitated to proliferate visions of what it will be- the end of history, the return of traditional rivalries between nation states, and the decline of the nation states from the conflicting pulls of tribalism and globalism, among others. Each of these visions catches aspects of the emerging reality. Yet they all miss a central aspect of what global politics is likely to be in the coming years.

It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological nor primarily economic. The great divisions among human-kind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilisations. The fault lines between civilisations will be the battle lines of the future.”

The fault line that he was referring to in 1993 was that between Western culture and Islam. The relationships between the local community, the “national”, and the “global neighbourhood” are clearly complex.

The perspective of bio-social anthropology.²⁶

It is believed that the sociological and political theme of the previous paragraphs can be illuminated by a bio-social approach to human social groups. It is fully appreciated that such an approach fits uneasily into British social and cultural anthropology, but sophisticated attempts to combine anthropology and ethology have been made by, amongst others, Russell and Russell (1961), Tiger (1969) and Reynolds (1976). It is also central to Fox's "marginal anthropology" discussed in the previous chapter.

In a review of spacing mechanisms in the social behaviour of primates Kummer (1970) described those behaviours that had evolved at the non-human level to facilitate intra-group interactions. At a primitive level escape and distance keep animals apart; however, a variety of mechanisms have evolved which allow for greater contact between group members; this is considered advantageous for a number of reasons including group defence and comfort. These mechanisms include "cut off" (Chance and Larsen, 1976), redirection of aggression (Lorenz, 1979), submissive postures (Russell and Russell, 1961), and inhibition of responses. In social groups living without privacy and in constant contact such mechanisms are vital. In some species of primate relatively complex activities such as group hunting and the formation of intra-group alliances have evolved (Goodall, 1991; de Waal, 1982).

Kummer concludes that, at the non-human level, all these evolutionary refinements only apply *within* the group. Relations *between* groups remains primitive, and Reynolds (1968) uses the term "closed group" to describe the largely aggressive interactions between groups, and the aggression shown towards outsiders, although he does argue that the chimpanzee has a more "open group" structure, with greater fluidity in group membership. Kummer makes the interesting remark: "*Refining relationships between groups, however has been left to man*" (110). Unfortunately he does not elaborate on this crucial factor, and, indeed argues that human inter-group activities remain largely archaic. In a paper based on the ethological observation of nursery children, Waterhouse and Waterhouse (1979) noted the importance of "object exchange" in facilitating entry for a newcomer into the social group. They comment:

²⁶ The term bio-social was used as part of the title of an edited book based on papers presented at Section H (Anthropology) at the B. A. A. S. conference at Aston University in 1977 (Sunderland and Smith, 1980)

“From what we can infer about “proto-hominid” behaviour they must have been in contact with other groups from an early date either in trade or because hunting took him out of their own area...It would not be surprising therefore if a behaviour had evolved which facilitated inter-group interaction.... adaptive behaviours do not occur de novo; they are, rather, a re-shuffling of those in the pre-existing repertoire of the species. In this case object-sharing within the group- a feature of present day pongids and presumably the proto-hominids- was extended to inter-group contacts. Anthropologists have stressed the importance of “the gift” but only in terms of normative structure. Tiger and Fox (1974) discuss the possible evolution of gift-exchange but only in terms of intra-group relations in the primitive hunting group....The present argument is that it would make evolutionary sense for exchange to be made outside of the normative structure of the group”. (28)

It is a speculative paper but one based on the unexpected observation of object exchange between nursery children and potential new group members. Crucially, we know from the anecdotal evidence of traveller’s tales (Steel’s description of early St. Kilda, 1981) and the literature of anthropology (Malinowski’s *Kula*, for instance, 1964) that human adults do it too: both in ritual forms of reciprocity and towards strangers. The paper makes no comment on the relative importance of genetic and learnt factors involved in the practice, and obviously the highly complex and ritualised activities of the *Kula* ring are culturally elaborated. Much of human interaction retains the archaic “closed group” structure, but there has been an opening out to include other groups. It would be moving too far away from the theme of this chapter to discuss the history of ethics, but the sociologist and social philosopher, Morris Ginsberg (1962) has mapped out the territory in his essay, On the Relativity of Morals, where he notes both quantitative and qualitative changes in the practical answer to the question “Who is my neighbour?” He writes: “*This vast and tortuous movement has involved not only an extension of sympathy but a deepened insight into the fundamental human relations*”. (103) Undoubtedly so, and a biosocial approach adds depth to the already vast subject; too often, however, Kummer’s earlier remark seems to be true, human inter-group relations, remain archaic. There are oscillations in human groups between relative “openness” and “closedness”. This perspective will be explored later in this work.

A critique of community studies

Recent work by anthropologists has centred on the concept of globalisation. Three edited works are considered to be of importance here. Palsson (1993) criticises the fundamental “root metaphors” of anthropology, which include boundary, discontinuity, and “otherness”. He argues that until recently the subject involved a journey into a strange land (mentally and/or physically) and that this concept of the “other” should have disappeared with de-colonialisation. For Palsson the ramifications of globalisation require a new approach, and the contributors to this edited work suggest:

- The substitution of a global *mosaic* with that of the global *ecumene*.
- An emphasis on common human experience.
- Resonance. Wiken criticises anthropologists for imposing “*a sense of peculiarity on the mundane and the familiar, moving from the bazaar to the bizarre.*” (1993, 27)
- Hannerz recognizes a global *ecumene* that he defines as “*an area of persistent social interaction and cultural flow.*” (1993, 44)
- Local studies must be recontextualised within a global *ecumene* in which “*the media have been changing the rules of the game with respect to the use of symbolic modes. What used to be confined within communities or regions can now reach everywhere.*” (1993, 55)

A similar concern with a shift in perspective is discussed by Goddard *et al.* (1994). They argue that European studies too often concentrated on the small community when they should have included wider social, cultural and political forces. Boissevain goes as far as criticising European ethnographic studies as having “tribalised Europe”(quoted page 14). In her overview, Goddard argues that by the 1980s European studies had gone well beyond “community studies” by collaborating with historians and sociologists in the inclusion of studies of state formation, national integration, urbanization, industrialization, and class conflict. Goddard even de-values the role of fieldwork in the local setting.

A third, very useful discussion, comes out of the work of anthropologists working in Oceania, where the effects of social change caused by colonialism are extreme. Here there has grown up a post-colonial critique of anthropology. Wassman (1998) describes a:

“creolised periphery more or less under constant pressure from the centre whilst creatively looking for autonomous answers.” (3)

Old concepts of culture no longer apply and in their place are pastiche, collage, hybrid forms. He quotes Resaldo:

“All of us inhabit an interdependent late 20th century world, which is at once marked by borrowing and lending across porous cultural boundaries, and saturated with inequality, power and domination.” (11)

Wassman is clear in his criticism of an older anthropology, which stressed “otherness” and the closed group. Post-colonial anthropology is navigating the:

“uncharted waters, that wide sea between the classic ethnography of the Pacific and contemporary concern in anthropology theory with global relations and transnational cultures.” (14)

For instance, Friedman (1998) describes a “*kitchen table bricolage*”²⁷ in the Hawaiian stories of Spanish and British exploration of the islands. He argues that this is not that different from Western historians in search of national identity. This quest for identity is further explored by Fitzgerald (1998), who has looked at second-generation Cook Islanders living in New Zealand. He argues that people can still be different even when sharing the same culture. Cook islanders have bi-cultural skills in code switching-ethnic identity is kept alive, but within New Zealand culture.

These authors provide an exciting perspective and a necessary antidote to an older generation of community studies which tended to ignore outside influences and class relationships; it will be an approach used here. However it is a product of the late twentieth century commitment to globalisation and under-emphasises the archaic dictates of the “closed group” (The Balkans, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Huntington’s

²⁷ Bricolage (French) –“do-it-yourself.” Bricoleur- handyman. Here the connotation is of disparate elements being reassembled as culture. It will be used to discuss Orcadian culture.

“clash of civilisations”, to name a few). Jarman’s (1997) study of parades in Northern Ireland tends to confirm the “tribalist” tendencies of Europe, which Goddard underestimates. It is an excellent example of contemporary anthropology in that it:

- emphasises actors, symbols, and contested meanings.
- concentrates on how “the imagined community” is made visible through ritual, parades, music, flags, and banners.
- uses a variety of fieldwork methods including photography as “another way of telling”.
- is based on the study of the local.

The study emphasises boundary marking and identity and it is thoroughgoing in its historical approach and its contextualisation of the local in a European context. However, a consideration of the concept of global *ecumene* might have given a larger role to the many people in Northern Ireland who have an ethically broader answer to the question “Who is my neighbour?”

Community studies had originally been given a new stimulus by Cohen and his associates (1983, 1986) who rejected a structural-functional approach for one that was strongly phenomenological and closely related to that of Geertz. The generation and maintenance of social boundaries by actors who gain a sense of cultural identity is central to their approach. It has proved a fruitful method of inquiry in British community studies, but the comments made by the theorists of globalisation above need to be taken on board. Cohen is too dismissive of mass culture and “the national”. His approach also emphasises the necessity of boundary maintenance and conflict in the generation of identity. Part Two, chapter 1 will attempt to show that this is may need modification. It should also be noted that gender is largely ignored in this approach (see Ashton, 1994 for a description of a sense of identity amongst farm women [sic] in North Wales).

It is within this context that Welsh community studies may be introduced and critiqued. In his preface to Land of My Fathers (1998) Gwynfor Evans, sometime leader of Plaid Cymru, characterises Welsh history:

“The history of Cymru has an astonishing continuity and unity. Its unity derives from the persistence through the centuries of a unique civilisation..... no generation has been without men and women of deep commitment who strove to secure the conditions in which the national civilisation could endure..... I called the original book *Aros Mae* (It endures), because Wales still lives. Her civilisation is in ruin in much of the land today it is true..[the language partly destroyed]... Television may yet complete its success...the survival of any traditional life is something of a miracle.” (no pagination)

Wales: a nation, a civilisation, the constant threat to the language; this approach reflects what Roberts, quoting John Berger, refers to as a “culture of survival” (1998). It is not a history of Wales that would be recognised by many contemporary Welsh historians (e.g. G. A. Williams, 1985), but it does provide the theme, which runs through the “classic” Welsh ethnographic accounts of community made in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

Owen (1982), who is a distinguished folklorist of Welsh culture, admits to this strain of “culture of survival” in his discussion of A.D. Rees’ seminal Life in a Welsh Countryside (1950). Rees, he argues, was as much a politician as an ethnographer:

“The note of pessimism and subjective judgement introduced in the final pages of the book reflected Rees’ refusal to remain academically aloof..... A small polemical book published in Welsh in 1943made evident his pessimistic view in wartime of modern civilisation with its lost ideals and materialistic attitude. (103)

It was argued in the last chapter that subjectivity is no bad thing in ethnology; the problem with Rees and his followers is that they were not self-critical about their value-laden stance, and more importantly thought they had a monopoly of Welsh studies. (See the next chapter for a detailed critique of this approach and its academic origins).

Owen begins his overview of Welsh community studies with D. Ll. Thomas' government report of 1893, The Royal Commission on Agricultural Labourers. In line with the argument of the last chapter there are, however, grounds for looking for the origins earlier in travelogues, Census returns, Government and private reports. This is not the place to give a comprehensive bibliography but a few are worth mentioning, as they have significant similarities and differences to the "classic ethnographies".

The landscape, "exotic" peasant culture, language, and history attracted "Romantic" interest in English travellers such as Hucks in 1795 (1979) and Borrow in the 1850s. Borrow is the most interesting in that he made a number of long excursions in North, South and West Wales describing language, peasant customs, Bardic literature, and a continuing interest in poetry, subsequently written up as Wild Wales (1982). He spoke a sort of Welsh and took Welsh poetry seriously even if his translations read badly today. It is possible to gain some idea of the boundaries of the Welsh language in the 1850s, the industrialisation of parts of Wales, Welsh customs and commerce. He is an odd mix of English "John Bull", and Celtic Romantic (Williams D., 1982; Waterhouse, 1983). Another strand of romanticism and the perception of a growing Anglicisation prompted the Welsh themselves to uncover, document (and fabricate) their culture and history.

Jones describes the growing industrialisation of Ebbw Vale in 1779. Monmouthshire generally was covered by Coxe in 1798 and Willett in 1820. A growing unease concerning the restlessness of the South Wales working class led to an impressive sociological study of Pontypool by Kenrick, ironmaster of the Varteg works in 1840 (1840, 1841; see also Waterhouse, 1979). Other parts of Wales had their chroniclers such as Fenton (1903) in Pembrokeshire.

The first major overview of Welsh culture, which with great licence could be called ethnographic, was the notorious Government survey made in 1846: Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales (1847). It was re-titled by angry Welsh commentators as *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision* (Treason of the Blue Books). Ostensibly an inquiry into the state of Welsh education, it was an outsiders view of the culture, and a highly critical one.

Roberts (1998) has analysed the report in terms of its official language and finds it a typical piece of Victorian writing about other cultures in its assumptions of the superiority of the English language and middle-class mores, and its tone, which assumes “objectivity”, “knowledgeability”, and “authority”. She suggests that one of the commissioners, R. Lingen, had an “ethnographic point of view”, but this did not lead him to seek the opinions of working people, only the clergy, magistrates and gentlemen. This was a pejorative point of view that “struck” deep into the Welsh *psyche*, despite Welsh intellectual refutations which produced amongst others, the monumental Wales: The Language, Social Condition, Moral Character and Religious Opinions of the People, considered in Relation to their Education (1849), by Sir Thomas Phillips, knighted for his role in the Chartist debacle in Newport in 1839.

As previously observed, Owen begins his overview of community studies with D. Lleuffer Thomas’ monumental volumes on Welsh rural life, which were presented as Royal Commission Reports in 1893 and 1896. Unlike the 1847 Blue Books the former was a study of the social conditions of labourers and farmers based on first-hand testimony of labourers and farmers, the latter included a major survey of history, landscape and housing in Wales, and includes a large number of photographs which provide graphic illustration of rural housing. Both reports provide useful information on the social conditions in rural Wales at the end of the Nineteenth Century.

Finally, before discussing the “classic ethnographies”²⁸, some mention should be made of Caradoc Evan’s short stories of rural Cardiganshire life written in the early years of the twentieth century (My People, 1915; Capel Sion, 1916; My Neighbours 1919. The last is about the London Welsh. See Harris, 1985). Evans caused just as big a stir in the Liberal-Nonconformist Wales of The First World War as the Government Inspectors had in 1847- but there was the added indignity that he was a local man. He, too, questioned the morality of the Welsh peasantry, but his main target was the Nonconformist minister and other prominent figures in the chapel – the schoolmaster, the farmer, the shopkeeper. The stories are hard-hitting in their emphasis on hypocrisy, poverty both economic and spiritual, cruelty and madness: many of them are as difficult to read today as when first published because of the sheer cruelty of village life that is

²⁸ I use this expression to cover the ethnographical studies centred around The University of Wales, Aberystwyth and the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagan’s. See next chapter.

portrayed. T. Williams (1971) has traced the criticism and Evans' responses in the editorials and letters' pages of The Western Mail.

On November 13th, 1915, The Western Mail reviewed My People and suggested that it was a lost opportunity to give a realistic picture of Welsh Life:

“he would have appeared to have raked in the garbage of the countryside for his characters. Male and female, they are all of a piece, either whining hypocrites or vulgar, lecherous creatures... And all this is supposed to be a true picture of Welsh Nonconformity and West Wales.” (Quoted, 147)

It was Zola without the artistic brilliance.

The major circulating libraries- Smiths, Mudie, Boots- banned the book. Evans responded to his critics by writing in The Western Mail (23.11.1915) that he had:

“given a photographic description of my people as I know them- a people shaped and moulded by Nonconformity.”
(Quoted, 147).

On January 10th, 1916, Cardiff police raided Wyman's Bookshop in an attempt to seize My People. Unfortunately for the Chief Constable, the shop did not have any copies. Questions are asked in The House of Commons regarding the book.

Capel Sion appeared in the bookshops at the end of 1916. The Western Mail rather foolishly gave over its centre page: “*Caradoc Evans Again- More libels on Welsh Peasantry.*”:

“Unfortunately, he pretends- or his publisher pretends for him that he faithfully portrays a type of Welsh peasantry. Emphatically he does not. He merely caricatures them with a malignity without parallel.” (Quoted page 160).

Evans' replied, using the same discourse of realism, in The Western Mail letters' page:

“Capel Sion is more or less a true record of what I have seen and heard and experiencedIn my youthful days West Wales was a “moral sewer”. As it was, so it is even unto this day. [The preacher is a hypocrite] It were better if on the site of every chapel in West Wales were erected a cinema palace”. (Quoted, 160)

This is the same *canard* as raised by the English Inspectors in 1847, except now given the twist that it is the minister who is the major corrupting force. The concern of the Welsh Liberal/Nonconformist hegemony with the work of Caradoc Evans, one of their “own”, is made explicit in a letter to The Western Mail at the end of January 1917:

“How can he help his country by presenting such a formidable “sociological document” (vide press) to the bitterest enemies of Wales- the English press whose criticism not only shows racial hostility, but a colossal ignorance of all things Welsh”.
(Quoted, 166).

The Welsh slip is clearly showing.²⁹

Central to Evans’ literary creations, and his own early life, was the village of Rhydlewsi in South Cardiganshire (Harris, 1985), some thirty miles north of my own study in North Pembrokeshire. It is also one of the sites of David Jenkins’ ethnographical works (The Agricultural Community in South-west Wales at the Turn of the Century, Jenkins, 1971). Jenkins (1974) attempts to put Evans into some sort of sociological and biographical context. Evans’ father, apparently, was the last man in the area to suffer the harsh sanction of the *ceffyl pren*. He was not welcome in the area partly because of his background, his occupation as a land agent and his adultery. Within the subtle gradations of land tenure the family was slipping downwards. Evans’ mother, Mary, and the children were brought back to Rhydlewsi by Dr. Joshua Powell, her brother, who provided a smallholding at Lanlas Uchaf. Jenkins suggests that the fatherless boy grew up on the “tall stories”, leg pulling, and gossip of the local women (see Jones, R, 1991, for the role of women in gossip and the *ceffyl pren* tradition), which by implication influenced his story telling. In Jenkins’ account the local teacher and minister are seen in a much more positive light than in the vicious stories of Caradoc Evans..

²⁹ The nearest equivalent I can find to the stories of Caradoc Evans, and to his play- Taffy (1923)- is Luis Bunuel’s film Land Without Bread. The film uses the travelogue format typical of France in the early 1930’s, to describe the abject poverty of a part of Southern Spain (Los Hourdes). It was banned as a documentary by the Republic and then used as an anti-Franco film by the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War. That is, its exponents and critics naively viewed the film as a factual piece of reportage. It is not a piece of realism, however, but an example of tongue-in-cheek surrealism, which explores the “primitive” and satirises the Roman Catholic Church for its exploitation of the poor. In similar fashion I suggest that sociologists can use Evans’ stories in an attempt to provide an antidote to the more positive accounts of Welsh rural life, but in actual fact he has some claim to be considered as a precursor of the Surrealists. Mary Jones (1982, 1985) sees his work as one, which fluctuated between a pastoral satire, and a satiric pastoral and both Evans and his opponents have fallen into the “realist” trap when arguing about his work- it is caricature and metaphor, not “kitchen sink”.

The above discussion suggests that no one has been “value free” when discussing Welsh culture. There were a series of “outsiders” influenced by the Romantic Movement who chose to look positively on rural Welsh society and emphasise its difference; there was a second group of “outsiders”, close to the heart of the mid-Victorian Establishment, who were concerned with working class protest in Wales, and the dysfunctions of the Welsh language in a “progressive” Britain. There were equally “romantic” insiders intent to emphasise Welsh culture as “different”. And there was Caradoc Evans with his own demons to exorcise. To put it crudely (as Roberts admits, 1998) it was a conflict between a “culture of survival” and a “culture of progress”, and Welsh ethnographers (on the inside), perceiving the inroads made by progress, produced ethnographies that supported the “culture of survival”.

Jones (1985) sums up Caradoc Evans:

“And inasmuch as it is a mythical race that is projected [by Evans], one wonders whether this portrayal of the Welsh is any less distorting than the romantic or sentimental portrayal that it ousted...” (95).

It is certain that Caradoc Evans did not oust the romantic view and here it is convenient to return to David Jenkins and his colleagues. In their introduction to Welsh Rural Communities (1960), Elwyn Davies and Alwyn Rees state that the studies contained in the edited book, were produced “from within” This is elaborated on by Jenkins in the paper on Caradoc Evans (1974), referred to above, where he translates from the Welsh the farmyard metaphors which describe and classify individual behaviour and the social status of West Walian farmers and peasants. Most social anthropologists would see the point but Anglicisation was well advanced in Wales by the time of these writers. It is not that they did not produce useful accounts but they left out, or under-reported, half the story of mid-twentieth century Wales. It is the familiar Pastoral, and just as the Nonconformist chapel was central to Caradoc Evans’ Wales as a form of corruption, so too it is given a positive centrality in these studies. However, utilising the approach of more recent anthropologists who have emphasised the global *ecumene*, and the importance of the wider context, it is possible to re-read these texts, and see that social change was well under way in the Welsh countryside.

In his study of Aberporth (1960), Jenkins introduces the important sociological distinction between *Buchedd A.* and *Buchedd B.* *Buchedd A.* is described at length and consists of the moral, chapel-going part of the population, which is obviously seen by him as the backbone of the community. *Buchedd B.* is hardly mentioned, although Jenkins admits that it makes up 40% of the population. *Pobl yr tafarn* has always been a feature of Welsh life, and was seen as a soft underbelly to the community allowing English outsiders entry into the community: in the case of Aberporth, people from the military depot nearby. Popular culture was a part of the culture of the community. Of more importance to the traditional values of the community, it was the children of *Buchedd A.* who were motivated to go to English-speaking grammar schools, obtain a good education, and subsequently move from the area in search of prestigious careers.³⁰ Jones' study of Tregaron (same volume) is similarly at pains to stress the traditional community, but later makes the same point about the drain of the young from the town. He pinpoints that teaching through the medium of English has opened up a whole new range of cultural choices beyond the boundaries of the town, abetted by English newspapers and the radio.

T. Jones Hughes, in his contribution to the same volume, presents an ethnography and social history of the area around Aberdaron on the Llyn peninsular. He is well aware of social change in the 1940s and 1950s and describes the changes in the farming economy brought about by the introduction of the tractor, and the wartime requirements for liquid milk that led to the end of domestic dairy production. The essay is fifty-five pages long, ten of which involve discussion of chapels and churches. Chapel going was obviously an important activity but some of the most important events sociologically are crammed into the last three pages. On the top of page 174 he notes:

“The plateau villagers are *pobl dwad*, people who have come to live in Aberdaron for a variety of reasons and people whose attitude towards the local culture is frequently unsympathetic”.

³⁰A similar situation has been reported by O'Brien (in Goddard, 1994) in French Catalonia where those children of industrial workers who wish to become members of the French Civil Service abandon the speaking of Catalan.

Where do they come from? In what way are they unsympathetic? What percentage is unsympathetic? Does the expression *pobl dwad* have a negative connotation, either when used by the native population or Jones Hughes?

On the same page Aberdaron's growth as a small tourist resort is mentioned and in the same paragraph reference is made to: electricity, mains water, regular bus service, non-traditional cultural organizations, "intrusive societies" such as the W. I. and the Mother's Union. The W. E. A. is given a full paragraph. The next paragraph discusses the village hall, which has become a centre for meetings of a secular nature. What becomes apparent by the concluding paragraph is that because of the growth of these institutions Aberdaron is entering a wider social sphere (not quite a global *ecumene!*), which paradoxically, Jones Hughes does not regret as: "there is to be seen a partial re-emergence of the llan [Aberdaron] as the centre of the whole region."(176)

At a local level in North Pembrokeshire the same regret at change is found in a *penillion* read at the Tre-bryn Eisteddfod in 1931. It compares the present unfavourably with the hiring fair of forty years ago. The poem begins:

"Ma popeth wedi newid
yn grwn" medd Sheci'r crydd.
"Dwes dim ar wmed deiar
Fel wedd hi "slawer dydd".
Yn gwishgo brethyn cartre
Dwes nemor yn y wlad.
Na neb yn gwishgo scidie
Gwaith gatre ar eu trad.

Ma ffarmio wedi newid
I gyd yr wes hon,
Ma pawb o'r ffarmwyr heddi
Yn gwerthu llath o'r bron:
Stim gweishon na morwirion
Yn unman braidd I gal,
Stim rifedd bod nhw'n achwyn
A gweid "mae'n amser gwal".

It translates approximately as:

"Everything changed altogether",
Said Sheci the cobbler.
Nothing on the earth is like it used to be.

Homespun- nothing like it.
Nobody wears home-made boots.
Farming has changed in this lifetime,
Every farmer sells straight from the udder(?).
No farm workers or maids to be seen.
No wonder these are winging times

[*Penillion* by W. S. Adams. Given to me by Mrs. Jenkins, Newport. Translated by T. Charles, L. Colfer, M. Griffiths, M. Waterhouse, 2002.]

It is not that the ethnographers were unaware of social change caused by outside influences, but they preferred to give minimal discussion. They fail to grasp the opportunity to theorise about the relationship between the local and the national, and can only be critical of the pull from outside.

There are a number of similarities between the Welsh situation and writings about Orkney, and there is little point in going into much further detail here. A few nostalgic examples may be given however. Forsythe (1982) studied a small island community, which she called Stormay, which had been subjected to depopulation and a recent influx of outsiders. Her pessimistic conclusion was that the traditional way of life was fast disappearing. Miller (1986) reaches a similar conclusion in his essay: Who are the Orcadians? The latter appeared in a volume The People of Orkney (Berry and Firth, 1986) and neither of the editors is so pessimistic. Firth writes of looking “outwards at the world” and Berry states:

“The challenge now is to find ways of benefiting by the present situation while yet retaining the synthesis...that is distinctively Orcadian.” (18).

Firth’s later activities, apart from being the county councillor for the island studied in this work, was as organizer of the Orkney Science Festival which has exactly followed Berry’s suggestion: it has included the past, present and future of Orkney. It will be suggested later (Part Two) that Orcadians have been following Wassman’s (1998) description of “creatively looking for autonomous answers”.

Fenton’s The Northern Isles: Orkney and Shetland (1997) is a magnificent attempt to synthesise the material culture of the two island groups. It is however about the past-old agricultural practices, machinery, farm buildings-and ignores completely all the things, which keep people on the islands today (modern machinery, television,

electronic communications; there are descriptions of the traditional small stone enclosure, the *plantiacrue*, which protected plants but not geodesic dome greenhouses). The nearest Fenton gets is a description of tractors³¹. It is therefore reminiscent of much of the work produced in Wales, although it contains none of the nostalgia.

Orkney has produced one great writer in recent years, George Mackay Brown (died 1996). He is a poet, short story writer and novelist whose raw material was similar to that of Caradoc Evans, but whereas the ethnographer can only use Evans' caricatures as an antidote to the pastoral of some of the Welsh ethnographers, Mackay Brown's work is far more useful. He is not a sociologist or historian but his corpus of work provides the best sociology or history of the islands. He is a descendant of the saga makers and the storytellers, and ethnographers can use his work in much the same way that they would use the myths and stories of pre-literate societies. He is the equivalent of one of Glassie's Irish storytellers whose stories led him into an understanding of Ballymenone society (1995)- but Mackay Brown has been published in his own right.

At first reading it appears that Mackay Brown suffers from the same faults as other pastoral writers. He mourns the passing of traditional culture and its being superseded by "mass culture":

"The stuff of narrative lies thick everywhere, but in the past rather than in the present. Now the mind is too easily satisfied with the withering pages of newspapers and their "stories", and with the fleeting shallow images of television serials". (Introduction to The Masked Fisherman And Other Stories. 1991).

He is steeped in the Viking sagas and fireside tales of Orkney. But his sense of history, or rather his sense of mythic time and the cycle of the seasons, allows him to deal with past and present, and with social change (both contemporary and historical).

Many of his stories involve the slippage of time: his Booker nominated novel is called Beside the Ocean of Time (1994) in which the boy "hero" has adventures in amongst others, the Iron Age, the Viking Age, at Bannockburn, and the present. Mackay Brown

³¹ . St. Fagan's also seems fascinated by tractors. Plastic artefacts don't have the same "romance"

is relaxed in his descriptions of change, just as some of my island respondents are in Part Two. Thus:

“He had not passed the driving test, he had neither licence nor insurance, but he took the risk, driving at night with no L-plates”. (A Calendar of Love, 1996, 11).

And:

“The first television sets had come to the island. They were the latest of the never-ending miracles of science, those half-dozen television sets lately installed in the bigger farms. They held children from their play and old men from their memories in the chimney corner.” (The Lost Sheep, 67, Winter Tales, 1996.)

Or of a more recent events:

“The young folk called flower-people used to stay here ten years ago, and move on. Nice enough young folk with guitars and long hair, from the cities. They haven’t been coming this while.” (The Eve of St. Thomas, 24, in The Masked Fisherman, 1991)

Of a slightly earlier period:

“It may have been the influence of a new stratum of society in the islands, the professional classes (teachers, doctors, lawyers, shipping agents, excise men) that put yuletide in a new favourable light. At any rate, the provost, magistrates and councillors at their monthly meeting in November decided that 25th December would be a holiday, and all places would be closed.” (The Children’s Year, 47. In Winter Tales, 1996)

The most “apocalyptic” of Mackay Brown’s work is his novel, Greenvoe (1976), which describes island life, and the “buy out” of the island by an anonymous industrial conglomerate, Black Star. There are obvious links with Shetland oil and mineral prospecting in Orkney. The island is depopulated, houses are destroyed, underground tunnels are constructed –and then the company disappears. Ten years later, local men re-appear to perform an ancient harvest ceremony. He can write about change but he doesn’t like it, and his vision allows for an older culture to return.

He provides a good description of community life in Orkney:

“Of the hundred or so folk who lived in the sea valley-
as in nearly every small community everywhere on earth-

it could be said that they lived in a kind of village harmony. There were small disputes about this and that, a score of times a year; about a boundary stone, for example, or about who owned a piece of driftwood, or two of the young men might fall out for a time about a girl- come to fisticuffs and swear words, even- but in the end most things were settled amiably enough.” (The Golden Bird, 1989,10).

And these communities are full of the same people as in Caradoc Evans: crofters, farmers, shopkeepers, ministers, teachers, the doctor (in addition there is the fisherman and the laird) Some of these characters are drunks, gossips, hypocrites and wife-beaters but there is not the sense of savage satire. Mackay Brown has a lighter touch which makes his islanders more credible than Cardiganshire folk.

The minister and the teacher were particular “hates” of Evans. Here they are given a more rounded, sympathetic, description, which places them in their sociological isolation. They are outsiders with more learning than their neighbours; they are the bearers of a middle class culture learned in Edinburgh and Glasgow. They are sometimes drunks, usually lonely, and always temporary. Of one of the women teachers he writes:

“Miss Yvonne Strachan, the teacher- more than a few islanders thought that, if she wasn’t exactly out of her mind, she was a very strange person indeed.”
(The Golden Bird, 1989,73)

And yet, as will be discussed later, they wrote the histories and folklore of Orkney, and to a limited extent introduced a “British” middle class discipline to the islands.

Orcadian personality is described well. In A Winter Tale (The Suns Net, 1989), the “outsider” doctor remarks:

“I had been told that the islanders were difficult folk to get acquainted with. I did not find it that way. They are shy, certainly....Once you break down that class wall you discover a kind humorous folk.” (10)

and:

“Most of the island men are cautiously progressives- liberalism is as far as they will go. They keep some kind of ancestral memory of the bad rule of the lairds and so Toryism is out. They have nothing in common

with the organised industrial workers in cities; the notion of strikes and industrial action is foreign to them, it is almost against nature- will the ripe corn wait till some dispute between the farmer and his reapers is settled.” (ibid, 14).

Later, the teacher remarks of the Orcadians:

“They are withdrawn with strangers, until friendship and sincerity are tested and proved, and then there is no end to their openness and kindness”. (ibid., 34)

One final point on Mackay Brown as a sociologist/ethnographer. In 1953, the guru of micro studies in sociology, Irving Goffman made a study of communication between individuals on another Scottish island, not that far from Orkney, but to the south west in the Hebrides (See for instance Relations in Public, 1972).³² Mackay Brown is equally as perceptive as Goffman on the ethology of Orcadians, and visitors to Orkney:

“The village watched with sardonic awe as the grand folk greeted each other with shouts and kisses. (Their own greeting, even after a decade of absence, was a murmur and a dropping of eyes.)” (Greenvoe, 1976).

It is argued that many of these ethnographers were only producing Welsh and Orcadian variants of a more general problem related to community studies as described by Bell and Newby (1982); Caradoc Evans and George Mackay Brown are the exceptions. They also fit into discourses related to a nostalgia for a “golden age” in the countryside “(Williams, The Country and the City, 1975). Nor, paradoxically, is their work unrelated to fears about the deleterious effects of the mass media on the working class in urban society popularised by Hoggart’s Uses of Literacy (1972) and Thompson’s Discrimination and Popular Culture (1966). Whatever, they did not enhance the reputation of community studies generally.

Newby (1979) criticises views of “rural utopia” and a “picturesque world” in community studies. He argues that there has been a failure to comprehend the English

³² I am no longer sure which came first: my analyses of Orkney, in Part Two, or my reading of George Mackay Brown. I had never heard of Mackay Brown before my early visits to Stromness and Kirkwall bookshops. I rather think that fieldwork and tentative hypotheses based on discussions with local people were already underway before I read any of the short stories. By the time the Orcadian chapters were completed I had read most of his work. My more prosaic accounts of Orcadian culture and society are based on independent “witness”, but now seem close in their conclusions to Mackay Brown’s corpus of work. I suppose that I should be pleased!

village as one “organised around a distinctive agricultural economy” and “that if work is included as the central feature of village life then poverty, exploitation and the constraints that stem from the locally powerful”(24) must be studied. This is a point also made by Parker (1979) in his study of a mediaeval village in Cambridgeshire: in the feudal English manor there was neither equality, liberty, nor a sense of brotherhood. Newby’s research was carried out in a very different set up to the dispersed farms of Wales in which farm servants lived in the same houses as their employers, but Ll. Thomas’ report on Welsh labourers in the nineteenth century, the continuation of the “hiring fair” until after the Second World War, and Pretty’s (1989) analysis of the frustrated attempts of Welsh labourers to set up a union, underline Newby’s point about the need to emphasise power relations in local studies of the rural. ³³

Bell and Newby (1971) take the criticism further, in their critique of “community”:

“The subjective feelings that the term community conjures up thus frequently lead to a confusion between what it is (empirical description) and what the sociologist feels it should be (normative description)” (21)

For Bell and Newby this is not just a fault of community studies but is deeply entrenched in the intellectual inheritance provided by many of the “founding fathers” of sociology and anthropology: Tocqueville, Comte, Tonnies, Marx and Durkheim. These thinkers used “community” as an oppositional term to the dislocations produced by modern Capitalism. For instance, they state:

“ Comte’s sociological interest in community wasborn of the same circumstances that produced his conservatism: the breakdown or disorganisation of the traditional forms of association. The communitywas viewed as man’s natural habitat.” (22)

Similarly, Tonnies concern was the switch from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*, which he saw in terms of contrast. They see this opposition as one of the “unit ideas” of the sociological tradition.

³³ Although it has to be admitted that R. Jenkins of Newport recalls that the Tre-bryn hiring fair did not involve the more demeaning aspects of males and females lining up for hours to be selected by farmers. Most people knew in advance where they would be working for the following year, and farmers also knew who they wanted working for them. Other local people have argued with me vehemently that “class” is an English import- the evidence presented in Part Three does not support this view.

This oppositional model need not have grown in importance. One of the original contributors to the study of community, Redfield, makes it clear that “folk society”, the peasant village, is not an isolate (or at least only in the form of an “ideal type”), but has always been in a process of transformation. The title of his book is The Primitive World and its Transformations (1968) and it is argued that:

“This process of transformation of folk peoples into urban peoples or partly urbanised peoples has never ceased. It continues today on the Western-managed tropical plantation, in the African kraal, the American Indian reservation, the Macedonian village, and the Ozark mountain valley.” (42)

Later he writes:

“The peasant is a rural native who’s long established order of life takes important account of the city.” (43)

And:

“So far as the peasant community faces inwards, the relationships that compose it are still personal and familiar, but now they are modified by a spirit of pecuniary advantage. This pecuniary spirit contributes to the formation of an added dimension of the peasant’s social life; in the peaceful and stable relationships with outsiders . The peasant village maintains its local solidaritybut now qualifies the sharp exclusiveness of the primitive settlement with institutionalised forms for admitting strangers.” (44)

Redfield’s last paragraph needs qualifying (relationships with trading partners are not necessarily lacking in hostility), and begs the question of what form these institutions take, but reformulated into the evolutionary perspective of bio-social anthropology it is close to the earlier discussion of open groups. It also rids the concept of community of its holistic exclusivity and is closer the approach of Wassman (1998). Indeed, Pinholt, in this volume quotes Epeli Hau’ofa:

“The truth is that large regions of Melanesia were integrated by trading and cultural exchange systemsLingua francas and the fact that most Melanesians were and are multilingual” (274)

So was Wales! This is what many Welsh ethnographers refused to admit with their emphasis on “insider studies”.

However, there are a number of exceptions to these studies. Two community studies were made in Wales soon after those discussed above. In the early 1950s Frankenberg studied Glynceiriog on the borders of North Wales (Village on the Border, 1990), and in the late 1950s Emmett studied a community near Blaenau Ffestiniog in Snowdonia (A North Wales Village, 1964). Both were outsiders although Isabel Emmett had married a local man. There is no doubt that Davies and Rees (1960) have Frankenberg in mind when they state:

“For the student who approaches the culture from without these things (chapel, values, language etc.) are for the most part inaccessible....What he does see, he sees clearly.....[but these]...the Welsh student would regard as peripheral [football, carnival, local government]...” (1960, xi).

Jenkins (1974) could be referring to either of them when he states that he is trying to understand Cardigan society “from within” and not in terms of “notions which an investigator devises” (44). Nevertheless, both Frankenberg and Emmett seriously considered relationships between the local community and the outside; Frankenberg used his study as a basis for a more general consideration of social process (Communities in Britain, 1966), Emmett looked at popular culture amongst teenagers in Blaenau Ffestiniog (1982).

Later studies made in Wales include: The Politics of Rural Wales; A study of Cardiganshire (1973) by Madgwick, Griffiths and Walker; and Rural Wales: Community and Marginalization (1997), by Cloke, Goodwin, and Milbourne. Both are wide-ranging and employ interviews and questionnaires rather than “participant observation”.

A new interest in Welsh rural sociology and community studies in general is found in Lewis’ Welsh Rural Community Studies: Retrospect and Prospect (1985), which provides a useful overview and critique. Lewis argues that “community” has become of interest again because of changes in the countryside, and because outsiders are moving to rural areas to get away from the ills of urban life; these newcomers are looking for

the very things that Alwyn Rees and others sought to conserve. Although he acknowledges that Rees *et al* did not look at the Welsh communities in the larger context of class, he argues that the criticism of a-historicity is unjustified. They *were* aware of social change. But this is exactly the point: it is not that no reference is made to change but that it is not given full weight. There is a nostalgic refrain to the work (see references to The Mabinogion in the next chapter). The conclusion of the paper emphasises the wider social and economic context of local studies.

Day and Murdoch (1993) take up this point. Instead of rejecting the uniqueness that community studies bring to sociology, they argue that it should be seen within the context of general social processes. Community is about place, the wholeness of social life, and “lived experience”. Research should be about the interface between the local and external institutions. They argue:

“In these processes the notion of “community” plays a central part. As they come to terms with broader structural change, people judge what is occurring in terms of its impact on “their” community. If social researchers have a responsibility to follow the accounts of those actively involved in social processes, then this would seem to argue for the re-instatement of “community” as a term at the centre of the study of social space.” (109).

This is the view taken here.

This chapter has highlighted a number of points central to the investigation of the two field studies presented here:

- Small human groups are an essential part of human social organisation as discussed by Ridley (1996) and Sigmund, Fehr, and Novak (2002); “community” is a close approximation to their conception of such groups.
- The “local” must be situated within the wider national social and economic context (Newby, 1979), and even a global context (Wassman, 1998) in which local people respond in a variety of ways to change.
- One response to change is to stress local individuality at the boundary (Cohen, 1986); another is a more relaxed handling of the situation.
- Attention should be paid to the degree of openness of groups to change and to the reception of incomers (Kummer, 1970; Titmuss, 1973).

Community is still a useful concept if it is shorn of its normative connotations, and villages and parishes are not seen as some hermetically sealed rural idyll. It is useful as an “ideal type” in the form presented by Frankenberg (1966), central to which is the idea “that the performers of other roles in an individual’s many role-sets are likely to be the same people” (240) and face-to-face interactions are the norm. Contemporary social reality may be very different, particularly in areas where second homes, holiday cottages, and retirement homes have become common. Here Monger’s (1993) qualified definition may be more appropriate:

“ We can therefore construct a social model of a village as consisting of a series of social and kin networks – small overlapping communities- which are more or less active in providing activities within a wider community.” (74, my emphasis)

This fits the situation to be described in Orkney, but not that in Tre-bryn where a sense of “wider community” seems to have disappeared through the inactivity or disappearance of key players. Here one is left with Murdoch and Day’s (1993) emphasis on a sense of “place” shared by “locals” and “incomers” alike.

The use of electronic media- Internet, e-mail, mobile telephone- further complicates matters in that face-to-face interactions are unnecessary, and communication is facilitated over a wide area. The G.M. crop protest in Tre-bryn gained by the use of these media to create a “network of interest” which was strongly rooted in local concerns about place and community but which spread outwards nationally and internationally but did not activate many of the “small overlapping communities” of . As suggested earlier it was something of a hybrid.

The next chapter will further explore the concept of community as it relates to Wales by examining a range of films and film footage held by The Museum of Welsh Life, St. Fagan’s. It will suggest that by sticking close to traditional concepts of community found in the work of Rees (1950) and others, an opportunity was missed to document visually the social changes that have occurred in Welsh rural society since the end of The Second World War.

Chapter 5. Yr Etifeddiaeth-Welsh Ethnography and Welsh Film.

Chapter 3 suggested that film and photography could provide “another way of telling” in ethnographic studies. Unfortunately visual material is just as subject to the constraints of the wider cultural milieu as the written text (Tagg, 1988). This chapter looks specifically at the film archives held by The Museum of Welsh Life at St. Fagan’s and argues that despite its archival value and its presenting “another way of telling”, a unique opportunity was lost to visually document social change in Welsh communities since the 1950s. The argument presented in chapter 4 that community studies were influenced by the Pastoral literary tradition discussed by Williams (1975) can be extended to the St. Fagan’s film material, although the emphasis here will be placed on some of the academic roots of Welsh studies.³⁴

There are two major holdings of film material in Wales: the Welsh Film and Television Archives in Aberystwyth³⁵ and the ethnographic film and footage at the Museum of Welsh Life (formerly St. Fagan’s Folk Museum). The St. Fagan’s material consists of approximately 173 short pieces of work produced since the 1950’s. There is no recent work in the archives. The material ranges from professionally made films which use the language of “classic” documentary to footage produced by museum staff. Some of the latter is competent, some very poor indeed. All the material was originally made on film and has been transferred to V. H. S. tape by B. B. C. Wales. Unfortunately many sound tracks are missing.

It is an *ad hoc* collection, some donated by various television companies, others produced in-house but most of the material shares a characteristic which will be referred to here as Traddodiad Llanbryn-mair (Stevens, 1986)- the Llanbryn-mair tradition .In some ways it is similar to the archival material described in many accounts of visual anthropology dating back to Catlin’s paintings of the North American Indian from the 1830’s (1989) and Curtis’ photographic work at the beginning of the twentieth century

³⁴ Stoklund (1982) has discussed the importance of Scandinavia on Welsh folk studies. Here, emphasis will be placed on the role of University of Wales, Aberystwyth and other indigenous influences.

³⁵ The major study of Welsh film, which includes discussion of documentaries, but not the St. Fagan’s material is Berry, D. Wales and Film (1994).

(Pritzker, 1993), which were intent on “salvage”, but unlike much ethnography it was produced not by outsiders but by members of the culture-Welshmen (*sic*) filming Welsh men and, occasionally, women.

It is my intention to describe this body of work, to relate it to wider discussions of documentary film and to tie it into the discourse of the Llanbryn-mair tradition, and to the closely related discourse of the Geography and Anthropology department of U.W. C. Aberystwyth under Professors Fleur and Bowen. This will lead onto a wider discussion of the representation of the *gwerin*- the folk- in discussions of Welsh life. As with the discussion in the last chapter it will be argued that not only is that approach to culture and community inadequate today but was wildly inaccurate in the middle of the twentieth century.

As a preliminary description the archival material at St. Fagan’s may be divided into a number of rough categories based on stylistic differences:

- Type 1. Well-crafted black and white films which in terms of type of shot, camera angle and editing technique are reminiscent of both Russian silent films and the subsequent British Documentary Movement pioneered by John Grierson in the 1930’s and 40’s (Winston, 1995). It is a narrative film, which emphasises activity and artefact and usually ends up with a shot of the finished product. The camera concentrates on the hand-artefact interaction but also include close-up shots of the human face. An example is Esgair Moel Woollen Mill (no. 3), which begins with an establishing shot of a man leaving the factory and a sign reading Esgair Moel. It is followed by a series of shots of water, wool being sorted, close up of the wool fibres, and shots of the rollers and other machinery. This may sound boring but the quality of the filming is not dissimilar to that of the early Russian work of Eisenstein.

The film lasts about four minutes and concludes with a shot of the finished product and the wheel turning.

Few examples of this type of film give the wider social or economic context-instead we are taken through a process. However, a more “open” and complex version is no. 9, Stray Sheep, Gwytherin (5 minutes long) that involves a social gathering of farmers sorting stray sheep. Through parallel editing the work of women is also documented as they prepare and serve a meal for their men-folk.

In Benjamin Evans, Lipwork (no.23, 9minutes) there are a series of establishing shots (man in woods, close up of cutting sticks, long shot of landscape). The camera then concentrates on the hand-artefact interaction or close-ups of the face. The film ends with a close-up shot of the finished product.

- Type 2. A second type of film appears to have been produced in-house and is either footage or involves simple editing (in camera). It concentrates on activities such as peat cutting or haymaking.

Peat cutting, Bryndir, Capel Curig (no.7) is a typical example and is indicative of both the strengths and weaknesses of the films made by staff at St. Fagan's:

Credit side:

Good, clear record of process or artefact.

Different stages of production recorded.

There is some sort of narrative structure.

Debit side:

No establishing shots giving context to the activity.

No close- up shots. Subjects always remain in the distance.

Sometimes the quality of filming is poor.

The above example is one of a large number of peat cutting films from various parts of Wales and local variations are clearly shown. The material is fairly standard archival /salvage footage.

- Type 3. The set piece display. This is a relatively uncommon type of film but because it has been set up as a performance the camera work is reasonable. Folk Dance (no.10, 9 minutes) is a good example and the following notes were made whilst viewing:

“This is a curious set piece filmed in the kitchens at St. Fagan's (?). It uses lighting and looks like a staged piece without audience. There are two performers- an older male clog dancer and a young female dancer- who go through their routines in a very self-conscious manner. The camerawork is satisfactory and the dancers are framed in mid-shot with occasional zoom shots. This is the moving picture equivalent of those stilted Victorian photographs of Australian aborigines sitting in front of a Romantic scenic backdrop”. (See Morphy and Edwards, 1988).

- Type 4. Well-made television films, which include shots of the interviewer and the interviewee. The latter, after an introduction, proceeds to describe the activity, followed by a sequence of shots of the activity, and occasional cutbacks to the interviewer.

In Fishing for Sparling in the Conwy River (no.25, 9minutes) an establishing shot pans across the Conwy estuary and is followed by a series of close-ups of birds, river, and fish. The interviewer talks to camera and introduces the fisherman. There is a close up of the fisherman's face whilst he talks about the activity. There is a cut back to the boat on the river and various shots of fishing. The film ends with the fish brought into the bank and a head-and-shoulders shot of the interviewer, which concludes the programme.

- Type 5. A range of poorly produced film footage, often fragmentary accounts about haymaking and other aspects of harvesting. It is of such poor quality that it is best left to lie in the archives without further comment.

- Type 6. A small range of professionally made English language films made as shorts for the cinema. These include:

Collecting Folk Song. Look at Life. Rank Organization.

Ebbw Vale Eisteddfod. Richard, Thomas and Baldwin.

Playing the Crwyth. Pathe Pictorial.

- Type 7. Welsh Language feature or publicity films. There are very few examples of this category but there is an incomplete version of the first Welsh "talkie" and the delightful advertising film: Nosen Lawen/The Fruitful Year.

Excluding the feature films of type 7 all the material is some kind of documentary although much of it is best described as "footage". All the more professionally made film fits the category of "didactic" film or "illustrated lecture" as described by documentary film theorists such as Henley (1985) and Winston (1995): a narrative film with voiceover commentary. There are no examples of investigative film, "direct

cinema”, *cinema verite* or “fly on the wall” which were all innovations in documentary form which were being introduced in the years when the St. Fagan’s material was being produced (the 1950s and 60s). There is certainly no evidence of what was to become the dominant form in ethnographic film in the 1970s: *reflexivity*.

On the basis of 124 films/footage viewed an attempt was made at “content analysis” of the archive. This was based solely on the main subject matter or the protagonist of each film:

- The world of women.

Thirty-two examples focussed on women. Activities occur within the farmhouse, outside, in the dairy; often it is within the kitchen. Women do occur in other categories devoted to male activities where they appear in a subsidiary role helping with the harvest, providing a meal for sheep shearers or giving a helping hand (literally) in the production of an artefact. Behaviourally, when “giving a helping hand” the woman’s body language is uncertain- in contrast to her self- confidence in the house. As recently as the 1990s, Ashton (1994) has commented on women’s work as being confined to within the immediate surroundings- the *ffridd*- but she has also criticised the lack of research into what are the “invisible”, and unformalised, activities of the “farmer’s wife”. The subject matter of women’s activities is provided in the following table:

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Buttermaking | 6 examples |
| Cheesemaking | 2 |
| Cakes | 8 |
| Toffee | 4 |
| Bread | 6 |
| Cawl | 1 |
| Cooking | 3 |
| Knitting socks | 1 |
| Embroidery | 1 |

Table 1. Women’s activities portrayed in film.

This clear male-female division is hardly surprising and is documented in Lleufer Thomas’ (1893) report on Welsh agriculture made in the 1890’s and more recently by Bouquet in England (1986), Ashton (1994) in Wales. The narrow range of activities, which tend to emphasise artefacts is consistent with the folk museum’s emphasis on crafts.

However, given that during the period covered the role of women was being re-defined and many more jobs were becoming available to the rural economy it is surprisingly limited. There is no reference to “Bed and Breakfast”, for instance, and even if the emphasis was to be placed on the artefact, there is no reference to labour saving devices.

As Ashton (1994) emphasises, we are still “shockingly” ignorant of women’s lives in rural Wales.

- The world of men

Most of the films deal with male activities and these have been divided into two rough categories, the second being those which concentrate on documenting the body-artefact interaction of a particular craft.

There is a wide range of farming and craft activities which are summarised below:

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----|--------------------|----|
| Cereal crops | 23. | Bullocks | 1. |
| Arable | 8. | Building | 2. |
| Sheep | 11. | Water-divining | 2. |
| Pigs | 2. | Millinery/woollens | 5. |
| Horses | 3. | Ship building / | |
| Peat cutting | 8. | Coracles/sail | 3 |
| Walling/hedging | 3. | Cobbler | 3 |
| Brewing/cider | 7. | Carpenter | 2 |
| Blacksmithing | 4. | Mole trapper | 2. |
| Fishing | 13. | Quarrying | 2. |
| Doctor | 1. | | |

Table 2. Men’s activities portrayed in film.

A further list of male activities (16 items) concentrates closely on making:

clogs, lipwork, tethers (3), saddles, baskets, pottery, leather, coffins, rope, spoons, wheel making, millstone grinding, rake making, scythe making.

These two male lists contain one surprise. In a paper entitled *Le Pays de Galles* written by Professor E.G. Bowen in 1959 (in Carter and Davies, 1976) great emphasis is placed on the Welsh dairy farmer whom Bowen sees as heir to a great tradition and is the most progressive element in Welsh agriculture. Ironically it is only in female work – cheese and butter-making- that dairy farming figures. Bowen emphasizes the number of supplementary occupations, which have come about by the mechanization of dairy production by the Milk Marketing Board. Presumably he is referring to lorry driving, lorry maintenance, milk factories, secretarial and managerial work, all occupations that

did not interest the folklorist. As will be argued later Bowen has close links with St. Fagan's; he emphasises continuity and tradition, but he is also aware of social change.

The archival material from St. Fagan's does not concern itself with social change in the countryside, although the motivation behind this sort of salvage ethnography is no doubt the perceptions of a changing social and farming environment. The emphasis placed on craft activity does not allow for the visual depiction of dairy farming with electrically operated milking machines and milk tankers.

It has been noted already that the film style found in the archives is conservative- at its best it is the "illustrated lecture". It may now be suggested that content is backward-looking and ignores social change. In her biography of the founding father of the St. Fagan's Folk Museum, Dr. Iorwerth Peate, Stevens (1986) does her best to protect him from the charge that the museum gave a "fossilized" view of Wales but the above analysis supports the critics. There is evidence of change in some of the films, however unintentional it might have been, and it is a demonstration of how useful photography and film can be. A few examples are given below:

- In the butter-making films plastic buckets are used. It is worth comparing the films with the display in the Material Culture Gallery- there are no plastic buckets there.
- Fashion- 60s sunglasses and skirts above the knee; nylon coveralls.
- There are occasional shots of Land Rovers and electricity pylons.

Only one film appears to take note of change: Reaping at Cilie Fawr, no.16. Unfortunately there is no sound track but the silent film is explicit enough. Notes made at the viewing state:

"This filmmaker has watched Eisenstein's work. Excellent bit of filming. It starts with a tractor and trailer leaving the farm and then cuts to a large number of people using scythes and stays with them for the rest of the film. An old man on sticks is the pivotal figure and he is used as a "cut away": he looks from the tractor to the row of men and women using scythes: here there is conviviality and tiredness, there the rush of the new."

It is a highly professional film with its roots in Russian realist film via the British Documentary Movement of John Grierson, but whereas Grierson and Eisenstein filmed, and extolled modernisation, here it is condemned.

The film material needs to be seen within the wider context of the ethnographic and folk life discourses of Wales, community studies, and indeed the whole pastoral tradition of The United Kingdom, as discussed in the last chapter. The novelist Emyr Humphreys (1983) has made an analysis of Welsh tradition and noted how a small nation without the leadership of a Welsh speaking gentry focussed on *y werin gyffredin ffraeth*- the witty, common folk. He discusses folk poetry:

“ In this raw form the new hero figure is a simple countryman: the patient ploughman and honest husbandman replace the fearless fighter.... he is loyal, wise, pious, hard working, and sufficiently sensitive both to enhance a traditional way of life and to celebrate it. His character became a substantial addition to the genius of the place. Like any pagan deity he is deeply rooted in his locality. His nature is not only in tune with nature; it is capable of infinite expansion and thereby actively assists in the subtle process of pinning down posterity and binding generations yet unborn to the landscape which will become the place of their birth.” (63)

Humphreys' discussion is a link between the localised poem of *fair*, the wider discourse on the pastoral discussed by Williams, and the more mundane discussions of Welsh geographers and ethnographers encapsulated in folk life and community studies. It is the group centred on Iorwerth Peate at St. Fagan's (the Llanbryn-mair tradition) and Professors Fleur and Bowen at Aberystwyth University (*Le Pays*) that attention must now be directed.

In their introduction to Geography, Culture and Habitat –the selected essays (1925-1975) of E.G. Bowen, Carter and Davies (1976) discuss the significance of H.J Fleure as Gregynog Professor of Geography at Aberystwyth. He imported the geographical approach of Vidal de la Blache, which emphasised regional geography. Of particular importance was the concept of *le pays*, which Bowen later developed, in the Welsh context. In Le Pays de Galles (1959) Bowen defines *le pays* as:

“ recognized by their inhabitants as possessing a unity of their own based upon their physical or cultural endowments.” (244)

For Bowen, Le Pays de Galles did not mean the Principality of Wales but:

“the land of the people who speak the Welsh language. The correlation here implied between the Welsh language and Welsh life and culture is a very real one.” (245)

In The Geography of Wales as a background to its history (written in 1964, in Carter and Davies, 1976) Bowen attempts to demonstrate an historical continuum. He contrasts the nucleated village of chieftains and bondsmen with:

“these scattered farms of the free Welsh tribesmen that the Welsh way of life continued to grow and develop its special features. It was in the isolation of these farms that so much emphasis was placed on the non-material culture, music, poetry, philosophy, and religion, to say nothing of their interest in later times in eisteddfodau, singing festivals, and the religious revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There developed at the same time a very high standard of craftsmanship...”(15)

This was the “real” Wales and although history is important, and social change occurs it is within a tradition. Thus as noted earlier, according to Bowen, the independent and energetic, isolated Welsh dairy farmers were open to innovation provided by the Milk Marketing Board.

It was within this intellectual tradition at Aberystwyth that Iorwerth Peate did his post-graduate work. Stevens (1986) also emphasises the importance of Peate’s early upbringing in Welsh-speaking, Independent Montgomeryshire, at Llanbryn-mair:

“He traced the family bond far beyond his immediate pre-decessors into the mystical cloud of witnesses, mainly lowly folk, *gwerinyr* who had gone before.” (3)

Thus Peate’s need to research the skills of the craftsmen. There was also anxiety over the survival of Welsh language and culture, which was a very real problem in Montgomeryshire border country. But it was not just creeping Anglicisation as is made clear in Peate’s introduction to the National Museum of Wales’ Guide to the Collection of Welsh Byegones published in 1929:

“ The mass production resulting from the industrial revolution in squeezing the rural craftsman out of existence has also, it is more than probable, impoverished the spiritual life of the people.” (2)

It is an early twentieth century Welsh version of a lament found in William Morris’ Arts and Crafts movement and in the later twentieth century Leavisite attack on popular culture generally.

Later in the guide “community” gets the same treatment and it can be seen how Welsh community studies became so hopelessly romanticised. He describes:

“Village as the centre of a self sufficient community where work and leisure, individual enterprise and mutual cooperation were combined to produce a rural polity where poverty was never extreme nor wealth out of all proportion to the needs of those who enjoyed it. Craftsmanship and agriculture, professional work and farming were combined.....” (2)

The guiding interests of the Welsh Folk Museum and the Aberystwyth department under Bowen ran parallel and there was interchange between the two. Part of the programme initiated by Fleure and Bowen was “anthropology at the local level” and between 1939 and 1940 A.D. Rees made his “classic” study of Llanfihangel, which emphasised a continuing tradition and a sense of history. It was a Welsh version of the research conducted in County Clare before the Second World War by Arensberg and Kimball (1968). Rees concludes his book (Life in a Welsh Countryside, 1950):

“Any social activity aroused in the countryside by remote control is bound to be superficial and short-lived, but modern society can do little else.....The completeness of the traditional rural society – involving the cohesion of family, kindred and neighbours- and its capacity to give the individual a sense of belonging, are phenomena that might well be pondered on by all who seek a better social order.” (170)

Under the direction of Rees, between 1945 and 1950, Aberystwyth graduates made studies of Aberporth, Aberdaron, Tregaron, and Glanllyn. These were collected together in Welsh Rural Communities edited by Elwyn Davies and Alwyn D. Rees (1960) These are described as studies of culture “from within” and Rees is scathing of the “outsider” anthropologist in Wales as discussed in the last chapter. He is arguing for a monopoly for those initiated into the Llanbryn-mair or Le Pays traditions. Today this approach appears extraordinarily one-sided.

Jenkins’ study of Aberporth (1960) is instructive. It is a major contribution to Welsh social studies, particularly in the distinction he makes between two ways of life: *Buchedd A* and *Buchedd B*. He traces *Buchedd A* back to its roots in Nonconformism and its tradition of self-improvement; ironically he shows that this very desire for

improvement leads to the social and geographical mobility of the young, which results in a drain of talent from the locality. *Buchedd A* is identical to Peate's *gwerin* and indeed Peate had made a similar observation to that of Jenkins:

“For the first time in its long history, Wales developed a middle class of “blackcoats” the children of rural craftsmen and farmers who forsook their father's world and sought a soft option in town and industrial life.”

(Diwylliant Gwerin Cymru, in Stephens, 1986)

It is difficult not to read “blackcoat” as “turncoat”.

Buchedd B, however, is given short shrift by Jenkins- within this category are the public house frequenters, those who go down to the beach on a Sunday, the non-chapel goers, and the English expatriates. This is mirrored by Peate's St. Fagan's. Although brewing features in a couple of the archival films there are only two references to a pub- and although there is a chapel on the St. Fagan's site, there is no public house. The large military research establishment in the parish is hardly mentioned although sociologically its impact on the area was of some significance.

History is not ignored by Jenkins but it is given a romantic gloss. A sense of loss is evident in his work and that of others of the Llanbryn-mair tradition:

It was once the case that the conditions imposed by dependence on the sea helped to foster a sense of community among the village people. (25)

There is a lack of sympathy with the idea that a village can re-invent itself by using the resources of the sea to become a holiday resort, and be none the worse for that.

Buchedd A and *Buchedd B* were useful ways of generalising about some aspects of Welsh village life (the concepts still have some validity in a village such as discussed later) but they ignore the fact that Welsh rural life still has to be understood within the context of the British class system (see Owen, T, 1982). Even if there was no gentry, its absence does not mean that class and politics have no part to play. The Labour Party had established a new branch in Aberporth for the 1945 General Election (Pretty, 1989)

The Llanbryn-mair tradition is continued in the journal Folklife. In an article entitled

Bowl Turners and Spoon Carvers, J. Geraint Jenkins (1963) describes the work of the wood turners in the North Pembrokeshire valley of Abercych. Peate had previously discussed their work in his contribution to a *festsschifte* presented to Professor Fleure (1930). Peate emphasised a tradition going back to the Iron Age and remarks on a “beauty of line” and “fitness for use” but adds that “Woolworth” spoons are now supplementing the craft.³⁶ J. Geraint Jenkins is also concerned about the “advent of cheap china, plastics and tinware” in his 1963 paper. There is the same note of nostalgia as detected earlier in the study of Aberporth:

“The woods of Cwmcuch, which not very long ago were alive with the sound of the woodman’s axe are silent...”(37)

Not satisfied with this, and apparently unable to come to terms with the fact that new patterns of social life now dominate the valley, he adds a piece of mythological whimsy:

“In those same woods the knights of the Mabinogion hunted the wild boar”. (37)

Both Peate and J. Geraint Jenkins do note, however, that the lathe is electrically driven. A point, which is unintentionally, emphasised in a photograph (plate 2 in Geraint Jenkins’ paper) of John Davies, the last of the Abercuch turners, in which an electric light bulb is prominent. Once again the use of visual material undermines the dominant discourse.

More recently, a paper by Gwyndaf (1998), gives a moving description of Welsh funerary practices, including an innovation made by Gwyndaf, at his mother’s funeral in North Wales. There is the same strain towards the past:

“...the custom and traditions associated with death and burial in such intimate Welsh communities as Uchwaled clearly demonstrate that it is all too easy to generalise, local correspondents continue to take as much care as ever in writing their detailed reports..... there is still a closely-knit community, a neighbourhood where people still care for one another” (103)

Maybe, but there is a whole new form of funerary custom in the United Kingdom, including that part of North Wales, which involves the laying of flowers etc. at an

³⁶ J. Lleufer Thomas also commented on the de-skilling of agricultural workers in Wales in the 1890s (1893, Royal Commission Report).

accident site which could have been usefully documented. It would also have been interesting to have seen a “fly on the wall” documentary about contemporary practice amongst North Walian funeral directors.

However, the journal does occasionally include articles critical of the discipline. Kavanagh (1984) suggests that folk studies give:

“a fossilized interpretation of the Swedish understanding of folk life at that time” (7)

and:

“folklife studies have become embalmed in their time-bound, romantic origins “ (6)

She advocates that such studies should embrace contemporary culture, including popular culture. This was taken up in the following two studies to be described.

Social change is occasionally charted in Folklife. The 1989/90 cover illustration is an old electricity advertisement: “I’d never go back from electricity to old-fashioned cooking now.” In a fascinating paper S. Minwel Tibbott traces the introduction of electricity into Welsh rural housing from the 1950s. The inhabitants were careful with their money and prioritised what they bought- electric light, iron, vacuum cleaner, mains radio, and electric kettle all preceded the electric cooker. She has expanded minor points made by Peate and Geraint Jenkins into the main substance of her paper.

An important addition to the literature on Welsh communities is another paper in Folklife (1996). D. Roberts considers the impact of English outsiders on local communities. These are the Butlin’s holiday camp at Penychain on the Llyn peninsular in North Wales and the Royal Armaments Depot at Aberporth. Both sites are significant: the Butlin’s camp is not far from one of the sites described in Welsh Rural Communities (T. Jones Hughes’ contribution, 1960) and also figures in an important Welsh Documentary film to be discussed below (Yr Etifeddiaeth/The Heritage); Aberporth was the site of Jenkins fieldwork (1960).

In Aberporth many ties had grown up between the incomers and the native population of both a social and economic nature. He does conclude, however, that after fifty-five years the “pobl Aberporth” still manage to define who belongs and who does not.

Roberts provides the more balanced view. Significantly in the following edition of Folklife (1997) G.E.Jones returns to Aberporth and closes down such analysis- he acknowledges change but argues that the Welsh character has been retained. It is not that Roberts and Jones necessarily disagree in their respective analyses but that Roberts is willing to seriously discuss social change and acknowledges a highly conspicuous part of Aberporth- the English.

The second village Roberts discusses in his paper is Penychain. He describes the impact of Billy Butlin’s holiday camp on village life. In 1994 105,000 visitors contributed £11,000,000 to the local economy, and 150 permanent staff were employed. He describes the seasonal work opportunities provided and the romantic alliances formed. It was not just that the area became more familiar to the English but that Butlin’s staged its own Eisteddfod. However, once again Roberts concludes that there has been minimal change:

“The fence, which surrounds Butlin’s Penychain camp, is surely symbolic. The strangers that sojourn at Starcoast World impinge little on local people; they arrive by Caelloi bus or Regional Railways train; have their bags carried by young native porters; eat food supplied by local wholesalers; sleep in sheets washed by Afonwen laundry.....
They might have been vexed as they tried to find their way from Pully Welly via Chilly Wog to Penny Chain but their long term impact is minimal.”

He may be correct, but there seems to be some impact from this description. Nevertheless, at least Roberts doesn’t ignore the incomer.

It is this camp which allows a return to film. Between 1947-9, John Roberts Williams and Geoff Charles made a documentary entitled Yr Etifeddiaeth/The Heritage. (See Berry, D, 1994). It is a record of rural life in Llyn and Eifionydd supposedly seen

through the eyes of a young black evacuee from Liverpool, Freddy Grant. The title (The Heritage) is reminiscent of the concerns of the Llanbryn-mair and Le Pays traditions discussed above but unlike this material it is conscious of social change and attempts to document what is happening in North Wales after the Second World War. It is not an innovative documentary (neither of the directors was either a filmmaker or an anthropologist, and John Roberts Williams now regrets the portentous narrative by the arch druid, Cynon) but, as Berry (1994) comments, it shows a flair for camera angles and *mise en scene*. The film includes sequences on sheep shearing, the hiring fair, and the bards but also references to “bed and breakfast”, the cinema and other forms of popular culture, the role of the Milk Marketing Board and the growing importance of tourism. Ultimately it must be seen as another elegy to a passing way of life and the narration ends:

“We captured the end of an era- the last legacies of pre-war life. The farm labourers hired would live in the stable lofts above the houses. That would be their condition. We filmed a labourer living in a stable loft near Bodfel. You’ll never see this again”.

However the closing sequence is a worthy challenge to any ethnographic filmmaker. A series of beautifully composed shots contrast the old way of life with the new- Brynbachau chapel and the swimming pool at Butlin’s. In one frame a large number of holiday makers in bathing costumes appear in the foreground and the chapel, with its small congregation, is seen in the background. Visually a serious question about the continuation of the old way of life is suggested. The film was made before the St. Fagan’s material and it demonstrates the power of film as “another way of telling”.

This is not to suggest that the archival material at St. Fagan’s has no value. Film allows for a vivid description of the relationship between human being and artefact, body posture, and the artefacts themselves; these are all aspects apparent in the St. Fagan’s material and could not be adequately described in words. It also provides important “salvage” material, a function which has been championed by Margaret Mead (1973). What is so disappointing about the St. Fagan’s material is that a chance was missed to document changes in rural Wales.³⁷ There is no farmer’s wife using an electric cooker,

³⁷ Rockett (1987) traces a similar story in Eire where many documentary films were modelled on Flaherty’s Man of Aran in their ahistoricism and political quietism. There was space however for more socially-committed work e.g. Liam O’ Leary’s Our Country (1947).

let alone a farmer (male). The important economic activity of “Bed and Breakfast” was not recorded. There are no films about the importance of television in isolated environments.

In the next two sections it is intended to provide ethnographies of two small parishes on the geographical and political peripheries of U.K.: one is in West Wales and the other in Orkney. Although considerable historical continuity will be found attention will also be paid to the cultural adaptations made by “locals” in these parishes to the outside world. Forms of ethnographic telling (chapter 3) will be explored and the problems associated with the use of the concept community (chapter 4) will be recognised.

PART TWO.

Introduction.

The chapters that follow document the culture and social life of Orkney, and in particular that of the small island which I have named Langamay. They are intended as studies of a community on the “periphery”, and as explorations of ethnographic writing and visual documentation. The first chapter picks up on a variety of clues (Ginsberg, 1990) found in the writings of Orcadian scholars, the media, and conversations with local people to describe “the Orkney norm”³⁸. It is a culture based on tolerance and a slow acceptance of change, one that reflects a particular landscape, seascape and history. It also makes clear that “periphery” is a relative term historically, and that even societies which place great emphasis on “the past” are open to technological and social change. This, very general, chapter is followed by two chapters which are more specific and may be seen as “other ways of telling”.

Malinowski’s diary account of his fieldwork in Melanesia between 1914-1918, published posthumously as A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Word (1964), has highlighted to anthropologists, what they must always have known, that there is a wide gap between the “felt” experience of the contacts with local people, and the logic of the monograph. The ethnographic monograph is a form of literary genre which Turner (1982) has pointed out models itself rigidly, “rather abjectly”, on the natural sciences. Anthropologists are supposed to be finely tuned instruments who somehow gain data, or insight, into other cultures. However these abilities may be flawed as Grosskurth (1988) has shown in the work of Margaret Mead. Thus chapter 2 consists of slightly re-worked field notes, which are based on the “ethnographic gaze” of an anthropologist concerned about the breakdown of his car, the serious ill-health of a colleague in the field, and the frustrations of a difficult academic year. It might also be mentioned that a visit to a local spiritual healer in search of ethnographic material led to the suggestion that the anthropologist’s mental and physical health was very poor indeed! Such autobiographical details may seem misplaced in a “scientific” work, but given the sea-change in recent anthropology (see Part One, chapter 3), a move in Western

³⁸ I have coined this expression as a pun on “Orkney norm”, the old Norse language once spoken on the islands.

documentary culture which Dovey (2000) sees as “confessional,” and a shift in academic convention away from the view that personal constructions should not be used in scientific writing (underwritten by the O. U. recommended textbook, Effective Writing, Turk and Kirkham, 1998), the inclusion seems legitimate. Whatever the legitimate philosophical motives towards *self-reflexivity*, anthropologists also reflect their own culture.

The “ethnographic gaze” on Orkney is often focussed on landscape rather than people, as certainly on the smaller islands people can be elusive. Chapter 3 is a photographic essay, which is not intended to be merely “illustrative” but the anthropologist’s visual response to the island. Walker Evan’s photographs of “dirt farmers” are not secondary to Agee’s detailed written accounts in Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (1969), although no great claim is made for the aesthetic worth of the Orkney photographs. The photographic essays of Berger and Mohr are a good example of “another way of telling” (e.g. 1975, 1989); the photographs and written texts of Lesy’s Wisconsin Death Trip (1973) are more imaginative versions.

Chapter 4 is a more orthodox attempt to document social change on the island of Langamay.

Chapter 1. A Small Event in the Long History of a *Peedie* Island: Orcadian Identity and a Sense of Place.

In his Making of the English Landscape, W. G Hoskins (1970) uses the analogy of the *palimpsest*, a piece of parchment written on and partially erased time after time, to describe the evolution of the English Landscape. It is an analogy that is particularly apposite when applied to Orkney, the archipelago of small islands off the North coast of Scotland. Here are landscapes swept clean by glaciation which now bear traces of Neolithic tombs, *henges* and standing stones, settlement sites, Bronze Age burnt mounds, Pictish brochs and Viking farms; there is a magnificent red sandstone cathedral at Kirkwall and an earl's palace at Birsay; a Scottish baronial-style castle on Shapinsay. Linear road and field patterns are characteristic of a late-flowering agricultural revolution in the 19th century, as are the low-slung stone cottages with their "add on" barns and kitchens.

In the recent past Orkney played a key role in British sea defences and concrete bunkers can be seen on the low cliffs defending Scapa Flow. The South Isles are now linked to the main island (Mainland) by causeways built to protect the British fleet from "U" boat attack. Today, old cottages lie empty with sagging roofs, still containing furniture left by the last occupants, or have been renovated by strangers from the south attracted by cheap housing, the life-style and the isolated beauty of the islands. The only signs of recent growth are the new bungalows clustered around Kirkwall and Finstown on Mainland.

Orkney may appear an ancient place but the palimpsest is actually recent, even by British standards: Homo sapiens is a relative newcomer. Until 10,000 years ago the islands were ice-covered; as the ice retreated the consequent rise in sea level led to an archipelago of small islands separated from the north of Scotland by approximately seven miles of treacherous seas in which the North Sea meets the Atlantic.

Even if *archaic* humans had ever lived in the area, all trace would have been eradicated by glaciation, which rubbed smooth the Old Red Sandstone and Rousay crags, which

constitute much of the island group. As the ice retreated rich boulder clays were deposited. Hedges notes that “man came to Orkney ready made” (1987, 7); indeed, Homo sapiens had already “invented” agriculture.

It is customary to introduce an ethnographic study with some description of climate, geology, geography and other physical aspects of place; and with a survey of historical and political events. This will be attempted here, not because it is a convention, but, as has already been hinted, the physical and human geographical factors are the raw materials out of which Orcadians have constructed a distinctive stance, a sense of identity. It is a “landscape of memory” to use Simon Schama’s distinctive phrase (1996) or a mindscape:

“Landscape is not a neutral arrangement of physical forms, it is something we respond to emotionally, a place where the presence of previous generations can be felt.” (Children and Nash, 1997)

The physical aspects of Orkney carry “the freight of history” (Schama, *ibid*, 5). A shifting and interconnecting assemblage of constructs produces a sense of place, which is so typical of Orcadian identity- and indeed becomes that of most incomers.

This sense of place is not hard to discover whether one is in Stromness or Kirkwall, the only towns, or on one of the outlying islands. It is felt, conceptualised and articulated with greater or lesser sophistication at a number of levels which may be rather artificially differentiated as:

- The intellectual. For a small group of islands, Orkney has produced a large intelligentsia, some such as Mackay Brown, who decided to remain in the islands and others such as Eric Linklater who left. The 18th and 19th centuries provided historians, diarists, folklorists and archaeologists. Such people defined, and their contemporaries continue to define, what it is to be an Orcadian. A small island such as Langamay produced a major folklorist in Walter Traill Dennison (1995), as well as minister/schoolmasters who interpreted the social and natural life of the island, and who continue to do so using photography (R. Thorne), the website (E. Stockton) and local photographic history (K. Foubister). The islands also attract outside scholars such as archaeologists

Renfrew (e.g. 1973) and Hedges (1987), and the composer Sir Peter Maxwell Davies who now lives on Langamay after many years living on Hoy. The St. Magnus Festival is a major annual music festival, and the Science Festival organised by Howie Firth attracts international speakers. The ex-headmaster and children of Langamay gave a concert at the 2001 St. Magnus Festival.

- The media. B .B. C Radio Orkney and The Orcadian newspaper provide important links between the islands. It is surprising how much of their coverage involves archaeological, historical and natural historical themes (B.B.C. Radio Orkney, July- August, 1998). Kirkwall and Stromness bookshops carry a good stock of local interest books and postcards of “old Orkney” (For the importance of this type of popular history see Raphael Samuel, 1994).
- The general public. It is a commonplace on Orkney to enter conversations about transport problems, traditional crafts, recent archaeological finds, and natural history. Skea’s memoirs of Langamay have been published as Island Images (1982) and the late Peter Fotheringham’s recollections have been collected by Orkney Archive (also by documentary film team, University of Wales College, Newport).

These three levels interpenetrate. The B. B. C and The Orcadian cover scientific conferences and archaeologists in local halls on remote islands give archaeological “digs” and talks. The schoolchildren of Langamay had their request to explore the possible origins of some mounds near their school taken up by Channel 4’s Time Team, who excavated the site (broadcast, 1998). An important chance discovery of a runic inscription on the island was recently analysed by the National Museum of Scotland, but after local pressure, has now been returned to the island and finds its place in a glass case in the local pub. Islanders are used to, and enjoy, archaeological investigation and sometimes the archaeologist stays to live locally. The impact of Renfrew’s prehistoric investigations led one South Ronaldsay farmer, Ronnie Simison, to conduct his own (characteristically unauthorised) dig on his land which led to the discovery of the extraordinary “Tomb of the Eagles” which is now a major tourist attraction, as well as a significant contribution to Neolithic archaeology (Hedges, 1987).

The Orkney archipelago consists of some forty islands (Ritchie, 1995) although Schei and Moberg (1991) give figures of sixty or seventy although this would include grass covered rocks with a few sheep. Today only a minority of the islands are inhabited and the majority of Orcadians live on the largest island, Mainland. Here the main concentration of population is around the ports of Stromness and Kirkwall, the latter being the county town. South of Mainland lie the islands of Burray and South Ronaldsay linked to Mainland by the Churchill barriers built by Italian P. O. W.s during World War Two. There are also the islands of Hoy, Graemsay and Flotta.

Immediately north of Mainland lie Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre, and a short ferry crossing from Kirkwall pier, Shapinsay. Further north lie the Northern Isles of Westray, Eday, Stronsay, North Ronaldsay, and Langamay. The total land area of the county is 973 sq.km., and the islands cover a distance of 85 km. North-South, and 49 km. East-West. As Schei and Moberg (1991) point out, the islands are situated between 58 41 and 59 24 north latitude, the same as Leningrad and southern Greenland. During the winter months there are only about five hours of daylight each day; by contrast, in early summer it never gets really dark and it is possible to drive a car without lights at 2 a.m.

Geologically, the islands are relatively simple, and quite unlike the Scottish Highlands to the south of Pentland Firth. They consist of sedimentary sandstones, bedded horizontally, which outcrop on beaches, and split into flat, even slabs which provide excellent building material in an environment devoid of woodland. In some ways the exploitation of stone for building materials changed little between the Neolithic and the nineteenth century, and the stone furniture found in prehistoric Skara Brae had its parallels in nineteenth century cottages (Ritchie, 1995; Fenton, 1997). With the exception of the more mountainous Hoy, most of the islands present a whaleback appearance, low in the water, with hills gently rising from the rich agricultural land above the foreshore.

The more recent deposits consist of highly fertile boulder clays and, particularly on Langamay, wind blown sand deposits, which produce dune systems (*machair*). These lands were easily worked by land-hungry Viking farmers. The boulder clays were

improved during the agrarian reforms of the nineteenth century (Schrank, 1995) and as a result, today many of the islands have a trim, well-groomed, grassy appearance. Peat was an important resource on some of the islands (e.g. Eday).

Trees are conspicuous by their absence on Orkney today. The postglacial landscape was made up of barren grassland and heath, later juniper and crowberry dominated and birch, hazel and willow colonized. Davidson and Jones (1990) note that by 3,500 B.C. this cover was being replaced by more open vegetation indicative of human disturbance, although increasing wind speeds, which showered the islands with salt spray, may also have played a part. Today, islanders attempt to grow fuchsia hedges in the lee of stone dykes, and occasionally trees grow in sheltered spots

Wind is an ever-present factor in these unsheltered islands; it is rarely absent and comes from all points of the compass: thus the sturdy, squat nature of most of the cottages. Strong winter gales are characteristic and during the storm, which occurred on January 15th, 1952, winds of 190 km. per hour, devastated the islands and destroyed the lucrative Orcadian poultry business, which has never recovered. Rainfall ranges from 800-1000 m.m. per year but it is its persistence throughout the year which is most trying. Mists blown in from the North Sea are also common. At the psychological level the severe winter gales and winter darkness cause stress and a depressive condition sometimes labelled *morbidus Orcadiensis*. The whiskey bottle is one answer, as is the hospital in Aberdeen. However, the weather acts as a form of natural selection amongst incomers and as one respondent stated: "when the sun shines it is the most beautiful place on earth". Despite the weather, good vegetable patches are to be found behind stone dykes, in geodesic dome greenhouses and in polytunnels on Eday.

More prosaically, Davidson and Jones (1990) note that wind and dampness place a severe stress on agriculture and argue that the traditional mixed agriculture and large hay production was at the mercy of the weather. However modern farming still has its hazards: personal observation, and editions of The Orcadian in the summer of 1998 suggest that the high investment in modern technology has led to machinery becoming mired and unusable in wet conditions.

The Scottish ethnographer, Alexander Fenton, notes that:

“land and sea cannot be studied in isolation from each other by anyone concerned with the historical development of the North Isles.” (1997, 7).

Island life has obvious constraints. At present P. & O. ferry services sail from Scrabster, in Caithness to Stromness on a twice-daily basis- this entails a crossing of the dangerous Pentland Firth; Orcargo runs a nightly freight service from Invergordon to Kirkwall, which takes about ten hours³⁹. All inter-island sailings are focussed on Kirkwall which means that it is virtually impossible to “island hop”. This is a relatively recent phenomenon and the eighteenth century diaries of Patrick Fea of Langamay (published by Hewison, 1996) indicates considerable movement between the various northern isles, as well as frequent visits to Mainland (1996). Until recently there were also more fishing boats on the islands, and, for instance, Langamay men would visit the pub on Eday for an evenings drinking. It might be added that an air-ambulance service now operates as a passenger service between the Scottish Mainland and Kirkwall with short connecting flights to other islands- at a price.

The reliance on ferries has inevitable consequences. Although subsidized by Orkney Island Council, transport costs are high. Food, petrol and other supplies are more expensive than in the rest of Scotland. The freighting of animals is costly, but the agrarian revolution on the islands could not get under way until there were regular steamship services to carry the excellent beef cattle (Traill Dennison’s report to H.M. Commission of Inquiry, 1884; Schrank, 1995). Until there was a Ro-Ro service to Langamay in the early 1990s, island children who attended Kirkwall Grammar School would only return home at the end of term, now they catch the return ferry on Friday evenings. Ferries break down or are delayed by bad weather resulting in no postal services. Newspapers on the smaller islands are at least a day late in the best of weather conditions.

Ferry passengers are seldom out of sight of land and there is a blurred distinction between land and sea- *skerries* may be covered at high tide, isolated *holms* carry sheep. On North Ronaldsay sheep are kept on the seaward side of a stone dyke, which circles the island, eating seaweed, which produces a characteristic type of meat. The foreshore

³⁹ Typical of the problems facing Orkney, this excellent service is now in liquidation.

provides shellfish, driftwood and seaweed for fuel and fertiliser. Kelping (the collection of seaweed or *tangles* for use in a variety of chemical processes) was a major nineteenth century proto-industry, which is still practiced on some islands (Thomson, 1983). Wrecks, beached sea mammals provided added supplies, although a shipwrecked crew could presumably be a nuisance.

This blurred distinction of land and sea presumably gave rise to the many stories of the mythological *finfolk*, *selkie folk*, *Assipattle* and *Mester Stoorworm*, which Walter Traill Dennison collected in the nineteenth century (1995).

The sea level is rising. Heavy seas constantly erode the low coastlines, revealing Neolithic and Viking settlement and burial sites. As early as 1893, Traill Dennison documented such encroachment on Langamay.⁴⁰

It should not be assumed that Orkney has always been neither a “backwater”, nor, indeed that the sea always acts as a barrier⁴¹. At times Orkney has been at the cultural crossroads of Europe. Fenton (1997) notes that:

“ Isolation and remoteness are relative concepts, however, and in terms of the ebb and flow and intermixture of culture, these islands have been like busy crossroads in Viking times they were stepping stones towards northern and western Britain.....Orkney stood out like a fertile jewel.....and became the heart of the Norse kingdom in Northern Britain.”(2).

as the twelfth/thirteenth century Orkneyinga Saga (Palsson and Edwards, 1984 edition) makes clear. In the Neolithic Orkney had major links to the rest of Britain, and since the Middle Ages there have been close shipping links with Norway, Germany and the Low Countries which allowed Orkney’s merchant lairds to build fine town houses in Kirkwall. The North European connection continues with Scandinavian cruise liners which dock in Kirkwall during the summer months- the cultural significance of which should not be underestimated as shown by the increased sophistication and prosperity of

⁴⁰The Times newspaper (18.2.2000) devotes a half-page spread to the rapid erosion by the sea of many of Orkney’s archaeological sites including Skara Brae on Mainland.

⁴¹ See Cunliffe, 2001, for a re-assessment of the migrations around the Atlantic seaboard of Europe.

the shops and the necessity to remain open on the traditional “half-day closing”. In the eighteenth century, British exploration led to ships calling in Stromness to take on supplies and water prior to long distance travel to North America. Orkney men served on whalers or worked for the Hudson Bay Company- the genetic makeup of Orcadians may be largely Norse or Scots but it probably also includes the Cree Indian.

A recent addition to both the gene pool and culture was the stationing of large numbers of troops and sailors in the islands during two World Wars. Currently, the desire for a “simple life” has led to a migration from Southern Britain of a large number of couples, families and individuals attracted by cheap cottages and land. And social services looking for a place to “dump” problem families. The Census for Scotland gives a good overview of population trends from 1801 to 1911 (vol.1, part 2, 1911). Population rose from a total of 24,445 in 1801 to a high point of 32,044 in 1881, thereafter falling to 25,897 in 1911. Agricultural improvements necessitating less labour. and a lower death rate, were followed by outward migration to the “colonies” and Southern Britain. These links with “doon sooth” and Canada, Australasia and elsewhere are still a feature of The Orcadian newspaper. There is a thriving and sophisticated family history society in Kirkwall. In an unpublished diary written in 1911, John Hans Tait describes a common experience of the exile on return to the islands from his new home in Scotland:

“We were anxious to share unfettered freedom from not only the prison walls of shop or office but from the narrow limits of city streets and the perpetual turmoil of industry and commerce” (unpublished mss, K. Foubister of Kettletoft).

But exile was an economic necessity and the 1911 census is ominous:

“ The ~~inter~~ intercensal decrease of the total population is 2,802, and is the largest intercensal decrease yet found in this county.....”.

By 1951, the census overview records:

| | | | |
|-------------|--------|-------------|----------------|
| <u>1921</u> | 24,111 | 11,452males | 12,659 females |
| <u>1931</u> | 22,077 | 10,617 | 11,460 |
| <u>1951</u> | 21,255 | 10,351 | 10,904 |

Table 1. Orkney Census 1921-1951.

and states:

“The loss of population from the county since 1861 has been due almost wholly to migration overseas or to other parts of Great Britain.....
In the whole period from 1861 to 1951 there were 12,276 more births than deaths in the county, but in the same period the population declined by 11,140. (1951 Census, 4).

This decline is common to other parts of rural Great Britain. However, within Orkney, itself, whilst the population of most of the smaller islands has continued to fall dramatically, Mainland has recorded an increase of population. Thus, for selected parishes:

| | <u>1951</u> | <u>1981</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Eday | 308 | 154 |
| Hoy and Graemsay | 189 | 79 |
| Langamay | 1,090 | 651 |
| Kirkwall and St. Ola | 5,519 | 6,825 |
| Stromness | 2,068 | 2,218 |

Table 2. Population of selected parishes, Orkney 1951 and 1981.

(The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Orkney. Edited, Miller, R, 1985).

The general trend has been for farm-holdings to be increased in size, and cottages left derelict, sold to outsiders or rented out. Retired people buy bungalows around Kirkwall and Finstown and teenagers leave the smaller islands for work on Mainland or further south. This long term trend is one that faces Orkney Island Council who are forced to prop up the declining island populations with subsidies on ferry and air services.

The declining population and the inward migration from “doon sooth” obviously effects local dialect. The local form of Norse (*Norn*) is no longer spoken and was dying out by the eighteenth century as the islands became “Scotified”, but the local dialect, a Scandinavian lilt so dissimilar to Scots, is also under threat as any reading the letters

page in The Orcadian will demonstrate. On Langamay, an island with considerable inward migration, Yorkshire dialect is almost as common as Orcadian.

Some mention must be made of the natural history of the islands. Terrestrial mammals are rare, and even the hedgehog is a recent introduction. Aquatic mammals, however, are common, and beaches can be covered by thousands of common seals. Otters can occasionally be seen on the seashore or in lochs. It is the bird life of the islands which is most dramatic and includes rare British species such as snipe and redshank. (See Meek, E. 1989).

As noted earlier, there is no evidence on the islands of Homo sapiens prior to the Neolithic, although Ritchie (1995) argues that as there are Mesolithic sites in Caithness on the Scottish mainland, and the islands would have been visible to these late hunter-gatherers, there may have been occupation. The earliest chambered tombs in Orkney are closely linked to those in Caithness, and the earliest radiocarbon dates are from the settlement site, Knap of Howar, on Papa Westray (3,600-3,100 B.C.).

This is not the place to describe in detail the rich and complex Neolithic culture(s), although as a general point Neolithic Orkney is closely linked with the traditions of the Atlantic façade of Europe (Cunliffe, 2001). Cunliffe writes of the Orkney Neolithic:

“...Orkney and the Boyne valley stand out, emerging about 3000 BC as centres of enormous focussed energy and innovation.....” (Ibid.187)

Shee Twohig (1981) documents megalithic art in passage graves at Holm of Papa Westray, Eday Manse, Pickaquoy, and at the domestic site of Skara Brae, similar to that found in “the Bend of the Boyne” in Eire.

Archaeologically, it is one of the richest areas in Europe, partly due to the late arrival of the agrarian innovations of the Nineteenth century which might have destroyed the monuments, the tradition of building in stone, and presumably because it was a favoured area by Neolithic peoples.

Detailed surveys are found in Renfrew (1978, 1990), Hedges (1986, 1987), and Ritchie (1995). Orkney contains two of the best-preserved Neolithic settlements in Europe- each

representing a contemporary but distinct culture. The site at Knap of Howar has given evidence of crop growing (barley and wheat), cattle and sheep rearing; the bones of whales, seal, seabirds, fish and shellfish have been discovered in kitchen middens. The rectangular shaped buildings are built of large, flat slabs and furnished with stone shelves and cupboards. The pottery is a distinctive "Unstan" ware, which is associated with "stalled cairns".

Stone built furnishings are a feature of the other type of occupation site- Skara Brae on Mainland. Here an interconnected village was built into, and protected by, a kitchen midden. Stone furnishings include beds and dressers made out of large flags. The "grooved ware" differs from that on the Knap of Howar. Associated with this type of settlement are Maes Howe type chambered tombs.

Renfrew (1978) and Hedges (1987) have attempted to provide a fuller picture of the Orkney Neolithic. Renfrew notes, for instance, that all thirteen dry-stone walled tombs on Rousay correlate with modern farms and are on the edge of cultivable land. He suggests that each tomb defines a prominent point in a territory. On the basis of hypothetical population levels, Renfrew argues that there was a relatively egalitarian tribal structure with each tomb a focus of a tribal grouping of 25-50 people. This would suggest a Neolithic population on Rousay of between 300-650; in the eighteenth century the population stood at about 770.

Hedges (1987) developed Renfrew's approach further suggesting a Tribal-Orkney 2, which was a more stratified society and consisted of the two cultures already discussed. A distribution map gives Maes Howe and the *henge* sites of Brogar and Stenness as the focus for Mainland, Langamay and North Ronaldsay. The remaining northern isles and the cultivable parts of the southern isles focussed on Earl's Knoll, Papa Stronsay.

The succeeding Bronze Age does not match the wealth of Neolithic sites, possibly due to deteriorating weather conditions. Ritchie (1995) refers Orkney's Bronze Age as "a dull time" but Hedges (1987) has shown that the characteristic *burnt mounds* date from this period.

Poor climate suggests a low population until c.700B.C. when renewed immigration occurs. At Bu, Stromness, a round house with a thick defensive wall (5.2 m.) has an interior with central hearth, cooking tank, cupboards and storage area; it may have been the point of evolution of Iron Age brochs. Other structures of this period include subterranean *earth houses* and *Treb* dykes. Of the Broch of Gurness, Ritchie (1995) remarks:

“The buildings outside the broch are a stunning demonstration of what can be achieved with Orkney flagstone. They form a series of semi detached units consisting of houses and yards, and partitions and cubicles have been created using the upright flags. Each unit has a rectangular hearth....cupboards and even a lavatory.” (105)

Jackson (1984) sees Orkney as playing a key role between the Fourth Century B.C. and the Eleventh Century A.D. as the cradle of the Picts, a confederation of tribes significant in the history of mainland Scotland, and as with the other authorities cited emphasises the continuity of settlement on the islands. Ritchie (1995) is less sure but sees the Viking Age as making Orkney “*the focus of a new world set in the North Atlantic*” (118).

It is certainly true that this was a “golden age”, but the influential “Primitive Viking Model” which suggested that around 800-900 A.D. all previous culture was swept away by Viking incursions has been questioned (Firth, 1986). Language, the bellicosity of the Sagas, and place-name evidence would point towards an historical rupture, but Firth argues that most Norse immigrants settled peacefully as farmers. Certainly, Hedges argues that the archaeological evidence points towards integration rather than violent conflict and once again continuity is stressed;

“ (the environment) seems to have changed little in Orkney from the earliest Neolithic through to the Viking period some 5,000 years later...introductions of the hen (at least by later Pictish times), the domestic goose (by Viking times), and of oats and flax (again by Viking times) pale into insignificance beside the solid foundation of food production. Even the breeds of the animals seem not to have changed greatly...” (1986,50).

This move away from what is sometimes referred to as the “genocide theory”, in which an indigenous population was replaced by a Norwegian one in Viking times, has now been amended. Recent research by geneticists at University College, London has shown that, unlike the rest of Scotland, 60% of the male population of Orkney and Shetland, has D. N. A. of Norwegian origin. This could be partly due to the close trading ties between Norway and The Northern Isles in more recent times, but a study of Orkney which concentrated on a sub-group with ancient Orcadian names has shown a greater increase in Norwegian Y chromosomes suggesting that the Viking input was between 60-100% (B. B. C. Viking Genetics Survey. <http://www.bbc.co.uk> 13/1/2002)

A second fault line running across Orkney’s history is the process referred to by Orcadian scholars as “Scotification” (see for instance, Berry and Firth, 1986). In 1468 an impecunious Danish king pawned Orkney and Shetland, and in 1470 the Earldom of Orkney was transferred to the Scottish crown. The history of the next few hundred years is far too complex to be discussed here but may be summed up as a process of *Scotification* by the Scottish nobility and their representatives on the islands.

This, intentionally, sketchy description of Orkney contains the elements which make up Orcadian culture and sense of identity. There are elements here that could feed into Cohen’s (1986) hypothesis that a local population undergoing stress (loss of dialect, declining population, inward migration, for instance) articulates a sense of cultural identity. However this will not be the stance taken here at present. Instead, it will be argued that a sense of history, transport problems, the weather, agricultural problems, and other aspects discussed above have produced a careful, tolerant, historically aware and weather-driven culture that can assimilate social and technological change, and inward migration by southerners. It is a creative search for autonomy rather than boundary defence.

It is a very different culture to that of the Scottish Highlands, and George Mackay Brown has coined the expression “mixter-maxter” to describe the dynamic, changing elements of physical and human geography that are so important for an understanding of Orcadian culture. It might also be seen as a form of *bricolage* (Friedman, 1998).

As suggested earlier, the local intelligentsia, the media and the general public create cultural identity. It is constructed out of:

- A weather-driven element.
- A landscape-driven element.
- A history-driven element.
- An economy/transport driven element.
- A science and technology-driven element.

As suggested, Cohen's (1986) argument needs qualifying. Many aspects are more the conscious workings out of the intellectual community than a knee-jerk response to outside pressure; others arise because of the sheer difficulties of island life, although landscape and natural history compensate. It is true however that for Orcadians and incomers alike it is the contrast with life on the British mainland, with its pollution, pace of life and crime, which is important. The unique cultural identity may be summarised in the following:

| <u>Physical and historical</u> | <u>Construct</u> | <u>Characteristics.</u> |
|--|---------------------|---|
| <u>Geography.</u> | | |
| Latitude/Climate | "Weather-driven". | Grumble about weather. Love of fine days. Acceptance of weather |
| Geology/geomorphology/ Vegetation/island habitat | "Landscape-driven." | Transport problems. Building techniques.. Anti-bureaucratic. |
| Demography/prehistory/ The "Vikings"/Scotification/ Agricultural revolution. | "History-driven". | Interest in the "past" Tolerance. |
| Agriculture/Science/ Technology/Tourism. | "Economy-driven". | Crises in agriculture. Wait and see attitude. Unemployment. |

Fig 1. Components of the "Orkney Norm".

It is an assemblage, mixer-maxter, *bricolage*, the “Orkney norm”. It is defined by, articulated by, the intelligentsia, mass media, and popular culture.

These concerns can be demonstrated by a “content analysis” of The Orcadian newspaper. It is a tabloid-sized local paper typical of, but superior to, many found in the United Kingdom. It is published weekly and currently costs 50p. It was established in 1854 and is circulated to all the inhabited islands from its base in Kirkwall. It is assumed that a local paper reflects/leads local opinion although it must be admitted that many Langamay respondents claim only to glance at it for references to their island, and there is some scepticism of the letters pages being monopolised by an atypical minority. There is little coverage of news items external to Orkney unless there is a local connection, but the M. P. for the Highlands and Islands does have an occasional column. The content breaks down approximately as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| • Advertisements | 11 pages, |
| • News | 5 |
| • Sport | 2 |
| • Photographs | 5 |
| • Sheriff's court | 5 |
| • Letters | 1 |
| • Parish news | 1.5 |
| • Book reviews | 1 |
| • Articles | 1 |

Table 3. The Orcadian, 24/12/98

The existence of an “Orkney norm” can be demonstrated by analysing the newspaper between July 16th and November 26th, 1998 (18 editions). Advertising, sheriff's court, parish news, sport are not included, general news items and letters are. The analysis is based on a topic's appearance, not the length.

- Weather-driven:
 - Weather generally 6
 - Farming crisis caused by poor weather 27 plus one letter.
- Landscape-driven:
 - Air services 17 plus one letter.
 - Ferry services 9
 - Natural history 14
 - Seals 5
- History-driven:
 - History/archaeology 26
 - Folklore 2
 - Old photographs 8
 - Heritage 3
 - Science festival 3
- Economy-driven:
 - (Farming crises as above)
 - Local enterprise 9
 - Factory fishing 1 plus one letter.
 - Fishing/shellfish 11
 - Internet 3
 - Agricultural shows 14
 - Tangle collection 3
 - Criticism of local bureaucracy 13 plus 16 letters

Table 4. Contents of The Orcadian, July 16th-November 26th 1998.

It will be readily apparent that although there are some natural clusters, some of the topics could fit into more than one category. The crisis in agriculture in the summer and autumn of 1998 was caused by the exceptionally poor weather but it is also an economic theme; similarly some of the references to air services were due to the weather. The list does not give percentages but it does give some indication of items of interest to Orcadians.

One of the items, criticism of bureaucracy, should perhaps have its own category. Little positive seems to be written about the O. I. C. or Social Services and it is often in the letters column that criticism is harshest. This will be picked up later when discussing Langamay, whose county councillor is criticised for spending too little time on local affairs. Perhaps therefore, there should be a fifth anti-bureaucracy category, although to an outsider this seems unfair as O. I. C. appears to put a great deal of subsidy into the northern isles.

A consideration of the front pages of The Orcadian during this period gives a little more detail (again no consideration is given to the length of articles):

- July 16th. Natural history, history, territorial army, champagne, Safeway store, trade.
- July 23rd. Jobs, quarry, Stromness shopping week, visit of Q. E. 2.
- July 30th. History, ferry, agricultural crisis, climbing on Hoy, coast guard, Q.E.2.
- August 13th. Japan, local enterprise, agricultural shows, Prince's Trust fatality, fire brigade.
- August 20th. Taxi services, history, territorial army, oil, agricultural crisis.
- August 27th. New leisure complex at Picky, housing, Kirkwall hotel, supermarkets.
- September 17th. Weather, Sanday marathon runner, The Cold War, cutting Christmas bonuses by O. I. C., marriage, old Safeway store.
- September 24th. Agricultural crisis, history, football, travel agency, health board, territorial army.
- October 1st. Council criticism, social services criticism, agricultural crisis, lifeboat, death of student, cannabis.
- October 8th. Local entertainment, local entertainment, illegal immigrants, death.
- October 15th. Air services, nightclub, Earl of Orkney, divers, assault, vandalism.
- October 22nd. Closure of cinema, ferries, air services, agricultural crisis, putting the clock back, mail fraud.
- October 29th. O. I. C. red tape, agricultural crisis, factory fish farming, Prince's Trust accident, hospitals.
- November 5th. Air services, war memorial, whisky, British Petroleum, social

work criticism.

- November 12th. Weather, tangles, Picky Leisure Centre, Prince's Trust accident,
- November 19th. Seals, jobs, agricultural crisis, agricultural crisis, social work criticism.
- November 26th. Knife attack, heroin, council criticism, Prince's Trust accident.

Fig. 2. The Orcadian front page, July 16th-November 26th 1998.

Newspapers everywhere reflect the contingencies of life, but again certain themes seem to re-appear- problems with ferry and air services, agricultural crises caused by bad weather, bureaucratic criticisms, and historical/archaeological themes

The social use of Orcadian history to create identity has been discussed by Fereday (1986) who comments on the unwillingness of earlier generations of Orcadian historians to describe the rapacity of the eighteenth century Scottish lairds because they were either patrons and/or relatives. Of more interest, Firth, in the same volume, notes

“ One does also wonder whether the growing Nineteenth century bourgeoisie of Orkney was looking for suitable ancestors to **match those** of the lairds; certainly the modern fashion for Norse Christian names seem to have started only in the present century.” (163)

Today, the tendency is to emphasise historical continuity over the millennia, rather than rupture, although “Viking” iconography still figure in popular representations of Orkney. (See for instance, The People of Orkney, Berry and Firth, 1986).

Contemporary Orcadian scholarship is wide-ranging and science and technology play as important a role as historical and archaeological research. The annual Orkney Science Festival can include local slants on genetics, transport, and computer technology, as well as folklore, botany and ornithology. It is a syncretism that emphasises both the traditional uniqueness of the culture and a sophisticated understanding of modern science and communications.

Central to Orcadian self-identity is the “Orkney norm”. It includes tolerance, a lack of drama, dislike of bureaucracy, a gradualist rather than a revolutionary view of history; it is a waiting attitude towards innovation but not a “Luddism”; an acceptance of both the rapidly changing weather patterns and the foibles of human nature.

These are associated with aspects of non-verbal behaviour. On arrival on the island of Langamay, islanders will give a perfunctory wave to all carsconversations are slow and considered.....you feel you are being judged.....service in the shops is often deadpan.....it is only after you have been on the island for some time that the wave becomes more effusive.

Four of my Langamay respondents led me to the Orkney norm (see also next chapter):

J. F. is postmistress, landlady of the local hotel and a spiritual healer. Over the years we have shared many conversations. She appears quiet and somewhat formidable but is highly tolerant of human eccentricities and happily accepts the last of a “hippy” group who came to the island in the 1960s, even though he has had a series of partners living with him in the last thirty years. Some island families have their “black sheep”, often a drunk; she shows great tolerance of this human failing.

K. F. is her husband. His ancestors built up the harbour village at the end of the nineteenth century and have always run the post- and telecommunications office. He and his wife intend to sell up and move to the Scottish mainland as neither daughter lives on the island. I suggest that, as a local historian he must be very upset to see the family tradition dying out (three generations). He is in no way animated when he replies that it is part of island life-people leave. Neither is he distressed that the island population is now approximately 50% incomer.

M. G. is an incomer married to a local farmer. We discuss modern agricultural techniques, which are the norm on the larger farms. She argues that the undoubted success of the farmers lies in the way they wait to see which technologies are suitable for local conditions and then embrace them wholeheartedly if they work.

J. W. runs one of the village shops. It is conversations with him that emphasise the breadth of island tolerance particularly when it involves “bad” behaviour on the part of certain incomer families which was so extreme that it led to coverage in the National press. The Cohen (1986) hypothesis might suggest that this that this would be the arena in which local cultural identity would exert itself against incomers. I turn to extracts

from The Orcadian newspaper concerning events that happened when I was not on the island:

January 8th 1998.

Not guilty plea. A trial date for April 14th has been fixed in the case of A. F. (33) ...after he pleaded not guilty to breaking into Chapelhead..... on Sept. 28th.

March 12th 1998.

Man in court on school murder threat charge.

A man accused of threatening to shoot and murder people at [the] Junior High School has been released on bail...A. F....breach of peace and three other alleged threats to kill two men (one of whom was J. W.) during an incident at Roadside Filling Station, Lady village on Dec. 12^t, 1997also denied threatening to shoot and kill

J. W. is quite calm about the incidents. A. F is not a bad bloke: "I told him he just needed a good hiding", he doesn't like authority, whether it is a headmistress or a policeman. He shrugged his shoulders and said that it was just a small event in the long history of a peedie island.

A. F. was one of a number of incomers "dumped" on the island under a deal made between various English social services departments and Orkney Social Services, which has its headquarters in Kirkwall. As suggested, Orcadians are tolerant of incomers but have no mechanisms to deal with "problem families" (no police, no social workers. As a number of Orcadians pointed out, in contemporary society they could no longer use the old sanction of a "good hiding".)

An earlier incident also involves an English family. The Orcadian newspaper again: January 30th 1997.

O. I. C. to provide teachers at home for.... family (despite £139,000 cuts to the education budget.

"Near year long problem on [the island] caused following the arrival of a family from Yorkshire... Problem began at.... Junior High School after parents claimed two brothers were causing major disruption in the classroom. Parents then kept half the school's 80 pupils at home.....The two boys were subsequently excluded and the family removed their daughters from the school as well."

February 13th 1997.

The local M. P. calls for clearer government guidelines to help the local council deal with disruptive pupils "following events on [the island] where teachers are being flown to the island to educate the children of one family".

February 20th 1997.

Letter from E. S. an incomer but long-time resident on the island:

"The suspensions, and the brief mass withdrawal of unoffending pupils, were not steps taken hastily by trigger happy trouble-makers looking for easy notoriety. They were considered steps taken by mainstream people, officials, locals and incomers."

E. S. is a frequent letter writer and web-site designer who, on this occasion was speaking from first-hand knowledge as his wife works at the school. It is the O. I. C. and

the County Councillor (Howie Firth, who does not live on the island and is the main organiser of the Science Festival) who are criticised by him:

“how limply he grasps the relative enormity of what has been inflicted upon his constituents”.

March 6th 1997.

A second letter from a resident (another incomer):

“in reference to the family who are residing in the caravan on [they are building a house in the north end of the island]. I feel that they are very much abusing the council’s system....”.

April 24th 1997.

Langamay family take the council to court.

May 1st 1997.

It is reported that Langamay’s much-respected headmaster is to take early retirement.

May 8th 1997.

A second letter from E. S.:

“.....it has to be said that there is a low morale among those who care about what is being done to our school. We are dismayed by the feeble defence of our school that our councillor has been putting up.”

June 19th 1997.

The sheriff’s court upholds an O. I. C. decision to exclude pupils. There is a description of their unruly behaviour: slapping a female support teacher in the face, racial abuse and bullying.

June 26th 1997.

E. S. again:

“[Our] society can absorb the family if those people are willing to comply with the Sheriff’s findings but our community is not in the business of pussyfooting around if they are not. We will be watching Councillor Firth and his colleagues very closely.

This was the end of the case and the children were re-admitted to the school. There was another incident involving the parents and the new headmistress involving the suitability of reading material that will not be discussed here. The events are fascinating and suggest that there is no knee-jerk reaction on the part of Orcadian’s to outsider behaviour. On this occasion both “locals” and “incomers” combined to keep their children away from school: it was an atypically dramatic response by Orcadians and not all incomer families joined the boycott. Those mentioned in the reports are all incomers- the miscreants, the headmaster and the letter writers. A second protagonist involved in the campaign was also an outsider and it was his adopted children who were allegedly subjected to racial abuse by the boys. Some local opinion is critical of him. The new

headmistress is also an incomer but has more experience of “inner-city” schools; nevertheless, she was the teacher threatened by A. F. in the first incident.

These two incidents were first recounted immediately on my arrival for fieldwork in 1998 and it seemed that the island had become a very different place, that the Cohen hypothesis could be employed fruitfully, as could the concept of “moral panics”, (but see next chapter). Certainly there have been changes and islanders are less likely to leave their keys in the car or their houses unlocked, but:

- Orcadians have not singled out the majority of incomers out as a problem
- Both Orcadians and incomers are equally irritated by events
- If anything, it is Orkney Island Council and it’s local councillor who have been blamed.

Orcadian sense of history and a broad tolerance seem to be able to absorb such crises. This does not mean that there are no limits to the tolerance of “the Orkney norm”. There is distant friendliness, a wait and see attitude- can the incomer survive the winter? The “Orkney norm” is elastic enough to cope with a wide range of human eccentricities whether exhibited by Orcadians or incomers. Even what appeared to an outsider as major crises are no more than “*small events in the long history of a peedie island*”. This sense of time and place is described further in the next chapter, but using a different voice.

Chapter 2. Telling Tales about Orkney. Field notes made on Langamay in July and August 1998.

Monday 20th July.

I am sitting above the landing stage at Heggli Ber, a few minutes walk from the Braeswick cottage where I am staying. The simple pier is made of concrete with steps going down to a landing stage. In the west the island of Eday is just a short distance away and a cluster of cottages are clearly visible on its waterfront. It looks an easy crossing but just to the north are white breakers and a fast-running sea. The pier is now derelict but this was where Langamay boats departed to obtain peat from Eday.

The low cliffs are a honey-coloured sandstone capped by a conglomerate. Various seabirds call and a fulmar colony is grumbling. Below me there is seaweed and three eider ducks, behind sea thrift, between the two, a jumble of metal waste, which has been thrown over the cliff in discrete fashion and is now becoming camouflaged by grass. There is at least one Ford Fiesta, and the cabin of a second car; rusted rolls of barbed wire; a tractor engine with wheels attached; a wide range of axles and wheels from a variety of farm equipment. There are also paint cans, oil drums, and at least three lobster creels. The disposal of rubbish is an island problem. I remember in 1994 a long line of derelict cars that ran the length of Kettletoft village. One shouldn't get too romantic about the island.

I start to walk inland along a rough track which until recently was the most southern track on the west side of the island. On each side of the track are herds of cattle including eight fine-looking bullocks. They are fenced-in, and some of the fencing material is recent- concrete strainer posts, new wooden posts, galvanised Canadian and barbed wire. In places the fencing is older and the wooden fencing is less secure; stumps of older fence lines are visible. A culvert carries water to the sea. An alkathene pipe feeds a concrete water trough. The wooden five-bar fence is old but serviceable; it is secured by a thick rope.

The next field to the north is lush cultivated grass. Outside the fence, vetch, clover, bee orchid and parsley grow uncropped.

An incomer – a woman who has lived alone since her husband moved back “down sooth”, is renovating the first cottage, Strangquoy. There is a detached barn with garage doors and bright blue double gates which give entry to the two-windowed, one-storey cottage. Through the windows I can see herbs growing in pots. On one side is a large enclosure made of thin, quarried slabs of sandstone capped with sea eroded boulders; stone roof tiles are propped inside the enclosure which is waist high in thistles and other weeds. A small garden enclosure to the east contains a mown lawn, flowerbeds and rhubarb. A caravan is securely roped down beside the cottage.

A complex of metal and wooden gates and pallets block the entrance to the next field. On the south side of the track a long dry-stone wall separates one field from the next. It is full of buttercups and ill drained. A ruined stone shed has a fishing net draped over the roof; stone-tiled in part, it also has a covering of grass sods. Curlews and oystercatchers give warning cries in the deserted fields where they are nesting.

Some of the fields are so wet that I am forced to make a detour to reach the northern cliff edge, where I look out onto the promontory of Lambaness with its scatter of single-storey cottages, and the gently rising land along which the narrow metalled road runs in a straight line. Here there are both single and double-storey cottages, some lived in, others deserted. Seals are “hauled up” on the beach.

An overspill fulmar colony is nesting in a small ruined cottage situated on Springwell land. It was a two-roomed, two-chimney structure, which still has the remains of a massive stone slab roof. The small windows face south. At some point it has been re-used as a cow byre and stone slab stalls and wooden fodder racks remain. Judging by the archaic nature of the structure it would appear to pre-date most of the cottages, which are clearly the result the agrarian reforms mentioned by Traill Dennison in his report to the Crofting Commission in 1884.

Springwell, itself, where I am staying, is a renovated two-bedroom property with living room, bathroom and kitchen. A detached range of outbuildings provides L-shaped protection from the weather to the west and north. It is a squat structure with a rear extension covered in pebbledash. Both “real” and asbestos slates have been used in re-roofing. The raingoods are made of plastic. A small border and rockery have been

planted in the shelter of a stone wall, although Towrie's escaped cattle were later to trample the lupins, nasturtiums and misembreantheums. The grass verge opposite has been mown.

Further up the track where it meets the new road to the ferry terminal, there is a third cottage. It is another renovated one-storey building although Velux windows have been inserted into the old slate roof. There is an L-shaped, considerably renovated barn complex, a couple of other buildings and a caravan. A lean-to greenhouse contains pot plants and is covered by a fishing net as a protection against strong winds. Once again there is an overgrown garden enclosure surrounded by dry-stone wall, but to the east there is a second enclosure full of poppies, pansies, carnations, and a rockery. The rose hedge is unkempt and two derelict Volvos are parked nearby.

Four cottages, three of which have been renovated, the other derelict. All the inhabitants are incomers: a woman living alone, "my" cottage owned by another single woman who lives with her Orcadian farmer boyfriend at Backaskaill when the cottage is let, and a family who have a smallholding, but are presently living in Italy. Although all the cottages have some land, an Orcadian farming family owns most of the surrounding good land.

Cultivation and fine looking cattle, fields going back to wilderness, the apparent closeness of wildlife, is a theme identified by this short survey. Derelict cottages and the renovation of cottages by incomers is a second theme. A beautiful landscape juxtaposed with occasional piles of junk, is a third.

A bike ride. Tuesday 21st.July.

The building of long straight roads by landowners in the 19th century, and the invention of the bicycle must have made travel within the island much easier, although, as will be argued later, there were, and perhaps still are distinct groupings within the island. I am forced to use a bike as my car is in the local garage for repairs.

I leave the Southend at 08.30. It is a sunny morning after low mist. There are no pedestrians and no one in the fields. The ferry is obviously about to leave as I count twenty-two cars going to Loth. In previous years I have noted the importance of the

“wave”, and conduct an experiment: how many drivers will wave to me first- eighteen out of twenty-two.

I cycle via the Brough of Ayre where there are a number of fishing boats on the beach, and another large pile of debris. One of the few large houses on the island, Marygarth, is nearby. Once the minister's house, it is now owned by an absentee vet, who rents the house, as a studio, to an incomer and her son. (I am later told that she answered a lonely-hearts ad. and came up without knowing the island).

The journey continues northwards past Quivals Garage where there are a large number of scrapped Land Rovers (the owner used to work for Rover in Birmingham). On the Burness road there are attempts at roadside cultivation in the form of fuchsia and irises, again protected by the dry-stone walls.

Most of the cottages that I have passed are one-story, with add-on barns and outhouses. At Scar, however, there is a large mansion house with walled garden. It had been empty for years and in a bad state of repair. Recently it has been bought for a ridiculously low price, although the family only intend to inhabit a few rooms. He has obtained a job as gravedigger; she is setting up a seal sanctuary. It contrasts with the nearby sod roof structure owned by E. and W. who run an Angora rabbit farm, and a successful textiles business. It has taken one hour twenty minutes to cover most of the length of one side of the island.

On the return journey I detour around the wide inlet of Otterswick intending to visit Lady village and Kettletoft harbour. Although most cottages are squat and undecorated there are exceptions. Quivals farmhouse is large with stepped gables typical of mainland Scotland, and some of the cottages have ornamentation on porch or gateposts-a consequence of holidays spent further south (I am indebted to Kenny Foubister for this observation). I am slightly shocked to see a flock of ostriches in a field (and later find that there is a second flock at Castlehill farm).

As it is now raining I cycle to Kettletoft harbour and village and visit the large general stores on the site of the nineteenth century herring fishing station. Both father and son are serving and two women talking. There is no greeting or conversation. The shop

contains a wide selection of groceries and hardware. Newspapers are delivered to the island by air and are a day out of date. Other goods are brought to the island by ferry by the owner who also has a road haulage business. Although many of the island gardens contain salads and vegetables, there are few fresh foods in the shop. I buy a pork pie, which I eat in the rain.

There is more of a welcome in The Belsair, which is one of the two hotels in the village. Tuesday is the day on which a small group of incomers meet, as bank staff from Kirkwall fly to the island to open the bank. The Belsair is run by J. F. who is also the island post-mistress and a spiritual healer; her husband, Kenny, is a postman. The building has been in Kenny's family for three generations, and was the original centre for post and telecommunications for the northern isles. I have known most of those present for some years:

- I. L. and S. L. live at Aboondarigs, a cottage they have renovated. They were both teachers and have taught in various parts of the world. They shudder when I mention that I have been to Kirkwall- I. L. has not been there for eight months and has no desire to go there. Most of the group agree.
- M. N. is a recent arrival on the island. She and her partner previously lived on The Gower in South Wales. He is a seaman working on an oilrig supply ship, she has settled into living in a cottage where she has a variety of animals.
- R. is a German doctor, who lived for years in Africa, has bought the converted stable block of a farm manager's house but he can't stand the cold in Orkney. He yearned for a cool climate whilst in Africa, but now misses "café society". He has a tiny kitten, Bandito, which amuses the bar. His house is now up for sale.
- M. G. came to the island some years ago with two young daughters and has since married a local farmer.
- J. F. has already been mentioned, she is a dominating presence behind the bar.

We discuss island life:

On arrival on the island I had been warned not to leave my car keys in the ignition, and to lock the house when I went out. This was unprecedented in my experience of visiting the island since the early '90s. There were now "undesirables" on the island, two of whom had recently been "sent packing" by the police; but there were still a few members of the family left. The problem was that an extended family from Northumberland, one of whom had a number of convictions, had been dumped on the island and had been causing trouble. It was suggested that some older Orcadians had actually left the island as a result of break-ins and violence. They even have to keep the school locked now.

This led to a discussion of the ways in which the D. H. S. S. and Orkney Social Services colluded in dumping English "problem families" on Langamay. There were further discussions about the way in which Orkney Council on Mainland was out of touch with the northern isles. (These seemed to be important themes: "moral panic" caused by English incomers, and antipathy towards the County Council. Only the latter proved important).

I will later find that S. L. and I. L., who were so adamant that they never had any desire to leave the island, even as far as Kirkwall, send me a Christmas card in 1999 informing me that they have moved to Southern Spain in search of the sun. When I contact M. G. in the spring of 2000, I find that she and her farmer husband are about to leave for the Scottish mainland to continue farming there.

Two of the women left the bar to join J. F. for a healing session; there are a number of trainees amongst the incomers. The conversation continues:

The "gay" couple from the derelict village of Ortie have left the island; no one worries about their being "gay" but they left owing a lot of money. The local farmer who thinks it has possibilities for tourism has bought the village.

A runestone has been discovered near to Kettletoft, and after analysis in Edinburgh is now displayed in the Kettletoft Hotel.

The “other” problem family, which I have read about in The Guardian, has now allowed their children back to school, and there is a new headmistress with experience of “inner city” areas.

Tuesday 28th July.

It is another grey day and sea mist covers the island for a second day. At The Belsair the usual Tuesday group is assembled.

There is scandalous talk about Betty and Andrew whom I innocently accepted as knowledgeable informants in 1993- I even filmed her milking a cow by hand. They, too, left the island leaving debts, subsequently sailed to Africa, and were to be the subject of a television documentary. “*Betty was too vocal, Andy too lazy*”.

Further rude comments about O. I. C. and County Councillor Firth; he does nothing for the island and should give up and concentrate on the Orkney Science Festival.

Another acquaintance who is best left anonymous is claimed to be bankrupt owing money. His new wife is far too “pushy”.

J. T., a member of an Orcadian farming family is an alcoholic and the family try to keep money from him- but he gets “tick”. Apparently he is recovering from “*a two day drunk*”, but M. G. got two bales of hay from him yesterday and he seemed fine.

I talk to Tracey, behind the bar. She is a member of an old Langamay family and lives in the Northend. Her husband is currently working on a trawler, which she doesn’t like as he is away too often, and he doesn’t fancy working on the boats in the winter. For some reason the discussion turns to livestock and we, “outsiders” comment on the way that bulls, cows and calves, are found in the same field in Orkney. Tracey sees this as normal; we see it as “odd” but nice.

This leads on to further discussions about Orkney and the rest of U.K. I. L. and S. L. recount the story of how their neighbour, B. M. regularly mows their lawn for them. When they first moved to the island they paid him. After a number of such payments, he confessed to the landlady of The Belsair that he was offended by being paid for a neighbourly act. Too shy to tell them himself, it was left to J. F. to explain the situation. Now, whenever Billie mows the lawn he is given “*a fair bit of whisky*” instead, and afterwards goes to The Belsair where he says he has been at the L’s “*M. bottle*”.

There are further adverse comments on the O. I. C. *“On a scale of one to ten, it would score minus twenty-five”* One reason for dislike, which has also been recorded in The Orcadian, is that the council appears to prefer employing “southerners”. The re-housing of English “problem families” is again mentioned as a serious problem.

The Belsair. 7th August.

It is always incomers who cause the problems although most are o.k. “We know how to deal with Orcadians- the problems incomers bring tend to be new ones.”

The local hotel should be a good place to obtain information. Unfortunately, by 1998 The Belsair has been rather eclipsed by The Kettletoft, which is under new ownership. I am later told that the latter is where business is conducted these days, and it does seem to have more events such as darts and quiz matches. However I remain loyal to The Belsair, which has the advantage of J. F. with her wealth of knowledge about local people, and K. F. who is the historian and photographer of Langamay.

The bar used to be the post office and telegraph office built by K. F.’s great uncle at the end of the nineteenth century opposite the herring factory. There is a fine collection of photographs on display which include:

- The first female telegraphist in the British Isles- K.’s aunt- who was in charge of communications between Langamay and North Ronaldsay.
- A huge blown up photograph of the herring sheds and about seventy of the girls who came to the island each year to fillet and pack the herrings.
- A large hand-tinted photograph of the harbour. One of the little girls dressed in an Edwardian frock and straw hat is K.’s mother, the little boy next to her was killed in The First World War. The harbour master and “Flaggie” are also present (whenever a ship entered harbour a flag was raised).
- There are other photographs of the postman, a crowd waiting for the ferry, and other old scenes of Langamay. Most of K.’s collection is in a computerised file.

Although J. has spent most of her life on the island, she and K. now want to move to her native Black Isle, north of Inverness. Her two daughters have now left the island transferring to Kirkwall Grammar School as boarders at the age of fourteen. It is a common problem; pupils leave the island for K. G. S., and don’t return. There is no

work for them anyway. T., the young woman who works behind the bar, and also in the post office, would like a job elsewhere, but has no training.

J. makes the important point that to live on the island you have "*to be at ease with yourself*"; I add: "*and in a partnership which is at ease with itself*", with which she agrees. To J. the island is a place of healing and she uses the landscape in her healing techniques. She seldom leaves Langamay, and hates shopping in Kirkwall.

I enquire where people meet, as I seldom seem to see anyone: "*they visit each other*".

The German doctor whose house is for sale sits quietly at the bar sipping a rum. In J's words, "he is not at ease with himself".

[So there appears to be an Orcadian cultural set- calmness, little show of emotion, and a willingness to enjoy simple pleasures at home. Incomers are accepted but they have brought some problems with them].

Friday, 24 July:

J. introduces me to her husband whom I have never met, although I have often asked to see his collection of old photographs of Langamay. We discuss the history of the island which he doesn't think is given the priority it deserves- the factor's house, Geramont, had a roof until someone from the "South" bought it cheap and gutted it; there was a fire at Stove Model Farm which damaged an important building; O. I. C demolished Bea Mill; the unique horse engine house at Tresness is closed to visitors by its German owner.

J. returns to a theme we have discussed before: the social fabric of the community is fragile; it can't cope with violence and other offences committed by outsiders.⁴² K. argues that not all "deviants" are bad. During the 1960s hippies arrived on the island to live, and islanders were unconcerned, even if some of their behaviour was unusual. (The Orkneys are not The Western Isles, which is a centre of the "wee Frees", the Kirk.) However, there is general dislike of the D. H. S. S. people dumped on the island. There

⁴² She coins the useful expression "Fragile Langamay".

is also a dislike of the Lambaness peninsular, which has become known as “Little England” because some of the English incomers have placed “keep out” signs on the private road.

I introduce the idea of separate communities, and social differences, on the island. J. argues that there is not a “posh” part, but K. pinpoints certain differences:

- “The surname “Work” is a Braeswick name, “Hames” a Wattester name.”
- “At one time Northwall people had a reputation for fighting-nothing serious- but it is all incomers there now”.

J. then adds that Burness is “first and foremost”. She has jokes with B. M. one of the farmers from up there, that “the sun shines on both sides of the dyke in Burness.”

4th August. “Divine gossip”.

It may be an exaggeration, but ethnography sometimes feels like academically sanctioned gossip mongering. Listening to gossip is pleasurable and provides clues; making sense of it is the problem. I spend another Tuesday in The Belsair:

- Police have been on the island today and have picked up D. P. (one of those keeping ostriches). It involves a long and complicated dispute over the sale of his old house. Whilst the new owners were away he has been using their telephone, running up large and dubious telephone bills. He is an outsider but not D. H. S. S. Some well off families get rid of their “black sheep” by setting them up on the island. “The weirdo’s are all incomers,” says S. L.
- S. M. has put an advertisement in The Orcadian for a girlfriend. He had once written a letter in The Orcadian about the evils of drink- “He knows all about that”, says someone knowingly. On another occasion he was supposed to be going to India but he was back in two weeks.
- Of A. F., the man on firearms charges in 1997. He now lives on Mainland but the remains of the family are still on the island. “He was alright with me,” says G.
- I have read an article in an old copy of The Orcadian in which the writer, Fiona Mckinnen, had attacked “incomers” for taking jobs from Orcadians. The landlady is dismissive: “She is not a journalist. Her father was head of Stromness Academy”. I note my surprise that the article did not lead to letters in

the newspaper giving support to her views. "*Orcadians let people get on with their own lives*", is her reply.

(On a later occasion I discuss letter writing with E. S. I suggest that one Langamay resident is always writing letters to The Orcadian; he must be a spokesman for the community. She disagrees. "*He just likes writing letters to get a response. If I see a letter by him, I don't read it-and I 'm not the only one who thinks like that*".)

It is worth noting that when we "incomers" or visitors talk, we are loud and inclusive, allowing others to join in the conversation. Orcadians, by contrast, are quiet and do not include others, unless an effort is made by me. This does not mean that they are unfriendly. I will return to Orcadian ethology or micro sociology later.

[I develop further the idea of the Orkney norm. As long as you keep the norm, and it is pretty broad, you are O.K., whether native or incomer. If your behaviour is criminal or you are D.H.S.S. (sometimes) you are outside the norm, if "posh" (the vet's wife who always looked dressed for Ascot), put up barriers (the English at Lambaness, the German at Tresness), or, if too loud or pushy, you are outside the norm. You can participate in island life or keep yourself to yourself. Driving an unroadworthy car, driving whilst intoxicated or being a "drunk" is forgivable. I know of only one couple whose embarrassing drunkenness is considered beyond the norm: as it was to my students when they were invited round to their house one evening in 1994. Central is the description of "fragile Langamay" put forward by J. F. which seems apt for this unique but endangered culture.]

30th July.

Two local men are at the bar. They are discussing the poor weather, how it is all "topsy turvey" now with more of the wind coming from the northeast. "*All we have had are hailstones- but it is still a wonderful place. Tried to leave but had to come back*".

There has been no post for three days because the persistent mist has led to flights being cancelled. It will come over on Drury's lorry via the ferry tonight. They discuss the high freight charges and the cost of petrol. The phasing out of leaded petrol will have implications for the large number of old cars on the island.

A couple from a yacht moored in the harbour come in. They have been waiting for friends who should have arrived on the morning ferry but it has broken down, and one of the other ferries has been diverted to Langamay.

There is discussion of the effect of the weather on the harvest. The problem is getting the heavy modern machinery into the wet fields. They are anxious to bale and wrap the hay.

I.S.

Ian is late for our evening meeting as the farmer he works for is desperately trying to get the hay in now that the weather has improved. He has also had to work building his mother's hayrick on her smallholding above Bea Loch. He is thirty-one and lives on the smallholding. He is an accomplished fiddle player, having learnt to play, like many other Langamay children, in the local Fiddle Group. It was started by a blind lady who came to the island at the age of sixty-seven and is now continued by the Newmans. In the summer there is a violin summer school for "*the peedie kids*".

I wanted to see Ian because he is one of the few people who still collect "tangles" on a regular basis to supplement his income. Today, he tells me only Andrew Skea, Billy Tulloch, Michael Brown and some of the incomers collect the kelp from the beaches. It was once a major Langamay proto-industry, and the remains of the circular kelp burning pits can be seen beside many of the beaches.

Permission has to be given by the landowner whose fields abut the foreshore (*Udal Law*), and usually the farmer will be given "*something like a bottle of malt*". The tangles are collected in December during the winter storms, and landed on the beach. They are transported by tractor for drying on *steethes*- either wooden pallets or stones. Ian prefers a stone run of some twelve feet, which allows air to circulate. The tangles are frequently moved: "*they must be really dry*". When ready they are weighed by the harbourmaster. In June a ship arrives and they are taken down to the West coast where they are stored in a Dutch barn. The following year they are "*clopped up*" and taken to Girvan. In 1998 they are fetching £166 a ton.

On a good day he can collect six or seven slings, and over four days a ton of the wet tangles can be gathered. He collects after work, at weekends, or at night using a halogen lamp. He wears oilskins and rubber gloves, and despite the arduous nature of the work, he thinks it great fun. It is extra money: "*tangle money pays for a motor bike*".

He describes farming on the island. There are about six large farms now, which are in the process of increasing acreage. Thus there are no prospects of starting up in farming- you need five or six hundred acres. If you only have a thirty-acre holding you need another job. As a teenager he didn't want to leave the island, although he ruefully acknowledges that it might have been good to get away. Of his class of twelve, eight left the island, and now only return for holidays. There are no prospects on Langamay, and whereas there were once seven or eight motorbikes (bought with tangle money) there are none now.

E.G. and M.G. farm at Castlehill. He is not one of the "big six" but a rising figure. He has married an incomer. He argues that proper farming- not smallholding requires modern methods. His wife makes the important point that Orcadian farmers are slow to take up new methods, wait until they have been tested, and then utilise them. For all his talk of modernity E.G. has a fund of old stories and is interested in folklore. His accent is a modulated Orcadian when he speaks to me, but I find his accent unintelligible when he is speaking to a fellow Orcadian. His most recent acquisition is a flock of ostriches, which he now accepts was not a good investment.

J. W.

I have known J. W. since my first visit to the island. He is a shopkeeper and elder of the Kirk. He is a local man but his wife comes from the neighbouring island of Eday. We discuss the island in his lounge over liberal drams of malt, which slightly disconcerts me, as I know he is a Kirk elder (but then, as I have already noted, this is not The Western Isles.) I had wanted to discuss the incident involving one of the "the problem families" when he was threatened with a gun. He misunderstands the "dramatic events" I am referring to, and recounts a story which I have not heard before, and obviously still hurts: Some years ago (early 1990s) there were problems with a new minister who refused to marry couples who wanted a social side to their wedding. The elders tried to defuse events. The daughter of the minister sent J. W. letters accusing him of being "a good example of hell". Seven elders, including J. W. broke from the church. They tried to stop the story from reaching the media, but press and television covered it. It was "*a horrendous time*", but it was the minister and his family who left the island.

He was then prompted to discuss the other incident, which I had read about in the press, and had been mentioned to me when I arrived on the island. It was a "*seven day wonder*

blown up out of all proportion.” There was no real problem. “*Alan, all you need is a good hiding*”, he had told A. F. “*But if you got on the wrong side of him he could be a nasty little devil. He was very anti-authority, thought the Specials were pigs, and that education was as bad as the police.*” J. W. agreed that some older people did now lock their doors but there was no need. “*It was a small event in the long history of a peedie island.*”

[I now had to discard my original hypothesis concerning “moral panics” but it gave me further evidence of the Orkney norm and the title for a chapter]

J. W. discussed his childhood on Langamay in the 1950s when the owner of Stove would tell them off for robbing the nests of wild birds; and the pranks meddling with the hayricks, which would be dismantled and re-built in front of the farmhouse door. The policeman from Kirkwall would have to come out on the boat, with his bicycle, to tell them off.

A born entrepreneur, J. W. went rabbit hunting as a teenager, which provided a “*livelihood for a great many folk*”. Young boys would poach one or two hundred rabbits a night using torches and a Tilley lamp; the rabbits were packed into wooden tea boxes and sent to George Agnew’s in London’s Smithfield market.

Of the other “problem family”, they were quiet at the moment, but no one would dare give them a lift.

[Another interview elicited the fact that these children were badly behaved unlike other Langamay children. One had said she was going to disturb animals at the island show. When a show official told her off she had answered back.]

John and Mary at Woo

They live in a re-built cottage, with nearby mill, close to Scar. There is no mains electricity, but a wind generator has been erected. They have goats, hens and an excellent vegetable garden. Extra money is obtained by gathering tangles, and there is a Scottish Office grant paid for leaving a marsh untouched. He had worked at Gatwick Airport but had “*overdosed on technology*”. Despite the apparent seclusion he would have liked greater privacy from the occasional passing tractor and was thinking of leaving the island for a more solitary life. His partner, however, who was not present, enjoyed the social life of Langamay and would probably stay on the island.

D.H.

D.H is now a smallholder and postman, but in the 1970s he was well known as the Leeds United (when they were a great football team) and Scotland goalkeeper. He is married with five daughters aged between nineteen and six; three are at the island school, and one at K .G. S.

They moved from Harrogate where the children were not allowed out on their own. Here the children roam safely alone. He emphasised the importance of the fiddle school run by the Newmans and Ian Simpson. The children had computers, videos and horses but he accepted that they would have to leave the island to find work when adult. He had always wanted a bit of land and was disillusioned with city life. His only regret was the lack of a Chinese takeaway and trees.

Although the children were heavily involved in the social life of the island, he was too busy working as a postman, and with his animals and garden. *“But you do have to be a certain type of person. There is no problem being an incomer: Just mix with them”*. He had relied on local people *“a hell of a lot”*. *“If incomers want to mix, locals were willing. If not, they would leave you alone. Take your pick”*.

He had no regrets: *“My only regret is not coming sooner”*. *“Don’t think we are on the edge of the Arctic Circle. Can be in Harrogate in four hours- by plane”*.

[I comment later that D.H. is not what I expect an international footballer to be like. The reply: *“If he tried to show off, he wouldn’t be accepted here”*]

B.F.:

I first visited Langamay in the early 1990s before the construction of the Ro-Ro ferry terminal at Loth. A motorboat made the long journey from Kirkwall to Kettletoft harbour. I landed, not knowing where I was, and was offered a lift by the local taxi driver, B, who refused payment when I arrived at my cottage. Since then we have often talked about “life” when I have returned to the island. Between 1949 and 1959 he worked for Austin Motors in Birmingham, and subsequently for Rover until 1969. He loved rally driving and for a time worked for himself in Sellyoak. The family left Birmingham because of the problems facing young people in the city. He bought the garage, on the spur of the moment, through Exchange and Mart magazine in 1983. The island came as a shock- *“nature in the raw, it was “clean”, there was a whale beached on the shore. I saw an owl – What a grand way to live.”* The school was good with only seven pupils in his son’s class.

There were no problems of acceptance: *"it's up to you. Join in if you want; if not, no problem."* After six months he was told, *"You're all right boy". "By listening you learn. Listen to the old boys. Man, before, you didn't have time to do that." "You should come in winter-rain comes sideways-stay for one winter. Some have gone by spring."*

He got involved with the island community association and also became a member of the community council. He wanted to put something back- there was no resentment. It is a lovely place to get involved and he knows more people than he ever did in Birmingham. Although his first marriage broke up, he has re-married and his new wife loves the island. They run the taxi service and a post office, and also do B&B; he runs the garage still.

On the negative side he misses motor racing, rallying and other big sports events. He has to watch them on Sky television or video.

There have been changes on the island: a new football pitch, a village hall, a swimming pool paid for largely by the islanders themselves. More cottages have been renovated, and house prices have risen because of incomers; this has stimulated local farmers to renovate redundant cottages.

He calls the "problem families" the "families from hell". What both Orcadians and incomers feel is that *"People work their bollocks off and there are about 25 individuals on the island dependant on D. H. S.S."* An Orcadian interrupts us- *"Tax payers keep the bastards going."* It does have an unsettling effect, and it is the incomers. Aggravation in a small school affects everyone. Teachers are powerless. Unlike J. W. he thinks that there may be a lasting effect on the island. But Langamay schoolchildren are still polite, and the school seems to be getting back to normal. Last month there was talk about a paedophile being dumped- it was made quite clear to the council that this would not be tolerated.

He feels that the island is "holding its own."

Aaron Cottage,

Aaron is a small cottage overlooking Roos Loch, in which I have occasionally seen otters swimming. It is being renovated for the composer Sir Peter Maxwell Davis who is moving from Hoy where he has lived for many years. The eighteen-year-old son of the artist running a studio was helping with the renovation. Four years ago his mother answered an advertisement put in a national newspaper; she came up from

Cardiganshire with an offer of marriage. It lasted three weeks. He is bored by Langamay and glad (but apprehensive) that he is now off to university. He loves the island, however, and may return when he is older.

E.S. and W.S.

Elizabeth and William and their children live and work in a long, low cottage near the mansion of Scar. It is roofed by turf over corrugated iron- because it was cheap. They breed angora rabbits, which are kept in a large barn, and shorn for their wool. Their garment business is thriving and the Internet "*is a godsend*", allowing them to receive orders from U.S.A., Australia, and Bahrain. They employ outworkers locally and in The Shetlands. They do not expect their daughters to go into the business, and the elder boards at K. G. S. and "*loves it*".

Elizabeth is a member of the music group and comments on the lack of Orcadian voices in amateur drama- "*they are too shy*". William is an international marathon runner and can often be seen running around the island.

I comment that I had read a letter by her in The Orcadian in which she defends incomers working on Orkney. I mention the article by Fiona McKinnen but she has not read it; she was responding to a letter from "*that man in Rackwick (Hoy) who is always writing letters about the way in which the Orkney way of life is dying out*". There is no animosity towards incomers on the island, although an occasional remark will be made when someone is drunk.

Kettletoft Hotel.

I seldom go into the bar here since receiving less than a welcome when I first visited the island. It is under new ownership and is now quite lively. I visit it to see the Viking rune stone which was discovered nearby.

I meet a large, bald talkative Yorkshireman who turns out to be Andy and Betty's brother who has taken over their cottage since they left leaving all their debts. It was the best move he ever made- if you went out in his part of South Yorkshire you could assume that the television and video would have been stolen by the time you returned.

He had helped D. P. set up his ostriches "*but he made a bollocks of it*". D. P. had given him a tractor.

There is animosity between him and his landlord, E.G. who hasn't repaired the cottage. Later E.G. tells me that he had been sent a bill for £300, because M. said E. G.'s cattle had got into his garden and eaten his vegetables.

The Police.

On my first few visits to the island I never saw a policeman. Islanders drove their dilapidated vehicles with little fear of prosecution- the clatter of a trailing exhaust pipe was almost as much a feature of island life as the din of bird song. The occasional visit of a policeman would involve taking a flight, but the police would book a car and accommodation in advance. Not surprisingly, un-roadworthy cars would be hidden away before the visit.

Visits to the island are still unusual, but now the police car can be carried on the Ro- Ro ferry, and nobody knows when a visit might take place. It comes as a shock to be suddenly confronted by a police car on a narrow road when there is no time to put a seatbelt on.

The police have always come to Langamay on Show day, when there is the occasional fight as the night advances and drink has been taken. Even the most sober of islanders is critical of their presence, as it is felt that it spoils the day.

In July and August 1998, I was surprised at the frequency with which I saw a police car. They were there for the Show; there was the incident involving D. P.; they were there when the remaining members of one of "the problem families" were escorted off the islands.

Ethology or the micro sociology of greeting.

Sunday, August 10th. The ferry must have arrived as I pass a line of about twelve cars driving from Loth. No one waves except those that I know to be "locals". The look of a car is a good indicator of being an islander- their cars is usually old and dilapidated.

I have an exhibition of photographs relating to Langamay to be set up in the island school. I telephone M.A., she is a teacher married to a farmer. The telephone conversation is one-sided: I have to keep talking until I have given a full account of myself, the only response is the occasional "ay, ay". It is the same when I meet her, although in the end she volunteers that the photographs are "bonny".

The Garage. I pay a bill for parts shipped over to the island for my car. There has been a delay as they were sent to the wrong island. Finally, Drury's lorry brought them over

as a favour. An oldish farmer stands in the garage entrance watching. No response. I pay the bill and chat. No response from the farmer. I leave; get in my car, but then return to ask if the police have left the island. I make a joke about not wearing a seat belt when I was confronted by the police car. The farmer now responds by laughing and mentions the number of times the same thing has happened to him. The ice has been broken but I had to make the first move.

Interview with M. and G. (incomers). They have noticed a perfunctory wave, which is given to strangers. It is only when people know you well that the wave becomes more effusive. G: *"They sum you up. Are judging. Are you going to stay? Not that they won't help if you need something. Lots of people come here with "rosy" ideas. Winters can be harsh."*

Notes on the wave. The majority of drivers do it, as do pedestrians, or if you pass someone in a field. If a person is gardening with their back to you, they will still wave without turning around. There are various types of wave ranging from one finger raised from the steering wheel to the whole hand raised. Both are pretty automatic and not accompanied by facial gestures. A pedestrian will raise the hand high. However, if a person is known, the hand will be taken off the wheel and a more flamboyant wave, accompanied by a grin, will be given.

If a wave is not given then it is probably a tourist visiting the island or it is a sign of non-acceptance or enmity.

Other non-verbal clues to island identity:

- Wearing a seat belt- visitor to the island
- Slowing down for rabbits in the road- rabbits are a major pest and only a visitor would be sentimental enough to brake to avoid them.
- Clothes. The rule is to dress down. Most people on Langamay wear layers of clothes that can be taken off if the weather improves. At Langamay Show most people wear their ordinary clothes, at Kirkwall show by contrast, there are many examples of gentrification in the clothes worn.
- Cars. As already mentioned most cars are old; the main farmers, however, tend to drive relatively new Land Rovers.
- Houses. This relates more to the nineteenth century. Most people lived in cottages but the laird, the doctor, the minister, and the schoolmaster would live in two-storey dwellings.

These observations are mirrored in some of the short stories of George Mackay Brown:

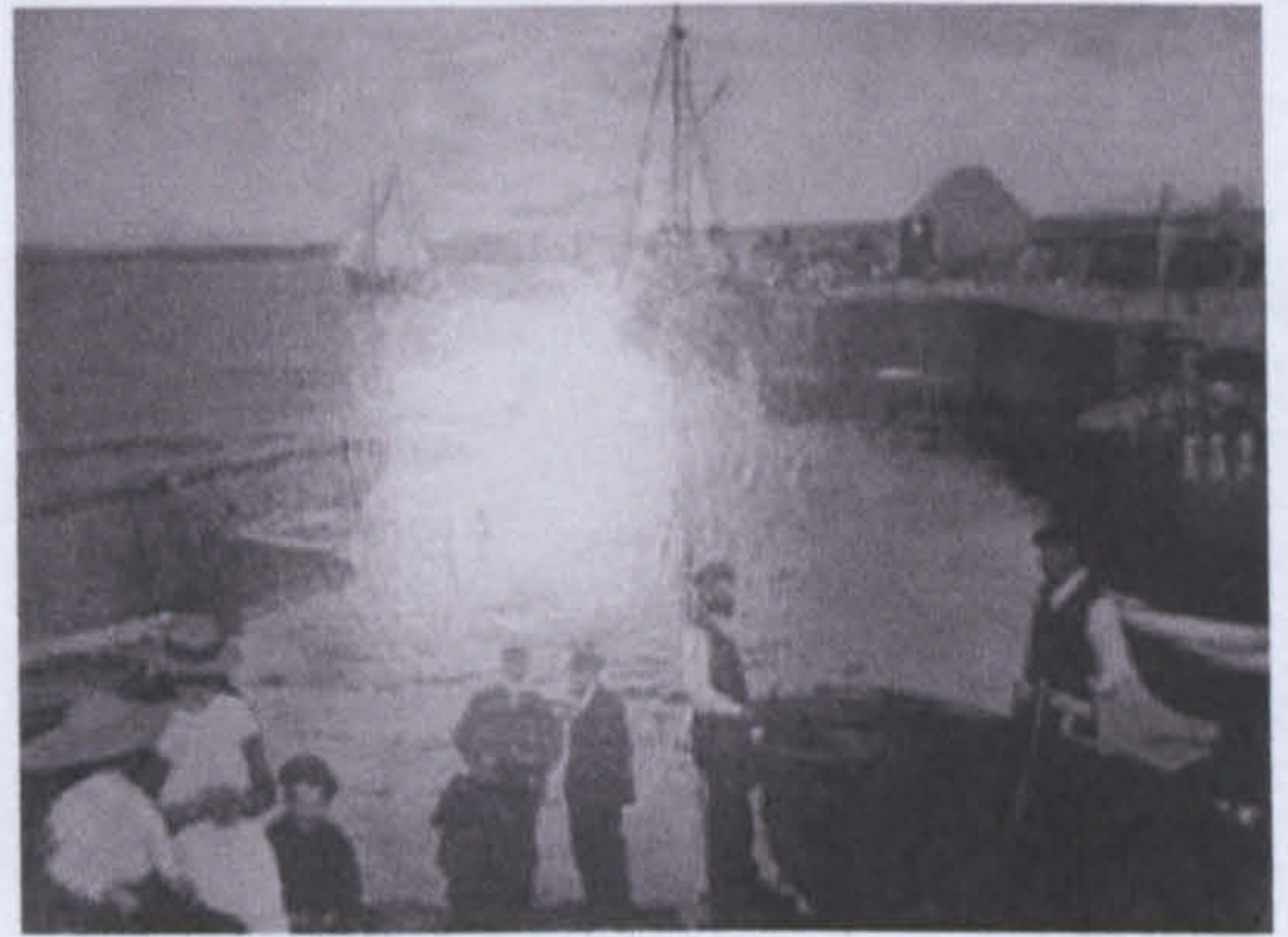
“The village watched with sardonic awe as the grand folk greeted each other with shouts and kisses. (Their own greeting, even after a decade of absence, was a murmur and dropping of eyes).” (Greenvoe, 1972, 13)

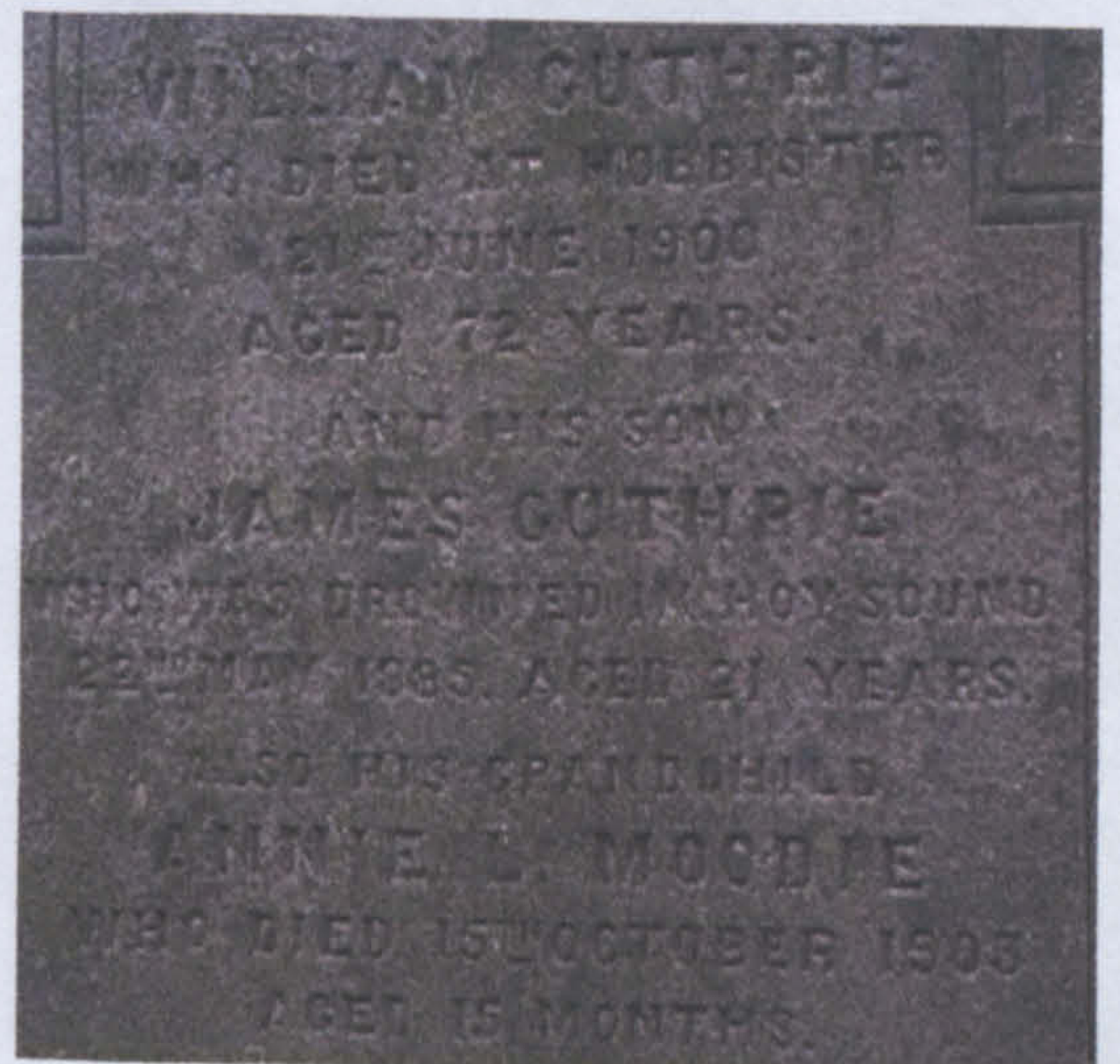
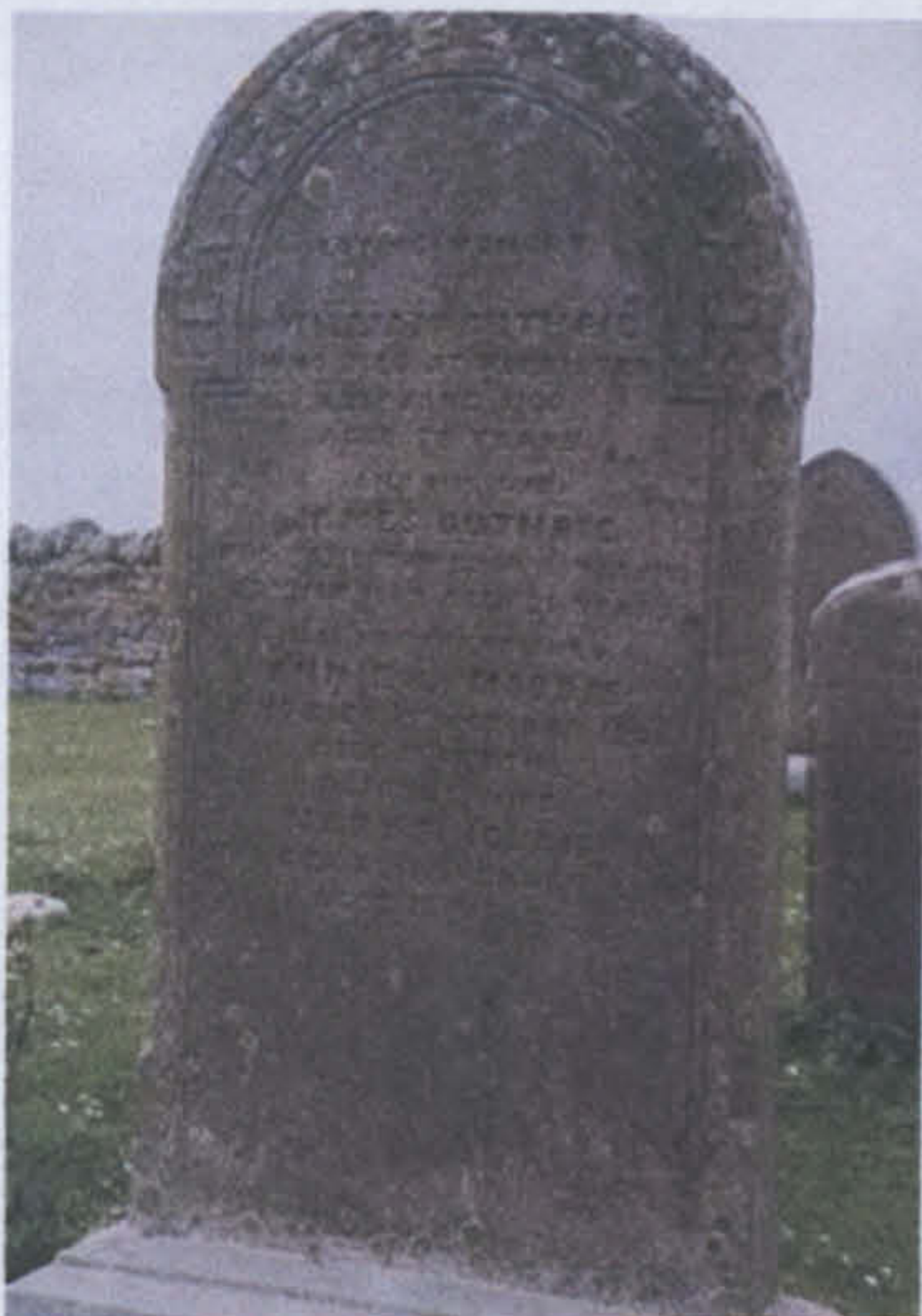
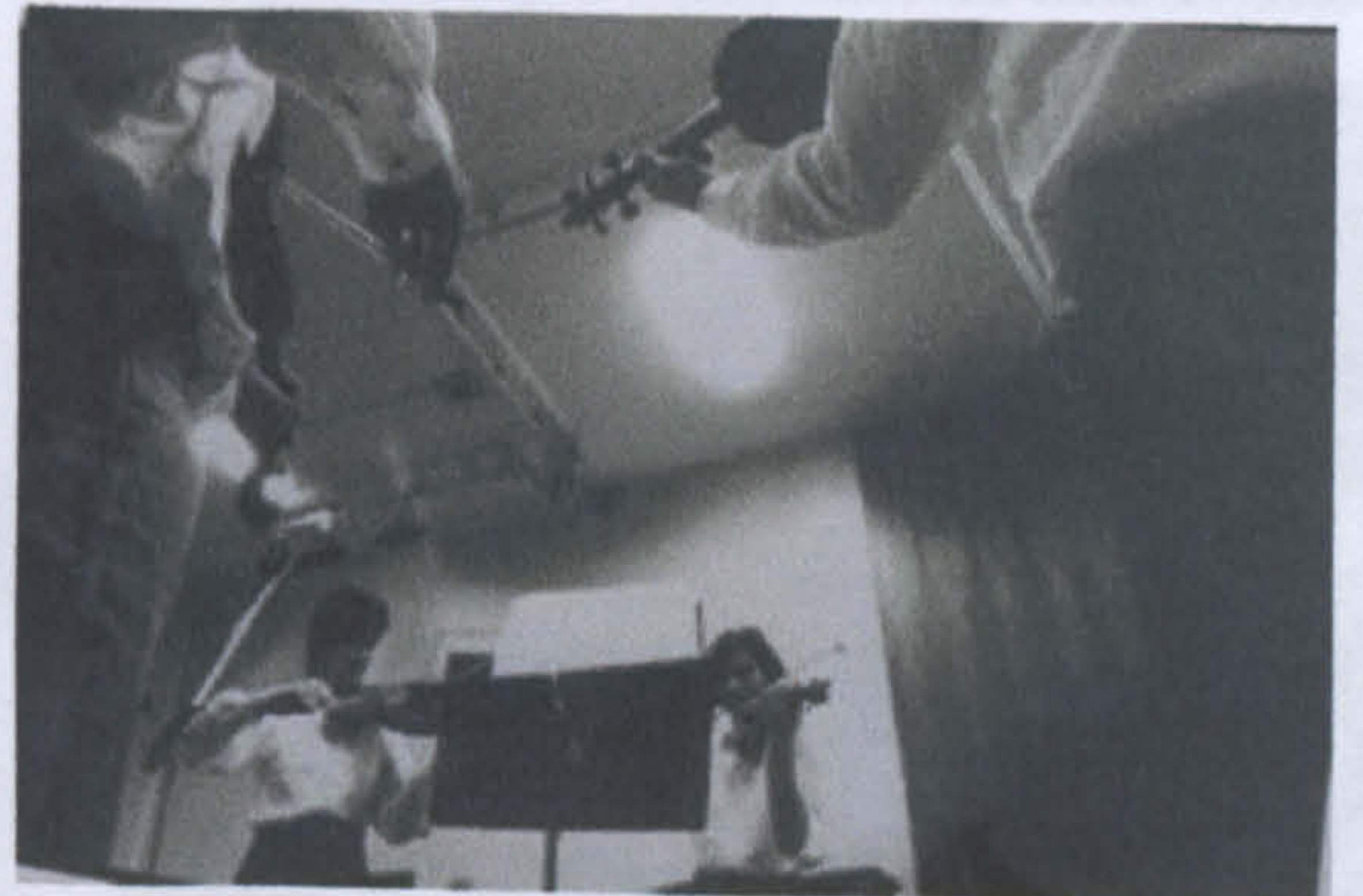
“The girl gestured with her whip. She called. Her voice is not like the voice of the islanders, it is more like the loud imperiousness of our former administrators and civil servants, a sequence of brassy shouts.” (The Indian salesman watching the laird’s granddaughter, Greenvoe, *ibid*, 71)

As suggested in Part One, Brown is a good sociologist.

Chapter 3. Visual aspects of Langamay.

These photographs could be seen as illustrating the text provided in chapters 2 and 4; they could also be a form of “salvage” anthropology as advocated by Mead (1973) but this was not the intention. The carrying of a camera was a useful “pretext” whilst making observations (Collier and Collier, 1986). It is hoped, however, that the photographs convey some of the main themes which struck the observer when first confronted by the island which were then formulated by him as a series of binary oppositions under the heading the raw and the cooked: wildness/cultivation, nature/culture, protected garden enclosures/wild flowers, dilapidation/rebuild, the “old”/the “new”, beautiful landscape/rubbish. It was a useful generalisation but it had to be modified later. In many cases there is more of a gradation in which land and sea merge into each other, old houses are rebuilt using new materials, other cottages are empty but retain mildewed furniture and memorabilia, and wrecked cars are moulded by weather and sand into a new aesthetic. Although many of the fields are derelict and overrun with rabbits and nesting seabirds, there are many others in which a modern agriculture is practised. The dominant first impression is of empty cottages and an un-peopled landscape; it is only later that the undemonstrative, but busy social and economic life of the island became visible. This sense of continuity and quiet change is exemplified at The Belsair, which was built in the late nineteenth century as shops, a post-office, and communications centre for the northern isles of Orkney. Three generations later the same family run the post-office, although the rest has been turned into a hotel where old photographs of the operatives and the post-office clock decorate the walls. It is not to produce a “theme pub” but is an affectionate memorial to the island and a family’s past. Upstairs, a huge collection of photographs has been computerised. The padlocking of a barn door, reflecting recent problems, produces the only discordant note.

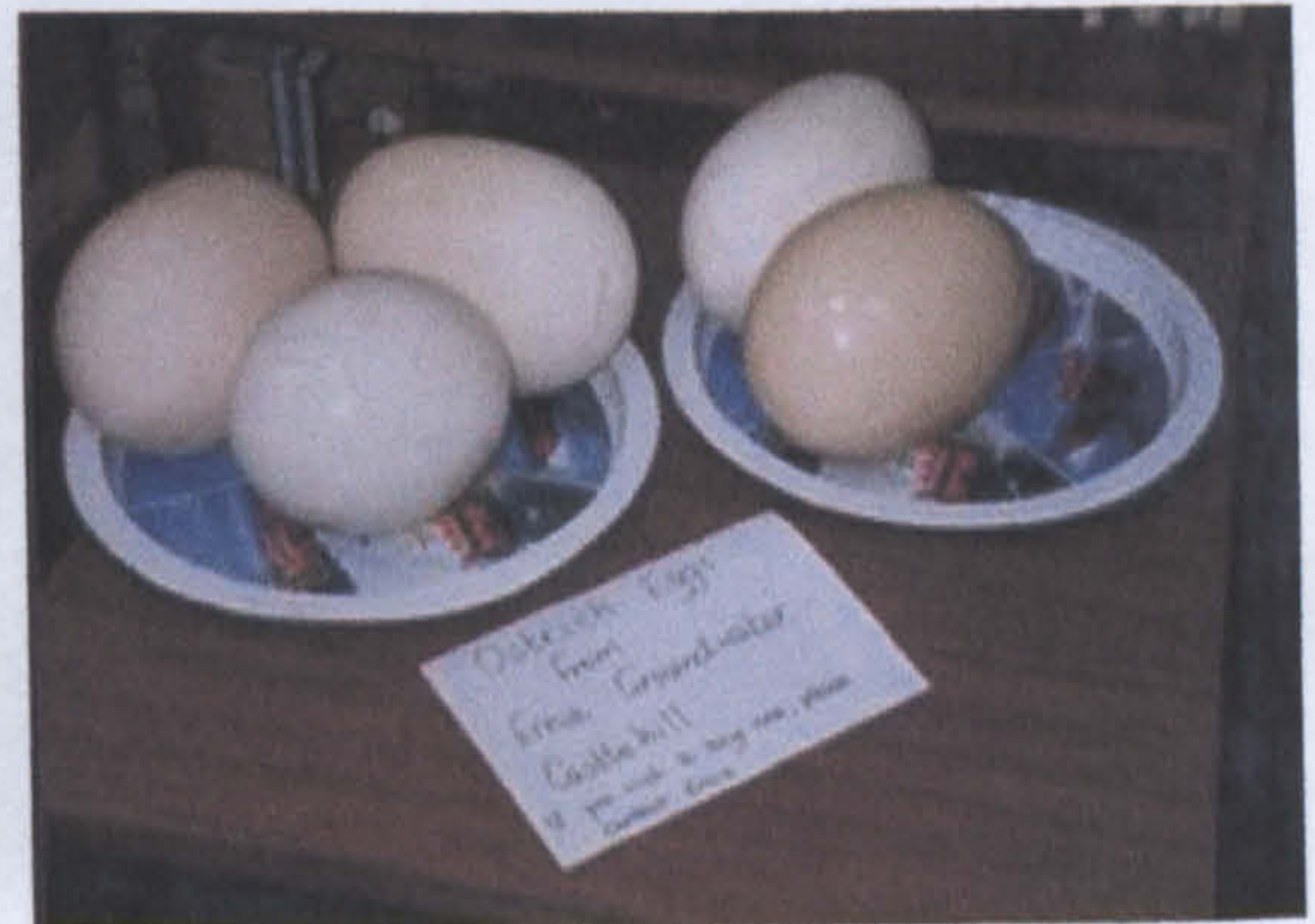






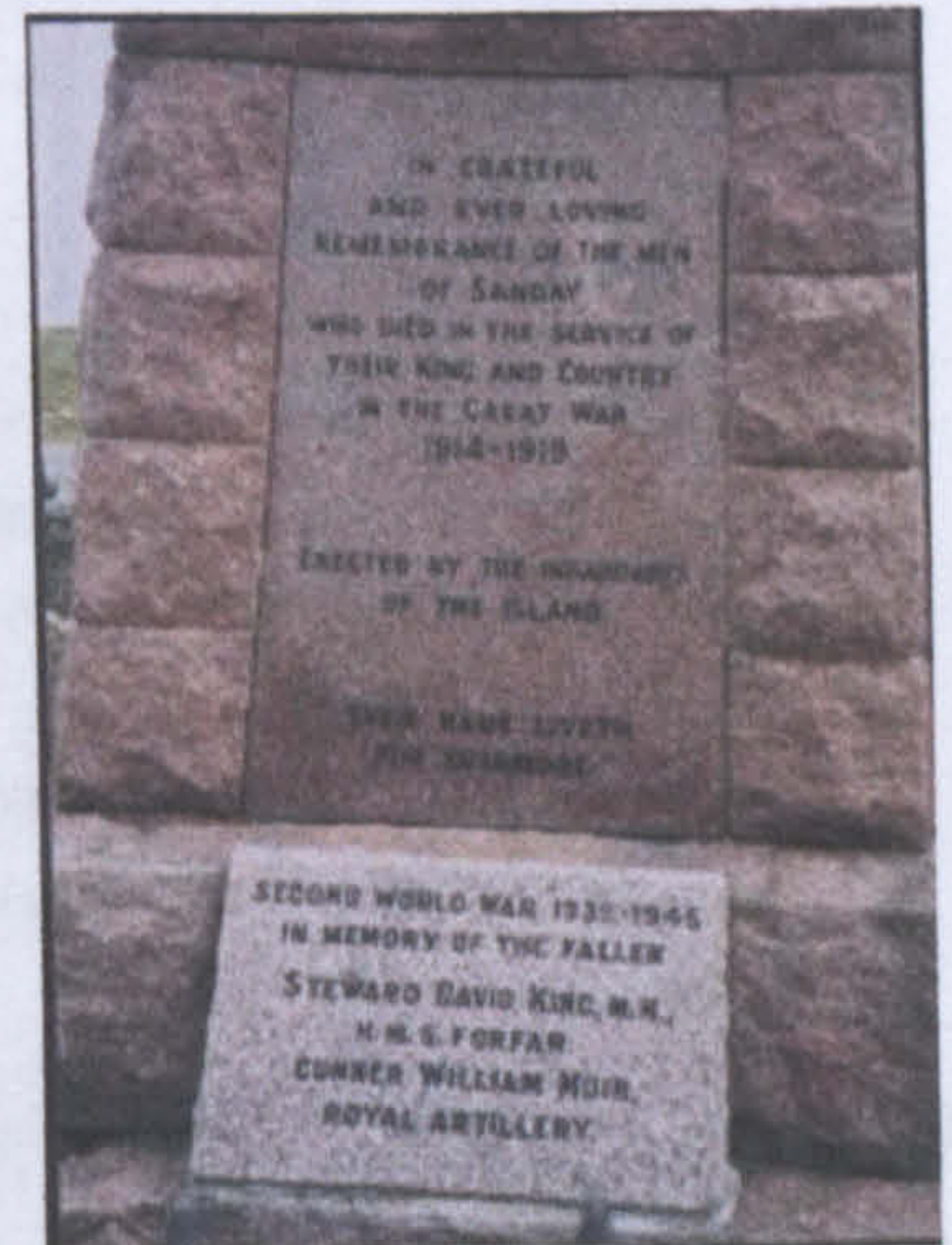
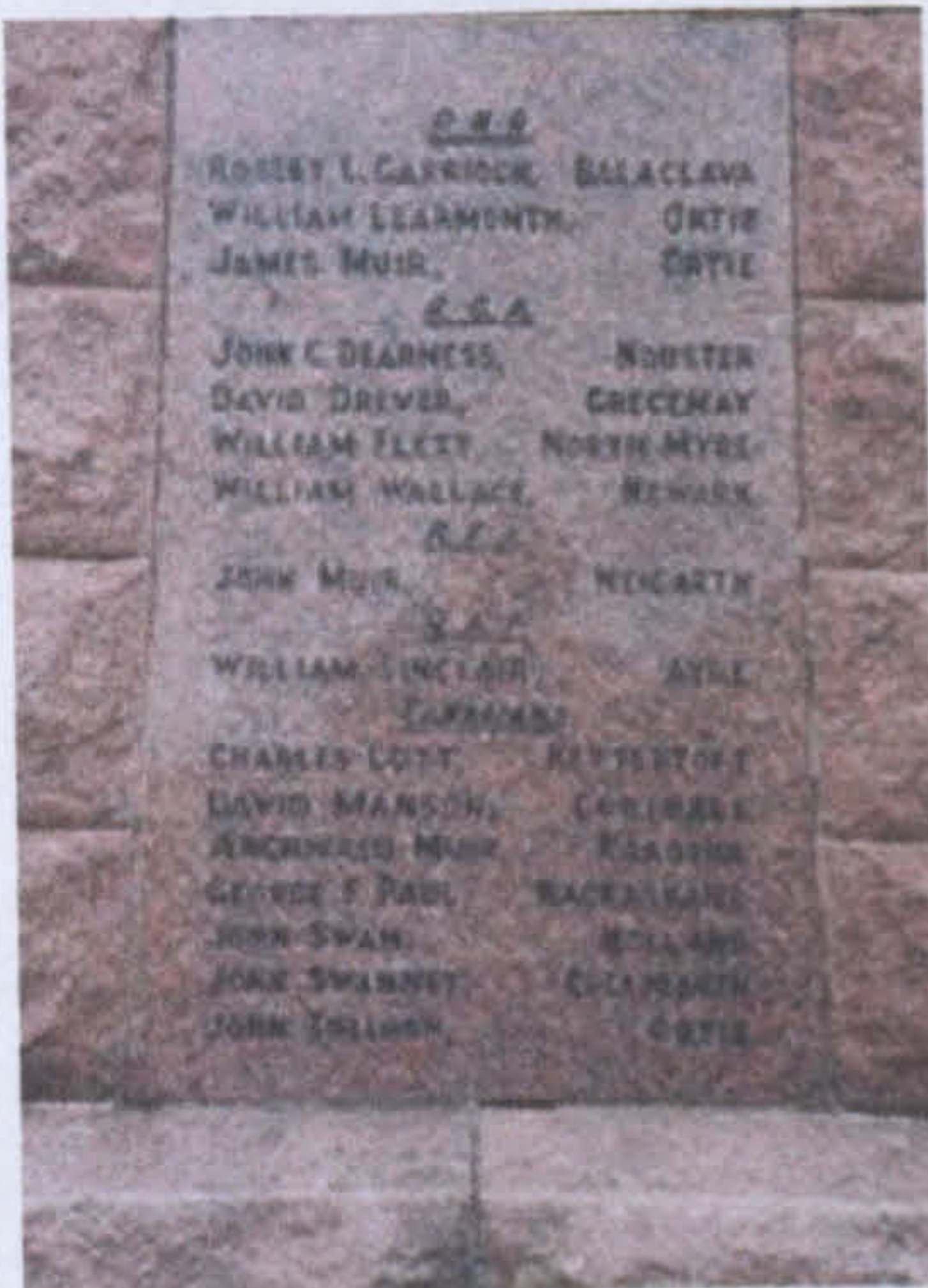






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Chapter 4. Stability and change on the island of Langamay

Part Two began with a general attempt to isolate what it was to be an Orcadian using evidence from the media and first-hand statements of local people. The following two chapters looked at the specific: a first-person narrative of observations of Langamay and conversations with islanders and a series of photographs, which were intended as “other ways of telling”. This chapter relies on a variety of census material, archaeological reports, “statistical reports”, locally produced magazines and web sites to provide an historical and sociological overview of stability and change on the island.

The island (it is approximately 20 km. long by 8 km. at its widest but for much of its length is only 1 km. wide) was surveyed in some detail by The Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments (Lamb, R.1980) in the 1970s and presents an astonishing picture of archaeological richness although most of the sites remain unexcavated. The summary, which follows, should be read in the context of the history of Orkney given in Part Two, chapter 1.

The Neolithic is well represented by a number of chambered tombs (5 in number). Quoyness (67663779) is a fine Maes Howe-type cairn, and Maesry (Mount Misery, 78314351) is a large sealed up cairn. There are at least twenty-six unexcavated cairns at Elsness, some of which may be Neolithic, and twenty-one *burnt mounds* usually dated to the Bronze Age.

At Toftsness, Lamb reports:

“there are several large artificial mounds- whether chambered tombs, brochs or settlement mounds cannot be ascertained and about these are much reduced long dykes, running for considerable distance and all of them at a regular interval of ten metres or so, beset with smaller cairns or mounds. There are signs of slab formed cysts in some mounds.” (1980, 9)

Ten Iron Age *brochs* are recorded and the Viking Age is well represented. Since Lamb’s survey, a Viking ship burial has been discovered and excavated near Scar. The 6.5 metre planked boat was buried in a stone-lined pit, and contained the bodies of a

man, an old woman and a child. It has been dated between 875-950 A.D. The grave goods of the woman were a sickle, shears, weaving sword and two spindle whorls; a sword, a quiver with arrows, bone comb and gaming pieces, accompanied the man. A decorated dragon whalebone plaque was also discovered and has become something of an icon for the Orcadian media. The original chance discovery above the seashore during fierce winter storms of 1985, and the later excavation to rescue the burial during similar storms in 1991, once again emphasises the changing land-sea interface of Orkney (see [Http//www.orkneyjar.com](http://www.orkneyjar.com) and The Times, 18.2.2000).

Of more recent date, kelp pits pock the island coastline, testament to the importance of tangle collection and the burning of kelp during and after the Napoleonic wars. It was first used to obtain potash for glass making, later for iodine and more recently for alginates used in a variety of food products. (See Thomson, 1983).

The agricultural revolution produced a number of impressive buildings including the horse engine house at Tresness. Of the great model farm at Stove, with its tall steam engine chimney, Lamb (1980) observes that it would be typical of Northumberland or the Lowlands, but is a most unexpected sight in Orkney. He does not mention that there appears to have been a similar chimney stack associated with the mansion at Scar: it has been demolished but is clearly visible in an old picture post card owned by K. F.

One of the First World War German Fleet, collected together in Scapa Flow at the Armistice, destroyer B.98, lies wrecked off the island, and is clearly visible at low tide in The Bay of Lopness. A complex of ruined and re-utilised concrete buildings at Northwall, which once formed the Lettan wireless station, represents the Second World War.

The ancient agricultural continuity of Orkney, referred to in chapter 1, is suggested on Langamay by the *tells*, large settlement mounds surmounted by more recent farmhouses. The antiquity of many of the present farms is confirmed by Norse place-names (Lamb, 1992): for example, *hister*, *bu*, and *bea*, all of which refer to Viking farms and are still operating today; and the present day Tofts farmhouse, *tafts* referring to “where a house once stood”.

A number of detailed accounts of the island have been written from the late eighteenth century onwards:

The Diary of Patrick Fea of Stove, Orkney. 1766-96. (Published recently with an introduction by Hewison, 1996):

Fea was a seaman and smuggler as well as a farmer. He played a peripheral part in the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, and hid with other Jacobites from Hanoverian troops. On the island Hanoverians seeking reprisals after Culloden destroyed the farmhouse at Newark. He was either a tenant or manager at the old Stove farm, and was one of a large network of Northern gentry. As Hewison notes of the day books:

“the days flow smoothly one into another becoming weeks and then months spilling over into the underlying rhythms of the season year by year- sowing in springtime, haymaking in summer, harvests good and bad in autumn, and the dim-lit barn work of winter....” (1996, 3)

The old farmhouse of Stove looked out onto a large green, which has now been eroded, so that the sea now laps close to the porch of the house, which was rebuilt in the nineteenth century. There were stables for fifty horses and barns for one hundred cattle. Sheep were wintered on the *holmes*. Rabbits killed for their skins. It was an arable farm growing oats, bere, turnips, and potatoes. In the garden grew kail, parsnips and salads.

The First Statistical Account of Orkney (also known as The Old Statistical Account) was drawn up between 1795-98 by local ministers (re-published by Wakefield, 1978).

The Reverend Mr. William Clouston described the island soil as requiring “sea ware” to manure it. Tangle collection and kelp making had become such a staple commodity on the island over the previous thirty years, that in summer the local people neglected their fishing. Because of kelp, estates worth £40 at the beginning of the century were now worth £300 annually. (This was the start of the kelp boom, which involved little investment by landlords, was labour intensive, and led to a large population rise. Thomson, 1983).

Clouston reckoned the island population in 1787 to be:

| Parish | Total | Males | Females | Farmers |
|------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| Cross Kirk | 581 | 256 | 325 | 18 |
| Burness | 388 | 170 | 218 | 15 |
| Lady Kirk | 803 | 393 | 410 | 24 |
| | 1,772 | | | |

Table 1. Population of Langamay, 1787.

Most islanders were engaged in agriculture. Other occupations included:

| Other occupations: | Retailers | Weavers | Tailors | Shoemakers |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------|------------|
| Cross Kirk | 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| Burness | 0 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Lady Kirk | 1 | 7 | 4 | 1 |

Table 2. Occupations on Langamay, 1787.

There were three hundred and forty nine houses on the island (but many of these must have been pretty basic; see Walter Traill Dennison's description of what constituted a house of an agricultural labourer below), a few were uninhabited but others had been built:

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| April 1791 | Cross Kirk | 115 houses | 579 souls |
| April 1791 | Burness | 79 houses | 390 souls |
| August 1787 | Lady Kirk | 155 houses | 803 souls |

Table 3. Dwelling houses Langamay, 1787-1791.

Thus there was an average of 5 persons per dwelling.

Clouston then gives a survey of livestock and equipment on the island:

| Parish | ploughs | carts | horses | horned cattle | sheep | swine |
|------------|---------|-------|--------|---------------|-------|-------|
| Cross kirk | 41 | 14 | 265 | 448 | 852 | 81 |
| Burness | 24 | 8 | 211 | 235 | 1100 | 36 |
| Lady Kirk | 50 | 15 | 380 | 631 | 2259 | 18 |

Table 4. Livestock on Langamay, 1787.

As with the earlier description of Stove, the importance of the horse can be seen. It was not just for general farm work, but also to transport the vast quantities of sea ware.

Clouston documents the great industry of the people and the time spent helping to the detriment of fishing. Although the people manufacture linen and “coarse clothes for their own use only”, some of the young wear clothes of “foreign manufacture” which they pay for from their kelp earnings (just as in the Twentieth century I. S. described “tangle money” as paying for a motorbike).

Tenant farming was based on *steelbow* which Fenton (1997) defines as: “ a form of land tenancy according to which the tenant got stock, growing grain, implements etc. on the condition that the equivalent in quality and quantity should be returned at the end of the lease.” (447)

As was general in the eighteenth century the lot of the labourer was parlous and few could be helped if poverty stricken, because of the absentee landlordism typical on Orkney. Most of the large Orcadian landlords used an intermediary, the factor. Clouston as described other problems facing the islanders:

- Lack of peat for fuel. Fea describes sailing to Eday for peat. The alternatives were seaweed, driftwood and dried cow dung.
- Lack of a ferry. Although, once again, Fea gives a number of descriptions of what seem to have been regular trips made between the northern islands and Mainland- but he was gentry.
- Lack of markets.
- The lack of a standard measure. This was a complex and peculiarly Orcadian scandal (The Pundlar Process⁴³).

The Second Statistical Account (also known as The New Statistical Account, 1842)

was compiled in 1842 by Walter Traill and George Smellie, both ministers on Langamay, for the parish of Lady only. They record the parish Census returns as:

⁴³ A complex scam involving unstandardised measurements used by the Earl of Orkney and challenged by 18th century lairds.

| | |
|------|-----|
| 1801 | 830 |
| 1811 | 862 |
| 1821 | 880 |
| 1831 | 858 |

Table 5 Population of Lady Parish 1801-1831.

Traill and Smellie pick up on the agrarian reforms that were being made on Langamay and the rest of Orkney (see Schrank, G.1995, for a detailed study of improvements made on the Graemeshall estate on Mainland. For the more traumatic changes, and poor landlord-tenant relations on Rousay see Thomson's The Little General and the Rousay Crofters, 1981.) They observe:

“For at least thirty or forty years past, there has been an inclination in every farmer who had the opportunity, to reclaim land from the waste. Before that period, it was considered as impractical; but the example of a few individuals who had the fortitude to depart from established custom, showed that the innovation not only was safe, but might even be attempted with advantage.” (144)

They describe two methods of reclamation:

- Mode 1. Plough at Martinmas when the ground is soaked. Leave for winter frost and summer heat. In the following spring spread ware and dung –harrow and roll. Cross plough and sow with oats.
- Mode 2. The lazy bed. Spread ground with dung, plant potatoes. The following season sow oats and bere.

They were impressed that the Old Statistical Account recorded less than forty carts for the island as a whole; there were now 118 in Lady alone. Carts had supplanted the old method of carrying ware in panniers.

The old tenancy system of *steelbow* was no longer common. On a large farm there were three classes:

- House servants dwelling on the farm with the family, and having a “monied fee”.

- *Boll men*. They lived in cottages scattered over the farm. In winter and spring they had monthly allowances of grain and oatmeal, food and wages. They worked as daily servants until the end of May; they then worked the kelp at a stipulated price per ton; they were also involved in shearing and harvesting.
- Cottars. They shear in harvest as *boll men*.

[Note: the 1841 Census only distinguishes agricultural labourers and farm servants, as well as farmers.]

Clouston and Smellie did not have use of the 1841 Census for the island. The population of Lady was now 885, and there was a total island population of 1894. Households in Lady had risen to 174. The average number per household was therefore still 5.

The 1841 Census:

As part of this work is concerned with outside influences on small communities it is interesting to look at the amount of mobility of individuals, both within the island and from outside. Unfortunately the 1841 Census is not as detailed as later ones, in giving family relationships, or parish of birth. I have guessed at relationships where necessary, although this is not as haphazard a process as it may seem given the context. Nevertheless, it is detailed enough to show the following:

Out of a population of 1894, 1839 (97%) were born in Orkney. Of those born outside Orkney:

| |
|-----------------------|
| 45 born in Scotland |
| 6 born in England |
| 2 born in Ireland |
| 2 born undecipherable |

Table 6. Those born outside Orkney, 1841 Census.

The English are an interesting mixture:

- An Orcadian teacher's son suggesting, that he had been born when the teacher and his wife had lived in England
- The wife of an Orcadian spirit dealer. Again, suggesting travel on business.

- The two sons of Orcadian shoemaker and spirit dealer, Thomas Leslie (Leslie is a common island name.)
- The surgeon, Patrick Wood, whose wife was born in Ireland and son in Scotland.

The other person, born in Ireland, was a sixty year old *hanker*.

Of the forty-five Scots, twelve come from the large model farm at Stove, including the farmer, a couple of farm servants, an agricultural labourer and his family.

At the Manse there were eleven people in the household. Both the minister and the preacher came from Scotland, as did one male servant. The preacher appears to have married an Orcadian and all three of their children were born in Orkney. Another, minister and a “preacher of the gospel” were Scots born. There are no Orcadian ministers.

The two lighthouse keepers were both Scots, one with a family and two lodgers born in Scotland. Two midwives were Scottish (although a third was Orcadian). The wives of two fishermen and two agricultural labourers were Scottish. There are a few others including three travelling merchants, but no trend is discernible.

The only conclusion is the well-known one that doctors and ministers of the kirk come from outside Orkney (a number of George Mackay Brown’s stories deal with their isolation, Greenvoe 1976; The Sun’s Net, 1989).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ In the 1990’s the island doctor was Nigerian and the minister Scottish. It is slightly surprising that the teacher in 1841 was Orcadian, although the professionalisation of teaching was still in its infancy.

The 1861 Census and related material.

The Census returns for 1861 are more detailed and include the relationship of household members to each other, and parish of birth. It is, therefore possible to gain a picture of movement within the parish as well as from other parts of Orkney or elsewhere. The 1861 Census also produces one surprise and I am grateful to Kenny Foubister for drawing my attention to this. I will begin this section with this event, which is also covered by The Orcadian in early 1861 (I would like to thank P. Astley of Orkney Archives for finding me this material).

On the 30th March 1861, The Orcadian reports that The Johannes, captained by D. Von Pritzen, went aground between Newark and Tresness, in a thick fog. The ship had left Bremen on the 23rd March and whilst off the island had mistaken Start Point lighthouse for a passing steamer. On board was a general cargo and some 137 emigrants bound for Baltimore in the U.S.A. Although the ship was badly damaged, passengers and crew were able to walk ashore at low tide (The Orcadian, 6/4/61).

Once on shore the shipwrecked passengers received “exemplary kindness” and although local charity was offered, the ship-owners and the local Lloyd’s agent, James Scarth were able to look after their comfort. The Tract Society of Edinburgh sent German language New Testaments (The Orcadian, 20/4/61). Later on May 6th The Orcadian was able to report that they had been picked up by The Anna and were now *en route* for Baltimore (and The American Civil War!). Obviously whilst on the island they were provided with accommodation, and on April 8th the Census took place. The enumerator, John Park records the following:

- 29 in the outhouses of Newark
- 44 in the new schoolroom, Lady.
- 25 in the outhouses of Cleat.
- 41 in the barns of Tresness.
- 3 at Millhouse.
- 1 at Cleat.

Table 7. Shipwrecked Germans, 1861 Census

There is no reason to doubt the islanders' generosity, but it obviously didn't extend to accommodation in their homes, which were no doubt crowded anyway. The younger unmarried males (12) and females (12), all less than thirty years old were housed close to the captain in the Cleat outhouses under, one assumes, the supervision of an older seaman. At Tresness, five families lived with twenty-one young men and women. At the large farm complex of Newark there were twenty-nine people, including a family of eight. The schoolroom housed forty-four, including seven families. A woman and newborn child, and the captain lived in private houses.

They were skilled craftsmen, servants, and farmers, but I have not been able to find any references of contact with the local population. It is a delightful curiosity, which, once again emphasises the "sea" in Orkney life, the contingencies of history, and things thrown up on the beach.

According to the 1861 Census, the population of the island had now risen to 2006, consisting of 969 males and 1037 females (not including the Germans). This can be broken down by parish:

| | | | |
|---------|-----|-----------|-------------|
| Lady | 983 | 492 males | 491 females |
| Cross | 594 | 289 males | 305 females |
| Burness | 429 | 188 males | 241 females |

Table 8. Population of Langamay, 1861 Census.

There were 372 households, with an average of 4.6 persons per household.

A rough index of geographical mobility may be obtained by looking at the place/parish origin of a parish population; Lady parish has been chosen for this analysis, which includes adults and children, but excludes visitors and the shipwrecked Germans:

Population of Lady Parish; 983.

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Born in Lady parish | 729 (74%) |
| Born in next parish | 106 (10.7%) |
| North Ronaldsay or | 30 |
| Elsewhere Orkney | 62 (9.4%) |
| Born in Orkney | 927 (94.1%) |

Table 9. Place of origin within Orkney

Elsewhere:

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| Scotland | 49 (5%) |
| England | 3 |
| East Indies | 1 |
| Ireland | 3 |

Table 10. Place of origin of those born outside Orkney.

Those born outside Orkney, with occupations, were: three lighthouse keepers, G. P., midwife, female teacher, farmer, three farm managers, ploughman, cattle-boy, two blacksmiths, cart-wright, inland revenue officer, housekeeper, domestic servant.

From the Census it is also possible to analyse place of origin of marriage partners, a better index of geographical mobility as it excludes children, many of whom will have been born on the island irrespective of their parent's origins. It might also be possible to pick up any trend towards differential movement between parishes of males and females should it exist.

Married couples, Lady Parish 1861: 142

Both born in Lady parish 62 (43.7%)

Male, Lady parish, female

adjacent parish 11 (7.7%)

Female, Lady parish, male

adjacent parish 9 (6.3%)

Both adjacent parish 9 (6.3%)

[91 couples or 64% are islanders]

Table 11. Place of origin of married couples both born Langamay.

Who were the other married couples? The numbers are so few that no distinction is made between parish of origin on Langamay. Of the other 51 couples living in Lady:

Male born Langamay, female
born elsewhere Orkney 10 (7%)

Female born Langamay, male
born elsewhere Orkney 10 (7%)

Male born Langamay, female
born outside Orkney 7 (5%)

Female born Langamay, male
born outside Orkney 2 (1.4%)

Both other parts of Orkney 11 (7.7%)

Both outside Orkney 10 (7%)

Table 12. Place of origin, at least one person born outside Langamay.

Discussion of these figures will be deferred until the 1891 Census has been considered.

A more detailed survey of island life is provided by Walter Traill Dennison's published evidence before a Board of Inquiry into Scottish crafting (1884, 1933). He is an important figure in Scottish Folklore studies, and some of his work has recently re-published as Orkney Folklore and Sea Legends (1995). He is commemorated today in the island school, and in a large memorial at Cross Kirk yard. He was another of that large network of wealthy families- the Traills, Feas, Balfours- already met with James Fea of Stove. Muir (1995) describes the family as moving to West Brough farm, Langamay, in about 1851. They were involved in the agricultural improvements of the period. In his spare time, W. T. D. collected Orcadian folklore, noted aspects of culture, wrote poetry, and recorded landscape change on the island. In the pre-ambule to his 1884 report he describes island society before the "new agriculture" as:

- Proprietors.
- Tenants with 50-100 acres. *Steelbow*.
- *Peerie* tenants with 10-15 acres.
- *Oncas* or cottars. Held a house and piece of land. The right to keep sheep on *hagi* or out-pasture. Duty to help at harvest, thatch the steading, thrash yule straw, collect ware.
- *Bowman*. A ploughman. If married had a cottage. Part money wage, part bere and meat:

"so late as 1848 the writer knew farms on which bowmen rose at four o'clock a.m. in winter, plodded in the darkness over wet paths from their homes...." (51)

He worked from fourteen to sixteen hours a day.

Traill Dennison describes the miserable existence of the tenant and labourer in the eighteenth century, and emphasises the burden of taxes and the rapaciousness of "crown donatories". However he argues in favour of kelping which introduced a cash economy to the island. He is strong in his praise of the agricultural improvers such as John Traill Urquhart of Elsness, and Malcolm Laing of Stove who "squared" and enclosed the land, demolished and rebuilt cottages, and dramatically increased productivity. The two Laing brothers are interesting; Malcolm was a historian, Samuel a writer and translator of the

Norse Heimskringla who also established the herring fishing industry on Stronsay. Unfortunately, before the advent of a steamship service allowing access to markets, and because of the incompetence and dishonesty of managers, many of the innovators went bankrupt, including Samuel Laing (see Schrank, 1995 for similar events on Mainland). He pinpoints the establishment of a steamboat service between Orkney and Leith and Aberdeen in 1833 as important to the success of Orcadian agriculture. There is a fine description of the old cottar housing, which is worth quoting in detail:

“the chosen site of a cottar house was the south side of a rising ground. The earth was dug away from where the house or rather hut was to stand....This natural embankment gave shelter, and also saved stones.... The side walls were generally from 4 1/2 to 5 feet High. The gables often built of turf....The only door often consisted of a straw mat. There was no window, no opening but a lum-hole...and a reek-hole in one end of the hut....The fireplace was in the middle of the floor. Parallel to, and about two feet from the horridly damp north wall, for back, the damp heather for bottom, and having the cold flagstones for front, was the bed of the last century.” (54).

He then retails an incident when he found a family of eight sleeping in such a bed. By contrast, he argues, and there is obviously a sub-text to what he is describing, since the improvements, crofters generally have two or three apartments, a wooden floor, grate, curtains and even geraniums on the windowsill. The modern peasant also enjoys tea, jams, loafbread, cheap paraffin, “and the beautiful modern lamp.” Because of such improvements, initiated by large, well-capitalised farms, he argued that there was no further need for change.

The 1891 Census.

By 1891, the population of the island had dropped to 1929 (933 males, 996 females):

| | | | |
|---------|-----|-----------|-------------|
| Lady | 845 | 410 males | 435 females |
| Cross | 639 | 311 | 328 |
| Burness | 445 | 212 | 233. |

Table 13. Pop. of Langamay, 1891

There were 420 dwellings and the average size of household was 4.5. Within the parish of Lady:

| |
|------------------------------|
| 651 born within the parish. |
| 75 born in the next parish. |
| 81 born elsewhere in Orkney. |
| 38 born outside Orkney |

Table 14. Place of origin, Lady Parish, 1891.

In 1891, 77% of the population of Lady had been born within the parish, 90% on the island and 96% were Orcadians. Of those born outside of Orkney those with occupations were: two schoolmasters, two farmers, four clergymen, G. P., two lighthouse keepers, housekeeper, three servants, grocer/blacksmith, soldier.

Of the 106 married couples in Lady parish:

| | |
|---|----------|
| Both born in Lady parish | 54 (51%) |
| Male, Lady Parish, female adjacent parish | 8 (7.5%) |
| Female, Lady Parish, male adjacent parish | 6 (5.7%) |
| Both adjacent parish | 8 (7.5%) |
| [76 couples or 71.7% are islanders] | |

Table 15. Place of origin of couples both born on Langamay, 1891

The other married couples comprised:

| | |
|--|----------|
| Male born on Langamay, female born elsewhere Orkney | 6 (5.7%) |
| Female born on Langamay, male born elsewhere Orkney | 4 (3.8%) |
| Male born on Langamay, female born outside Orkney | 2 (1.9%) |
| Female born on Langamay, male born outside Orkney | 2 (1.9%) |
| Both from other parts of Orkney | 9 (8.5%) |
| Both from outside Orkney | 7 (6.6%) |

Table 16. Place of origin of one member of a couple born outside Langamay.

Before moving on to the twentieth Century it is worth making a number of comments about this analysis of the 1841, 1861, 1891 Census. Throughout the period covered there has always been a small amount of inward migration; this has usually been the doctor, the ministers, the schoolteachers, an occasional farmer, farm managers (factors), lighthouse keepers, a few artisans labourers and domestics, a few farmers wives from the north of Scotland. However well over 90% of the population is Orcadian and this supports recent genetic research in Orkney that suggests a Viking (Norwegian) ancestry for the islands (B.B.C. web site, Viking Genetics survey results, 2002).

The marriage statistics for 1861 and 1891 show that:

- Many of Lady Parish marry others from within the parish (43.7% and 51%). This is consistent with a number of my respondents stating that there used to be distinct areas within the island.
- The majority of parishioners in Lady marry someone from the same or adjoining parish (64% and 71.7%). This is consistent with work on the

genetics of the island, which describes the high number of same name marriages on the island (Mascie-Taylor et al., 1987).

- There does not appear to be a differential between males and females moving into the parish at marriage.
- Although there is some evidence for marriages between parishioners and those from other parts of Orkney and northern Scotland, it is equally true that incomers tend to have married outside Langamay.

Elsewhere Orcadian and Langamay culture was described as welcoming and open, if slow, to change. These figures don't point towards an "open" society in terms of marriage or domicile. There is not much chance of cultural change through the intimacy of marriage⁴⁵. Alternatively, the few incomer farmers and farm managers may have had an influence out of all proportion on agricultural practice: Stove and Scar farms being the model. The censuses note the presence of a few visitors, hawkers and travelling merchants who may have acted as agents of change, particularly in the importation of artefacts. The most interesting outsiders are the schoolteachers, ministers, the doctor, but according to the short stories of G. Mackay Brown they were usually distanced from the community (but see Towrie Cutt below). Although it is not picked up in the census returns, holiday visits to the Scottish mainland influenced the incorporation of decorative features on the outside of cottages (K. F. pers. comm.)

The early twentieth century.

Two unrepentantly romantic accounts of Langamay are provided by the Canadian expatriate Towrie Cutt's memoir of Kettletoft (1977), and Betsy Skea's folktales and lore of Northwall (1982). There is also an unpublished diary by John Hans Tait (1911) in the possession of Kenny Foubister.

Towrie Cutt was born in Kettletoft village in 1898, and as an expatriate was concerned that a way of life was threatened by farmers selling off property to wealthy outsiders.

⁴⁵The prehistorian Aubrey Burl, 1979, suggests that pottery changes on particular sites in Neolithic Britain were due to wife exchange between different parts of the country; the assumption being that women were the potters

According to Towrie Cutt, there were the following trades in Kettletoft in the early Twentieth Century:

- Postmaster-who had been a saddler, baker and general merchant.
- Two bakers.
- Harbourmaster.
- Boat builder and apprentice.
- Hotel proprietor, coachman and handyman.
- Shoemaker and his son.
- Tailor.
- Road maker. Fish Agent.
- Four lobster fishermen, two of whom also sold rabbit skins to tinkers or *packies*.
- The nearby farm consisted of a farmer, foreman, four ploughmen, two cattlemen and one other labourer.

Fig. 1 Occupations in Kettletoft. After Towrie Cutt.

A few miles away at Roadside (or Lady village) there were cottages, rocket life-saving equipment, a temperance hall, large general merchants, church, drill hall, joiners, two blacksmiths, doctor's house and surgery.

For all Towrie Cutt's anxiety about losing a way of life in recent times (his book was published in 1977) it is apparent from his account that change was well advanced in his boyhood:

- At school, a new headmaster introduced the need for a written note to excuse absence, and boys had to raise their caps.
- At church they had to sing mission hymns including a "missionary alphabet" which included references to Zulus, the Japanese, and David Livingstone.
- For a number of years, up until the outbreak of the First World War, a herring fishing station was established in the village, and led to an annual influx of Gaelic fishing girls. For some two months each year local boys and men found extra employment:

“First came one cooper who put the long, wooden building in order. Then came a steamer with empty barrels, with barrels of salt and with more coopers, after which the women, perhaps thirty, arrived. Next some six steam drifters and a few larger fishing boats..... The farm of Howe sent down men with long carts which transported the herrings to the station, where the cooper salted them and kept shovelling them into the girls, who cleaned them speedily. Another cooper carried them to the women who packed them in barrels, salting each layer. When the barrel was almost full, the cooper poured brine over the fish, and sealed down the lid with a metal hoop.” (1977, 92)

The Langamay herring station was a smaller version of that established on nearby Stronsay by Laing. Either Towrie Cutt has underestimated the number of girls who came to the island (I have counted at least seventy posing in one photograph), or local women were also employed. The fishing girls must have introduced the islanders to the sounds of Gaelic language.

- Other outside influences were newspapers and books. Four of the fourteen village families were well supplied with books. In 1908, J. & P. Coates of Paisley donated a library to the school’ and also an adult library. The Scottish newspapers, The Orcadian, The News of the World, and The Christian Herald were received each week. Villagers knew all about the Crippen murder, Scott’s dash to the South Pole and the sinking of The Titanic. Wireless had been installed by the end of The First World War.
- A more serious example of social change, also recorded in the Census returns, were the young people who were leaving the island. Between 1904-1914, Towrie Cutt records that six of his brothers and sisters left the island to work in Scotland, New Zealand, and Canada. Other island youngsters moved to the U.S.A and the Pacific. As with so many island children, Towrie Cutt boarded at Kirkwall Grammar School, and then, he too, migrated to Canada. A more melancholic link with “The Empire” is the War Memorial, which records a number of men who died fighting in regiments raised in the Colonies. The population was beginning to fall dramatically. Between 1901 and 1911, the population of Orkney had fallen from 28,699 to 25,897. The 1911 Census records that the population of Lady parish is now 45.1 per cent of that of 1841.

The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Orkney.

This was published as recently as 1985, although it is based on material collected in the 1950s. It was edited by Miller who shares the common nostalgia for the past found in Towrie Cutt, Fenton and some of the Welsh ethnographers. Farming has become mechanized and there has been the loss of small farmers. Smallholdings have been bought by incomers from the South, especially England and Wales; one small island has no native born Orcadian on it, and another has equal numbers of incomers and Orcadians. There is the Leavisite attack on Radio and Television which have eroded Orkney forms of speech, and even on Langamay, the home-knitters at the Cooperative are producing work for Paris fashion houses.

The chapter on Langamay is written by the late J.D. Mackay- the much-loved “J.D.”, still talked of on the island today. Unlike the earlier contributors to the Statistical Accounts, he was the schoolmaster, not the minister. His data covers the year 1957. He states that the majority of island people earned a living from farming complemented by lobster fishing, kelping, and “coast watching”. “J.D.” describes shops ranging from small businesses selling tea etc. *“to large and commodious stores at which the customer can procure...all kinds of drapery goods, stationary, butcher meat and even ironware. Four motor vans carrying goods to all ends of the island....”* (1985, 110). There are no longer any travelling grocers, and I doubt if drapery is available. The small shops are no more, and people take the ferry to do their shopping in Kirkwall. Recently, J.W. and his wife have retired from their successful shop at Roadside, Lady. He has recorded some reminiscences about trading on Langamay on The Orcadian Website, which are interesting as he started at approximately the time when “J.D.” was documenting the island: he confirms the importance of the travelling grocery vans. Today one would have to add a number of islanders who use the computer and Internet to work from home (such as the cartoonist for a leading Scottish newspaper), a failed microelectronics firm, Langamay Knitters, and the Sichel’s textiles. There is also a web-site run by J. Stuart Christie, the anarchist publisher. At least one farm is “organic”. “J.D.” gives the following list of occupations (I have added comments for 1998):

- General merchants 9 (This category has declined to three.)
- Bakers 2. (There is no longer a baker on the island.)
- Butchers 2. (One in 1998.)
- Joiners 2. (? 1998.)
- Motor engineers 2. (Not sure what he is referring to, as he does not mention a garage. In 1998 there are two garages, which undertake repairs, and three filling stations).
- Blacksmiths 2. (1998 doubtful)
- Motor hirer 1. (1998 Taxi and minibus)
- Shipping Agent 1 (1998-one).
- Harbour master 1 (1998-one).
- Hotel keeper 1 (1998-two plus a number of B. & B. and rented cottages).
- Haulage contractors 2 (1998-two)
- Roadmen 3-5. (1998 ?).
- Welfare officer 1 (1998 none).
- Lighthouse keepers 2 (1998 automatic).
- Telephone engineer 1 (? At least one Hydro engineer.)
- Post office officials 7 (Depends. There is a main post office at Kettletoft and three smaller ones. There are a couple of postmen.)
- Full-time teachers 5. (At least as many plus support staff).
- Doctor 1 (Same).
- District nurse 1 (Same).
- Lay preacher 1. (This surprises me; I would have expected at least one minister. There is now one full time minister.)
- Full time kelpers 8-10. (There are now approximately the same part time).
- Post offices 5 (There are now four.)
- Telephone exchange. (None today)

Table 17. Occupations on Langamay, 1957.

The useful point is made in The Third Statistical Survey that one indicator of the health of a community is the number of voluntary societies that exist. Mackay lists the following for Langamay, which he thinks, indicates “good health”:

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| • The Agricultural Association. | Girl Guides |
| • Sailing club. | Boy Scouts. |
| • Youth Club. | U. F. W. G. |
| • Sellibister W. R. I. | S. A .D. S. |
| • Agricultural Cooperative | W. E. A. classes. |
| • Amateur Dramatics. | The British Legion. |
| • St. Colum’s model yacht club | . Central W. R. I. |
| • Women’s Lifeboat Guild | Rural Cinema Scheme. |
| . | |

Fig. 2 Voluntary Organisations on Langamay, 1957.

Once again there is a feeling that the radio has affected dialect and the amount of reading (there were even two television sets on the island). However, Orkney Education Authority provides cases of books. A survey of other reading material includes: People’s Journal, Weekly News, Sunday Post, News of the World, Reader’s Digest, Wide World, The Scottish Farmer, Good Housekeeping, Woman’s Own, My Home.

In 1957, there were three separate congregations, but only about 60 people attended regularly. The evangelical revival of 1860 led by The Reverend Matthew Armour of Cross and Burness had had its effect on the islanders but fervent Scottish evangelicalism was:

“too austere and puritanical to make any lasting appeal to an Orkney community.....By nature, the Orcadian abhors a strong display of emotional fervour.....” (118).

There is now one church on the island and R. C. mass is said in a private house.

The island was still without a public supply of water or electricity, and the O. I. C. and The Hydro are criticised- just as they still are for other reasons. Mackay produces the following figures:

| | Lady | Cross | Burness |
|---------------------------|------|-------|---------|
| <u>Tractors</u> | 50 | 41 | 22 |
| <u>Private electrical</u> | 9 | 6 | 5 |
| <u>Private water</u> | 12 | 15 | 13 |
| <u>Private telephone</u> | | | 81 |

Table 18. Utilities on Langamay, 1957

The main farms are listed as: Newark, Lopness, Scar, Elsness, West Brough (W. T. D.'s home), Warsetter, Howe, Tresness -some extend over 200 acres (the main farms are larger now). There has been a revolution in the dairy with cream separators and modern churns, Calor gas and coal for cooking, and paraffin lamps. The farmer's wife cooks, assists in the fields, makes cheese and butter, and knits Fair Isle jumpers for sale.

There was a well-equipped surgery but if there is a serious emergency, the patient had to be transported to Kirkwall by lifeboat. Mackay makes the point that there is a need for an air-ambulance, which, indeed was inaugurated a few years later.

Mackay sums up island life:

“As [the island] forms a more or less closed island community it will readily be recognised that the number of visitors and settlers from other areas is not large” (129).

This needs to be modified slightly as the above census returns show that there was some inter-island mobility, and the occasional incomer from Southern Britain. Mackay actually describes the impact on the island of World War Two when a large number of military and civilian personnel was stationed on the island. Three hundred labourers, craftsmen and technicians built the wireless station and barracks at Lettan; these were followed by two hundred servicemen. Relations between the islanders and the servicemen seem to have been amicable; Skea (1982) remembers that there were even some marriages between island women and the servicemen.

More sanguine than his editor about incomers, Mackay remarks that:

“The attitude of the islands to settlers in their midst tends to be rather conservative. They prefer to weigh up the character of the latest settler....he is treated with the utmost politenessprofessional men and others...often make mistakes in summing up local character....mistakes the quiet speech and the somewhat slow reactions, of the average islander for docility, and they have attempted to order him about.” (129).

The 1970s onwards.

Even before the death of J.D. Mackay there was to be a perfectly acceptable “hippie” presence on the island. Two trends are apparent- the Orcadian population was declining as young people left to find work elsewhere and the old retired to bungalows in Kirkwall; the incomer population rose as a variety of people from Southern Britain and elsewhere came onto the island attracted by the cheap and empty property. Outsiders, A.& A. Cormack, both teachers at the local school, who set up a printing press, produced the next account of Langamay. In 1974 they published a Guide to the island. Subsequently, they left Langamay for Mainland where they produce Orkney View (soon to cease publication, 2002).

The 1974 Guide still contains details of a large list of organizations (Mackay’s index of the good health of a community). It includes:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Brownies, Girl Guides, Cadets, Youth Club. | |
| • S. W. R. I –two groups. | Women’s Guild |
| • Ladies lifeboat guild. | Agricultural Association |
| • “Islanders”, 8-11. | Roos Loch Christmas Day model yacht club. |
| • Royal British Legion. | Harvest Home- Dinner and Dance |
| • Agricultural and Industrial Show | Sailing Club regatta. |

Fig. 3 Voluntary Organisations on Langamay, 1974.

Other points noted in The Guide (it is not paginated) include:

- The first A. I. group in Scotland.
- There are still a dozen Orkney yawls engaged in part-time fishing.
- A knitting cooperative.
- There is a small electronics firm in the old Sellibister School; a hand operated press; a maker of rubber carnival masks.
- There are several shops and travelling vans, two bakers, a doctor, nurse and resident vet.
- Four chapels- Cross Kirk, East Kirk, Rusness, and South End Chapel.
- There are special day trips on The Orcadia to “toon.”

The Guide is full of other anecdotal evidence relevant to social change:

“As roads improved, merchants began to go out to their customers, and equipped themselves with horse-drawn vans.....rural vans used to race each other along narrow roads to be the first to reach a group of customers.”

Tilley lamps were abandoned as islanders bought generators:

“On a quiet winter’s evening, the throb of folk’s engines could be heard in most parts of the island”.
[but Mackay doesn’t record many generators in 1957].

These in turn were superseded by mains electricity (the Hydro), which arrived in 1973. Piped water was introduced to the island earlier in 1968. Island cottages had received improvement grants for bathrooms and kitchens in the “last two years”. An air-ambulance service resumed in 1967.

Walter Traill Dennison’s description of the delights of a crofter’s cottage in 1884 can be compared with the Cormacks’ description almost a century later

“Hot water from the tap, a television set in the corner, and a deep-freeze in the kitchen have become standard equipment over the last decade.”

One might now add video, satellite, television, and the computer.

The Cormacks have now left the island to publish Orkney Life on Mainland. Their press is used to produce a newsletter distributed to all islanders, and is produced by the school (which has won a number of national prizes for its work in community publishing); apart from B. B. C. Radio Orkney, and The Orcadian, it is the most useful source of local information. As a previous chapter described it is possible to keep “oneself to oneself” on Langamay but this A.4 duplicated newsletter suggests a social life as vibrant as that described by “J.D.” in the 50s and the Cormacks in the 70s. One recent edition includes the following:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Industrial Society | Play Group |
| • Fiddle Class | P. T .A. |
| • Picnic Committee | Bingo |
| • The Afternoon Club | Holiday Club |
| • The Church | Trail Leaflet |
| • Community Council | Agricultural Association |
| • Music Group | Guides and Brownies |
| • Junior Football | Craft Group |
| • Parish Church | Friends of the School |
| • Central S. W. R. I. | R. N. L. I. |
| • Women’s Guild | Boys Brigade |
| • Golf Club | Good causes backed by both |
| • Community Association | hotels |

Fig. 4. Voluntary Organisations, Langamay, 1998.

One other major event in island life since 1949 has been the inter-island North Isles **Sports Day** held each year on Westray, Eday, Stronsay or Langamay. Not only has there been competition between the islands on the sports field but also over hospitality. As The Orkney View (July, 1989) relates:

“ In the host island the first obvious signs of preparation are not groups of young men and women training assiduously. Rather, older members of the community are to be seen making a door- to- door “collection” for the sports... the island ladies [have] to provide dinner and tea for up to two hundred guests”. (26)

Some extracts from the July/ August, 1998 edition of the local newsheet:

Industrial Show.

Just a reminder that the show is only about a month away. Entry and entrant numbers were down last year- can we make it better this year?

Fiddle Club.

Thanks to all who contributed in anyway to help the concert with the B. T. quartet on 20th June such a success....The Summer School will be held from Monday June 29th- Friday 3rd July. The week will end with a concert and dance.

For Sale.

Ford Sierra.

Second hand Jones sewing machine.

Hairdresser.

Catherine Leslie will be in Langamay on Monday 6th and Tuesday 7th July

Kettletoft- chip shop Wed. 8-10; Sat. 6-10.

Events in July at the Kettletoft Hotel

Sat. 4th. Open pool competition.

11th Kids Quiz.

17th. Ladies pool.

24th. Open darts.

31st. Chip shop 4-6

Are you interested in wood/metal work class. 21st.Sept.

Bank:

Royal Bank. Every Tuesday 09.45-12.30. 1.30- 3.30.

Bank of Scotland 14th and 28th 09.45-12.00. 1.00-3.30.

11th and 25th Aug. ditto.

Logan Air timetable.

A variety of events are included for August which include junior football, bingo, darts, line dancing, quiz, boys brigade; a Roman Catholic service in a private house. (In 2001 a new inter-island cinema housed in an articulated lorry was added to the island attractions).

Fig. 5. Activities on Langamay, July/ August 1998.

It has to be admitted that although there is plenty of evidence of "good health" in the community, the island loses its attractions for teenagers. The school publishes a good wild life magazine written by the children but it was obvious that (in 1994 at least) their was a large input from teachers, and the children spoken to didn't show a great deal of interest. A student team, which followed a group of young teenagers, found a great deal of boredom amongst the group (unpublished video tapes, 1994).

The 1997 Electoral Roll:

The Electoral Roll for 1997 contains a list of all adults who have registered to vote. It can have a number of uses for ethnographic inquiry:

- Give details of all inhabited properties.
- The number of adults on the island.
- The commonest surnames.
- Use of “Viking” Christian names.

It is acknowledged that a few names may be missing but it seems a reasonable record. It can be used for comparative purposes with earlier census records.

Mackay (1985) states that in 1500 the chief holders of *udal* lands in Langamay were the Sinclairs of Warsetter, the Muirs of Clett, and the Fletts of Hobbister. The first two names are still the commonest on the island; Flett is a common Orkney name, but not on Langamay today. An analysis of surnames since 1841 shows considerable continuity on the island and made be compared with the evidence of genetic studies on Orkney by Roberts (1985) which suggests an ancient population (although Harvey, Suter, and Tills, 1985, qualify this), and a study of the island by Mascie-Taylor, Lasker and Boyce (1987) which shows a high incidence of same surname marriages. The 1997 electoral roll contains 421 names. The commonest surnames are:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|--------|---|--------|---|---------|---|--------|---|
| • Muir | 22 | | | | | | | | |
| • Tulloch | 17 | | | | | | | | |
| • Sinclaire | 16 | | | | | | | | |
| • Drever | 13 | | | | | | | | |
| • Brown | 12 | | | | | | | | |
| • Walls | 12 | | | | | | | | |
| • Towrie | 11 | | | | | | | | |
| • Dearness | 8 | | | | | | | | |
| • Skea | 8 | | | | | | | | |
| • Leslie | 7 | Peace | 7 | Clarke | 5 | Evans | 4 | Thorne | 4 |
| • Moodie | 7 | Harcus | 6 | Wilson | 5 | Grieve | 4 | Bain | 4 |
| • Thomson | 7 | Field | 6 | Rae | 5 | Seatter | 4 | | |

Seven surnames constitute 24% of the adult population. A comparison with the Census returns for 1841, 1861, and 1891 is also illuminating:

| 1841 | 1861 | 1891 | 1997 |
|--------------|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Muir | Muir | Muir | Muir |
| Scott | Scott | Scott | Tulloch |
| Dearness | Peace | Sinclair | Sinclair |
| Sinclair | Tulloch | Moodie | Drever |
| Peace | Moodie | Dearness | Brown |
| Moody/Moodie | Dearness/Deerness | Peace | Walls |
| Skea | Drever | Slater | Towie |
| Garrioch | Wallace | Skea | Dearness |
| Young | Skea | Drever | Skea |
| Drever | Thom(p)son | Wilson | Leslie |
| Goar | Guthrie | Tulloch | Moodie |
| Guthrie | Sclater | | Thomson |
| | Leslie | | Peace |
| | | | Harcus |

Table 20. Surnames on Langamay, 1841-1998.

(The first three columns include both adults and children; the last is adults only based on the electoral roll).

Muir remains the dominant name, as Mascie-Taylor, Lasker, and Boyce (1987) also point out:

“....a single surname, Muir, is very common and that combinations in which persons called Muir are married contribute much to the frequency of repeated pairs of names.” (100).

There is now only one Scott. Otherwise, despite some change in the order the same names recur. Mackay (1985) records Sinclairs, Fotheringhams, Muirs and Skeas as the commonest names in 1957. Interestingly, throughout this period of 150 years it is the Scots rather than Orcadian names which predominate (the Muirs, Sinclairs, Scotts and

Garriochs. Dearness, Skea, Goar, Drever, Sclater, and Walls are the Orcadian, often named after places).

Firth (1986) noted the Victorian fashion on Orkney to give “Viking” Christian names. The 1997 Electoral role contains none. There is only one known to me- Magnus, the son of the English ex-headmaster.

Mackay (1985) gives figures for 1957 recording 158 occupied houses and 55 unoccupied (213), but he does not define what he means by “unoccupied” (holiday lets, empty or deserted; I doubt that he includes ruins). Lamb, G. (1992) in his survey of island place-names records all the houses on the island in March 1985. Ignoring his category “vanished”, I calculate the housing stock described by him to be:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 180 houses lived in.• 20 holidaycottages.• 133 empty.• 41 deserted. |
|--|

Table 21. Housing stock, 1985. After Lamb

Category three is the most melancholic as it is possible to enter, and walk around dwellings, which could be made habitable, and still, contain furniture, soft furnishings, and more personal memorabilia (unpubl. video tape, 1994).

My electoral role figures for 1997 give an accurate figure of 215 houses in occupation. There may be a few more if someone hasn't filled in the electoral roll form. I counted 61 cottages that fit the categories “deserted” or “empty”, but it was a very superficial count based on driving around the island roads. A few bungalows have been built recently, but my figures suggest that many of Lamb's “holiday”, “empty” or even “deserted” category have been renovated. This fits in with anecdotal evidence, which suggest that, unlike other northern isles, Langamay is “holding its own.”

Mackay records the population of Langamay in 1957 as 718; the census of 1981 records 651; in 1998 the population is approximately 570 (discussion with local councillors).

Number of persons per household has continued to decline:

- 1957. 4.5 per household.
- 1985. 3.6 per household (Lamb's figures).
- 1998. 2.65 per household (my figures).

Table 22. Persons per household 1957-97

The last figure contrasts dramatically with those given earlier for the nineteenth century, and confirms the fact that many of the incomers live alone or as couples, and most young Orcadians leave the island:

| Resume: | 1841 | 1861 | 1891 | 1957 | 1985 | 1998 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total pop. Langamay. | 1894 | 2006 | 1929 | 718 | 651 | 570 |
| House-Holds | 372 | 435 | 422 | 158 | 180 | 215 |
| Per house-Hold | 5.1 | 4.6 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 3.6 | 2.6 |

Table 23. Resume of population 1841-1998.

The nineteenth century returns are for households rather than houses, so the numbers per house may be slightly low, but as cottages on Orkney are of the “add on” variety this does not matter. What is apparent is that figures tumble in the 1960s and when combined with the Cormacks’ description of piped water coming to the island in the late

1960s, and Hydro electricity in 1973, and my own comments on video, satellite television, and computers, it is apparent that despite much continuity, there has also been considerable move towards a comfortable “life style”.

Who will live on the island in 2057? (<http://www.orknet.co.uk/godiva/108-o4.htm>)

The following is the pessimistic conclusions of one resident (Eric Stockton) delivered at an island meeting and recorded on his web site. He suggests that if subsidies were to be discontinued there are three possibilities for the future of the island:

- The St. Kilda Solution- take the people away and leave the place to the military and the wildlife.
- Develop the island as a place where people working in electronics-based service industries can work- such work is largely independent of location.
- Use Langamay as the site for residential institutions. Boarding schools, monasteries, and convents...mental homes... “drying out” stations.

Eric Stockton is a polemicist! The island still seems viable as a community to this observer and this use of the internet by Stockton appears to be one of the important adaptations made by islanders.

PART THREE

Introduction to Tre-bryn .

One aspect of contemporary social life in Tre-bryn was documented in Part One, Chapter 1. The chapters, which follow, go into greater detail about social and cultural life of the parish. Chapter 1 situates the parish within a distinctly North Pembrokeshire cultural setting by discussing one of the defining characteristics of the county- the cultural divide which separates the north of the county from the south which has been labelled the landsker by modern historians and the media. Chapter 2 provides an introduction to the parish. In an attempt to get a purchase on parish life, the centres of influence within the parish, and the nature of stability and change since the nineteenth century are examined; chapters 3 and 4 examine parish minute books and the census returns between 1841 and 1901. It will be suggested that because of certain long standing tensions within the parish, and contemporary social trends, Tre-bryn today can only be described as a “community” in a qualified sense. Chapter 5 is a photographic essay, which highlights recent changes within the village.

Chapter 1. Landscape, History and Culture: a sense of identity in North Pembrokeshire.

It was argued earlier (Part Two, chapter 1) that Orcadian culture could be interpreted as a shifting *bricolage*, which includes elements of history, natural history and a variety of geographical themes. At various times one or more of these elements may be emphasised by the media, local experts or laypersons. Analysis produced “clues” to a distinctive culture and sense of identity, which was shared by Orcadians generally and helped in an understanding of the people of Langamay. This identity was not necessarily a response to conflict on the boundary but something actively discussed by the press, the media and the local intelligentsia. It is the intention of this chapter to search for a distinct Pembrokeshire culture. In part Pembrokeshire shares a common Welsh culture but there is one unique feature- the so-called landsker line-, which distinguishes the county from other parts of Wales. Tre-bryn village is north of the landsker.

Pembrokeshire shares a number of characteristics with Orkney. It is true that it is not an island but:

- If G. A. Williams can refer to the whole of Wales as a western peninsula of Britain (1985), then Pembrokeshire is its isolated southwestern tip facing the Irish Sea.
- The transport infrastructure is poor. Discussions about poor road and rail connections in the media replace the Orcadian obsession with ferry and air communications. Fuel prices are high and the railway, which arrived late in North Pembrokeshire, provides an infrequent service.
- Unemployment levels are some of the highest in Wales.
- There are many incomers whose relative affluence attracts them to an area of cheap housing, which allows them to buy holiday cottages and retirement homes.
- It is an agricultural county and industries have usually failed. The coalmines, which produced high quality anthracite, were always under-capitalised. The much vaunted oil refineries of the 1960s and 70s are almost a thing of the past.

- The fishing industry has declined and is usually a second occupation.
- Tourism is of great importance.
- It is rich in history natural history, and has a coastline, which was created a National Park in 1952.
- It is a weather driven-culture.
- It has a wealth of *by-gones*, fairy tales and folk culture.

It is not being suggested that the two areas share a common culture; indeed the central organizing theme is unique to Pembrokeshire- the cultural divide between north and south.⁴⁶

As early as the seventeenth century, Camden referred to South Pembrokeshire as Anglia Transwalliana (Davies, M.1939). Owen's classic history of the county written in 1603 describes seventy-four "English" parishes, and sixty-four "Welsh" parishes, with a further six parishes in which both English and Welsh were spoken. Crucially this divide consisted of more than language difference:

“You shall finde in one parish one pathwaye...and the one side speake all English, the other all Welshe, and differinge in tyllinge and in measuring of their lande, and diverse other matters...” (Quoted John, 1984, 59)

In 1803 the Revd. J. Evans wrote in letters describing a tour through Wales:

“ A circumstance peculiarly striking meets the eye of the observant traveller on his entering the county of Pembroke, which is the difference in the dress, manners, and language of the inhabitants from those of their immediate neighbours... This county is still divided into what is called the Englishry And Welshry.” (1804, 258)

Not only is there a language divide crossing the county from Newgale on St. Bride's Bay in the west, across country via Treffgarne and Llawhaden, to Amroth in the southeast, but Evans notes of dress:

“That of the women in the Welsh part is a jacket and petticoat of check worsted, or lindsey wolsey stuff, with a cap tied under the chin, and a large, broad brimmed, high crowned, beaver hat. While that of the women of this part of Pembrokeshire [the South] is a thick, heavy cloth gown and petticoat, with a hood

⁴⁶ It will be suggested below that the label given to this divide- the landsker- is of recent origin.

hanging from it behind, generally of a dark colour, and instead of a cap, a large handkerchief wrapped about the head and tied under the chin....nor are they, like the Welsh, fond of going barefoot.”
(ibid, 258)

There are also food differences according to Evans:

“The Welsh peasant is content to live on bread and cheese, with milk or milk and water....[whereas in the south the peasant requires]...a good allowance of shambles meat and a plentiful supply of fermented liquor.” (ibid, 258).

Evans states that those in the south speak a form of English not unlike that spoken in England, although a few years later in 1811, Fenton (1903) describes it as “*a barbarous English peculiar to the hundred of Roos*” (85).

Fenton’s is the second “classic” history of Pembrokeshire after Owen, and he echoes his earlier comments. Of the Newgall (sic) river, he states:

“being one of the grand boundaries between the Englishery and Welshery, between Dewisland and Roos, merits notice, where the line is so correctly drawn, that to this day, on one side of a brook, one can step over almost in any part, they talk nothing but that barbarous English...and on the other nothing but Welsh...” (ibid, 85).

Whether it is a barbarous English or not, it is distinctive still, and later writers have collected dialect words which give a special “stamp” to the area (see Laws, 1888, James, 1959, John, 1976). It might also be mentioned that the Welsh spoken in North Pembrokeshire today is a dialect unlike that spoken in either north or south Wales. It is full of English-isms (“*We don’t speak proper Welsh in* ”, one local respondent apologised). This was commented on as early as 1906 by the Reverend Arthur Wade-Evans who defended Fishguard Welsh from the charge of being *Cwmrag gwal* (poor Welsh), and saw it as a dialect to be proud of, as did the local people then (Parry, in Parry and Williams, 1999).

Language issues were a concern to those living in the south. Ironically, in a paper mainly concerned with anxieties over the extinction of the Welsh language, Jones (in Howell, 1993) describes a meeting in Haverfordwest on October 3rd, 1829, which protested that the forthcoming abolition of the Court of Grand Sessions would lead to inequity as cases involving South Pembrokeshire people would now be heard before a

Welsh speaking jury at Carmarthen Assizes. Language is still an issue today, and bilingual road signs in South Pembrokeshire are unique in occasionally having had the Welsh section defaced.

In an unpublished diary the author of Wild Wales, George Borrow, describes a tour of West Wales in the middle of the nineteenth century, which is not included in the travel book. He notes that the “Welsh” were not liked in Haverfordwest (in the south), and he did not hear Welsh spoken until he reached Pen y Cwm, a mixing community north of Newgale brook. He was often obtuse when involved in human interaction but he had a sensitive ear for languages. It should be noted, however, that there are a few advertisements in local newspapers south of the language divide which ask for Welsh speaking assistants for drapery stores etc. (e.g. Pembrokeshire Herald, 12th January, 1844: “*To Drapers’ Assistants. Wanted a young man who can speak the Welsh language. Apply to Wm. Davies, High St., Haverfordwest*”.)

Between May and June 1892, D. Lleufer Thomas carried out an inquiry in Pembrokeshire as part of the massive Royal Commission on Labour (1893). In the present context one of his comments is revealing:

“Ethnologically there is also a physically finer race of men in the south, who in their contempt for the Welshmen of a more stunted growth in the north refer to them as the “little black Welsh from the mountains.” (57)

Lleufer Thomas, himself, seems more favourably disposed towards the labourers in the south.

This opinion does not seem to be replicated in a peculiar book written by H.T. Laws in 1888: The History of Little England Beyond Wales and the non-Kymric colony settled in Pembrokeshire. In his introduction he gives a distinctly Darwinian gloss to what is otherwise a standard work on local history, topography and folk custom. He suggests that with the increase in forms of “locomotion”, tribes of “unmixed blood” will cease to exist. Rhetorically he asks, who will be the “fittest”- those societies which are the purest or those where miscegenation has gone furthest? He sees South Pembrokeshire as a sort of “natural laboratory” where from earliest times there has been an influx of Silures, Gaels, “Dutchmen led by Italians”, Kymry, Scandinavians, Bretons, English, Normans,

Saxons, Flemings and mediaeval Irish. Later in the book there is a rather unscientific physiological survey, which purports to back up his introduction:

“the descendants of the motley crew have been strangely secluded for several centuries; for Little England Beyond Wales.. is hedged in by physical and ethnical barriers...” (ii)

Isolated because of poor transportation and underdeveloped industry.

The theme of miscegenation gets lost in the description of history and topography but he appears to have little sympathy for:

“a people, claiming blackmail in English, spoken as a foreign tongue, and at times clad in what our tourist deems an outlandish dress.” (iii)

What this “blackmail” consists of is made explicit later in the book when he argues that after the Civil War, Pembrokeshire exhausted itself. The decadence may have been halted but the industrial and agricultural economies are poor. There is a lack of enterprise. People still expect subsidy from England:

“Pembrokeshire men consider troops are quartered in their county wholly or solely for the benefit of Little England.... This subsidy I am afraid is the Alpha and Omega of political Conviction in West Wales.” (394)

Shorn of its Social Darwinism Laws has at least defined a cultural entity, and suggested some of the problems: under capitalisation and a poor infrastructure.

The divide between the “Englishry” and “Welshry”, which had undoubtedly existed for almost a thousand years, did not lose its interest in the twentieth century. In fact, it was now that the divide was formalised and labelled the landsker by academics (Davies, 1939; John, 1972). More recently the name has been taken up by the tourist industry and groups attempting to re-vitalise small communities.

On October 27th 1938 The Western Mail ran an article entitled The Racial Line that divides Pembrokeshire, written by the well-known travel writer A.G. Bradley. He emphasised, once again, the divide, which he compared to a more peaceful version of Ulster. He makes no mention of the landsker. However in the following year Dr.

Margaret Davies contributed a paper to The Land Utilisation Survey of Britain (1939, part 32) in which she states:

“Pembrokeshire as a county is distinguished by one feature of outstanding interest in that it is composed of two territorial areas that are strikingly dissimilar in regard to physical features, place names, tradition, and speech of the inhabitants. It is even more remarkable that the dividing line between these two areas is not only precise but has been permanent for hundreds of years. This dividing line, running from sea to sea, has always been locally known as the “landsker”- a term of Norse origin, signifying generally a boundary of any kind...” (78).

Davies picks up many of the aspects noted earlier, adds others, and formalises the differences between north and south:

| North of the <u>landsker</u> | South of the <u>landsker</u> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Wild, upland landscape | Kempt landscape |
| Welsh place-names | English place-names |
| “Celtic” bell towers | Tall, castellated church towers |
| Welsh language | English language |

Fig. 1 Characteristics of the Landsker.

Historically, Norman advance in West Wales had established a series of frontier castles across country to defend the south from the Welsh. In the north west the existing bishopric of St. David’s was left unmolested by the Normans. A series of large parishes in the centre of the county indicated the *rhos*, the no-go areas. South of the castles Norman village communities flourished; Flemings were imported and formed plantations; north, the life-styles and language of upland Wales continued.

Davies’ paper was an important one, but there was no precedent for her use of the term landsker in this particular context. The term has been used to denote a boundary in a number of parts of western Britain, it is not necessarily of Norse origin and it does not appear to have been used previously to describe the Welsh-English divide in Pembrokeshire (Awbery, 1991).

Interestingly, John (1972) asked respondents in the borderlands in 1961 if they had heard of the term landsker. They were aware of the English-Welsh differences but only those who had attended W. E. A. classes in local history or similar were aware of the term. John, following Davies, concluded that it was a word that had been lost to the local dialect. He used census returns to show the continuity of the divide but also the reduction in Welsh-speakers to the north:

“To the west the linguistic divide was sharp along the crest of the Treffgarne Ridge, especially between Hayscastle and Camrose parishes... The divide was established less securely along the south-eastern border of the county, although it was confirmed that the Llawhaden-Narberth- Amroth area was solidly English-speaking.” (16)

John’s fieldwork at the next Census in 1971 asked a number of questions:

- Do you consider yourself Welsh or English?
- Do you consider your village to be Welsh or English?
- What is the landsker?
- Where is the landsker today?
- Can you speak Welsh?
- Do you normally speak Welsh in you **home**?

His findings were as follows:

- Do you consider yourself Welsh or English?

| | Households in villages | Households in isolated farms |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Welsh | 70.3 | 78.3 |
| English | 25.7 | 17.9 |
| Pembs/other | 4.0 | 3.8 |

Table 1. After John, 1972.

He comments that although some who consider themselves as English must be immigrants, most must be natives from below the landsker “who think of themselves as English because they speak English only” (19); part of a distinct non-Welsh community.

- Is the village English or Welsh?

Table 2. After John, 1972.

57.7% considered their village to be Welsh.

30.5% considered their village to be English.

11.8% considered their village to be Pembrokeshire.

- Questions three and four established that few had heard of the landsker but all were aware of Pembrokeshire's divide on linguistic lines.
- Questions five and six – Can you (do you) speak Welsh? - provided a more exact idea of the use of Welsh than the Census. Although 58.1% of respondents stated they could speak Welsh, only 39.4% habitually spoke Welsh at home.

As with his previous survey, the 1971 fieldwork demonstrated that the Treffgarne Ridge in the west and the Afon Syfynwy section in the east were the most sharply defined areas between the speaking of English and Welsh. He concludes that the landsker is still remarkably stable and that “*Linguistic and cultural schizophrenia is an invaluable part of the character of our county*” (1972, 27).

It is apparent from this last remark that John is more than just an academic- he is partisan. He has become a major spokesman for Pembrokeshire in a series of popular publications, which describe aspects of Pembrokeshire life, geology, landscape, history, and folklore produced by his own publishing company. In the conclusion to his 1984 edition of the county guide- Pembrokeshire- he refers to the landscape and way of life as a rich tapestry. In his discussion of the landsker he ties landscape firmly to history and language:

“The south of the county is, for many people, a land of castles and small nucleated villages, of small green fields, and high wooded hedgerows, of winding, sunken, flower-fringed lanes, of English place-names and English speech...towns, village distribution and individual village layouts, field patterns and many other features can be directly attributed to the Norman genius for organisation.” (129)

By contrast:

“The Welshry of the guide-books is a land of Celtic mystery, of wide, wind-swept vistas of rocks and moors and stunted trees. Its people live on farms or in small hamlets... There are few castles. Farms are smaller...place names are for the most

part Welsh.” (133).

Accepting that this is intended for a popular audience, it should be noted that what is described is a rather simple division between north and south, and the north is presented in terms reminiscent of the le pays de Galles school discussed earlier in Part One. Unromantic as it may sound, there are not that many farmers in the north, and there are more council houses than farmhouses.

The 1984 edition of the guide is interesting in that it allows John to reflect on local government re-organisation which occurred in 1974 and which had grouped Pembrokeshire alongside Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire to form the super-county of Dyfed. John describes how there was common purpose between the “Englishry” and “Welshry” in an attempt to retain both the name and administrative unit of Pembrokeshire:

“The people of both halves of the county showed that, in spite of their traditional bickering in local council meetings and their petty animosities towards each other, they were united in their affection for the idea of Pembrokeshire.” (193)

He adds:

“Anti-Dyfed feelings seem to be as strong as ever, and the old “Save Pembrokeshire” campaign has been transmuted into a vigorous “Bring back Pembrokeshire” campaign which has much support particularly in the south.” (195)

These views are further developed in a substantially revised version of Pembrokeshire subtitled Past and Present (1995) in which John refers to “*the densest cultural weave and the richest landscape texture of any of the regions of Wales*” (6). As a metaphor it seems to suggest planning, intentionality and structure; bricolage with its connotations of making-do, the jerry built and change seems preferable to a “cultural weave”. In the Introduction to the new book he notes:

“Pembrokeshire is something of an enigma, and visitors are never quite sure what to make of it. Pembrokeshire people themselves are not quite sure what to make of their mysterious and turbulent history or of their complicated landscape”. (7)

and:

“Then we come to the matter of the people and their culture. Pembrokeshire people can be classified as either Welsh-speaking

Welsh or English-speaking Welsh; both groups feel that they are the real guardians of Pembrokeshire culture.” (9)

In his conclusion he notes that Pembrokeshire will again be an administrative entity (in 1996) and that the attempt by the Dyfed authority to assimilate “the Englishry” into bilingual Wales has failed. John is sensitive to the linguistic concerns of South Pembrokeshire in ways reminiscent of the citizens of Haverfordwest faced with the abolition of the Court of Grand Sessions in 1829.

Mytum (1994) adds an archaeological dimension to the discussion in a survey of churchyard monuments in Pembrokeshire churchyards. Following John, he assumes the landsker name to be unproblematic. He demonstrates that a particular type of gravestone, the pedimented headstone, is typical of North Pembrokeshire and Cardiganshire (and is found stretching up into North Wales) but is rarely found “*south of the landsker*” (253); it can therefore be considered “*a feature of Welsh culture*” (253). He also analyses the use of Welsh, English, and bilingualism on gravestones in parish churchyards north and south of the divide, arguing that linguistic choice “*indicates a commitment and ability in the language beyond a limited oral vocabulary*” (258). Mytum’s data may be summarised as follows:

| <u>Anglican graveyards north of the landsker.</u> | | | |
|---|---------|-----------|--------|
| Welsh language | English | Bilingual | |
| 373 | 764 | 391 | (1528) |
| <u>Anglican graveyards south of the landsker.</u> | | | |
| Welsh language | English | Bilingual | |
| 17 | 924 | 34 | (980) |

Table 3. After Mytum, 1994.

| <u>Nonconformist graveyards north of the landsker.</u> | | | |
|--|---------|-----------|--------|
| Welsh language | English | Bilingual | |
| 751 | 196 | 119 | (1066) |
| <u>Nonconformist graveyards south of the landsker.</u> | | | |
| Welsh language | English | Bilingual | |
| 82 | 666 | 15 | (763) |

Table 4. After Mytum, 1994.

It is apparent that south of the landsker English predominates in both Anglican and Nonconformist graveyards which, considering the tie up between Nonconformism and language in Wales, emphasises the “Englishness” of the south. Welsh is a feature of Nonconformist graveyards north of the landsker, but even in the north English is favoured in Anglican churchyards.

This is very much the expected result but it is questionable whether Mytum’s introductory remark is correct: “In this area...the choice of language was used as a cultural indicator and, indeed, one of national allegiance” (252). As John has pointed out (1972, 1984), people both north and south of the landsker consider themselves both “Pembrokeshire” and “Welsh”.

Academics such as Davies (1939), John (1972, 1984), and Mytum (1994) have “fixed” the landsker as central to Pembrokeshire culture. The latest stage in the evolution of the “natural history” of the north-south divide has been the adoption of the landsker line by the tourist industry, the media, and village initiatives. The popular magazine Pembrokeshire Life (June, 1994) carries an article entitled Discover the Landsker Borderlands. It begins:

“Sweeping from the Welsh speaking communities in the foothills of The Preseli Hills to the quiet riverside villages along the Daugleddau Estuary, the Landsker Borderlands is the perfect place to get off the beaten track and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of Pembrokeshire...a scattered line of castles, strongholds and

defended dwellings were built to protect newly captured Norman lands to the south. Over the centuries this line, the “Landsker”, has developed into a linguistic divide...” (25)

The article further notes that since 1987 rural initiatives have helped develop community awareness; one such development being the Landsker Borderlands project which is an area-wide strategy linking local initiative with tourism (The Landsker Borderlands, 1992).⁴⁷

The landsker has been further solidified, following the above initiative, by the formation of the “frontier trail”. In Britain, the magazine of the British Tourist Authority discussed the area in its edition of June 1999. Once again landscape, language and history are described and the article wrongly suggests that mediaeval Welsh incursions:

“..prompted the construction of a frontier, the Landsker Line. Today, this procession of defensive fortresses can be followed across South-west Wales, from Laugharne in the south –east to Roch on the west coast. There are ruins, palaces, strongholds and aggressive little churches....” (30)

This example of historical anachronism suggests more a Maginot line than the *ad hoc* defences of early Norman adventurers. “Firmed up” by the label landsker, and popularised by the tourist industry, the Landsker Line can now be used as a peg on which to hang a range of cultural consumptions ranging from Dylan Thomas’ boathouse to the Cwm Deri Vineyard.

Cultural identity in Pembrokeshire is therefore complex. The landsker is more an academic and media artefact than a term understood by local people. Those in both the north and south of the county consider themselves both “Welsh” and “Pembrokeshire”; they were equal in condemnation of government re-organisation, which got rid of Pembrokeshire County Council. In a number of his publications John sees the landsker as a cultural feature differentiating Pembrokeshire from the rest of Wales. However ask a North Pembrokeshire person today (whether they are Welsh-speaking or not) what they think of Haverfordwest in the south, you will get a “dusty” answer. A football team from Fishguard or Goodwick feels on enemy territory in the south, and it is well known that referees, who come mainly from the south, treat northern teams unfairly! The

⁴⁷ These initiatives to re-vitalize communities continue in the newly formed Planed.

Treffgarne gorge is still a cultural divide for many people. South Pembrokeshire people have their own English dialect and resent policies that introduce the Welsh language. Cohen's (1986) conception of boundary maintenance and identity has some relevance here. The next chapter will begin to examine a parish north of the landsker, Tre-bryn, and this cultural divide will be shown to be of importance in chapter 4 when considering marriage partners, occupation and farms in Nineteenth Century Pembrokeshire.

Chapter 2 Introduction to Tre-bryn .

Wales has been documented so far by discussing very general aspects of Welsh ethnography and film archive (Part One), and cultural identity in Pembrokeshire (last chapter). The focus now changes by concentrating on one parish north of the landsker: .

This and the following two chapters are based largely on four types of evidence:

- Parish Council records (volumes one and two deposited in Pembrokeshire Records Office, The Castle, Haverfordwest; volume three was rediscovered in 2001 in a farmhouse cupboard). Daybooks of school (local source, unattributable).
 - The Census returns for 1841, 1861, 1881, 1891, 1901. Electoral rolls.
 - Photography.
 - Participant observation.

Where necessary reference will also be made to first-person accounts (I am particularly indebted to T. C. who comes from an old farming family, although he has also been a seaman, and is currently involved in autobiographical research). Participant observation of the G. M. crop protest has already been documented in Part One of this work, and provides some insight into the sociology of the parish and its relevance to the concept of “community”.

The parish covers an area of 7319 acres. There are four distinct clusters of houses, each approximately two miles apart, and a large number of isolated farmhouses. The four settlements are:

- Tre-bryn village.
- Cas village.
- Yr Ysgubor (only partly in the parish).
- The Harbour.

There are a number of Mesolithic and Neolithic sites in the parish (Children and Nash, 1997). Flint microliths, typical of the Mesolithic, are ~~abundant~~ in the fields above Abermawr beach (Dunn, C. pers. comm.), and at Longhouse (Lynch, 1969). The Neolithic is represented by at least four burial chambers (Fenton, 1903; R.C.A.M., 1925; Lynch, 1975). There are a number of unspectacular Iron Age sites. Early

Christian crosses, now found in the environs of the parish church, suggest the importance of the hilltop site of the village in the Dark Ages. More recently, the scatter of farmhouses range from the small to those with “pretensions”, and the large residences of Lochturffin, Trefelyn and Castle Cenlas. The long history of one, Mabws Fawr, has been traced by Jones, F. (1970) and a cursory inspection of the records of a small farm-Carnachen-l(l)wyd- gives early references to occupation in 1326.

Tre-bryn is a hilltop village centred on church, pub, shop, woodworkers, and the village green. The church occupies an ancient *llan* enclosure, and appropriately contains a number of Celtic crosses, both cross-marked and Latin inscribed stones (Dark, 1992), although they have been brought to the site from other parts of the parish (R.C.A.M., 1925). There are three farms in the centre of the village- Ty Isaf, Upper House, and Church View (once part of the public house)- and one on the outskirts. A number of other properties in the village once owned farmland (Ernin House, The Vicarage and Cross House. T. C. pers. Comm.). Ty Isaf is no longer a farm, and the barn complex has been turned into six residential units. The chapel, Nebo, stands empty and neglected, and the number of parishioners attending the church is low, unless there is the regular inter-parish service. There is a second chapel near Yr Ysgubor.

The village shop is large, still functions as general store and post office, but is neglected. It once also served as agricultural and coal merchants, drapers and milliners, and was a foci for much of this part of North Pembrokeshire. The cottages in the lane at right-angles to the shop once housed a tailor, milliners, a butter-makers, and other employees of the stores; the middle house in which the shopkeeper lived, was also a farm. Today, most of the row is holiday cottages and an antique shop. Shop vans used to tour North Pembrokeshire as far as the Gwaun Valley (pers. comm. T.C and R.J.). A range of large outbuildings is now three “upmarket” dwellings.

The village green has been landscaped and the pond has been removed. It is kept trim by county council workmen. Recently kerbing has been added to edge the green and trees have been planted. Although the village is still very much a working community with the sounds and smells of the farmyard, and the whine from the woodworking machinery, there is an unmistakable look of creeping gentrification, which has only

developed, in the last few years. It is only newcomers who attempt to stop the insistent whine from the wood turners.

Three roads lead into the village from the main St. David's-Goodwick road. On one, Hill, the derelict blacksmiths is now a holiday home renovated by a Swedish couple. The Session House, which ceased to be a court as recently as the 1970s is a private house and sub-aqua diving school. The Siop Fach, once a sweetshop and focus for village children, is a wood turners and furniture centre. What was once an outhouse of the pub is now a small cottage. Other houses and part of Church View Farm abut the road.

The middle road climbs past the council house estate and two ex-police houses, between tall hedges, to the Ty Isaf complex of barn conversions and renovated farmhouse, onto the village green.

The third road is flanked by a number of modern, expensive bungalows and houses, mostly owned by local skilled craftsmen. Opposite is a row of council bungalows. This road also leads to the village green past Upper House and the stores, the village hall, ex-vicarage, and further council bungalows.

In the northeast corner of the village lies the popular infants' and junior school. A pre-fabricated corrugated iron structure which once served as a radio and television repair shop, and originally re-charged batteries has recently been demolished and a house is being built. There is another cluster of houses, and four recently built, architect designed houses, with superb views of the sea and the volcanic outcrops on Strumble Head.

There are approximately 86 units in the village; at least 10⁴⁸ are holiday homes, and 37 owned by recent incomers. Roughly, the holiday cottages are north and south of the village green, incomers' cottages south and east of the green, council houses on the outskirts, and the row of expensive bungalows owned by "locals" to the west (sometimes referred to as "millionaire's row"). It is more to do with the private preferences of local people for the "new" and incomers for the "romantically old", and

⁴⁸ Since this was written the number of holiday homes is growing and five of the six barn conversions are now holiday cottages, as is Ty Isaf and Ty Isaf cottage (Feb. 2003)

public availability of land, than a conscious segregation along the lines of nationality and income.

As noted above, the church is seldom full and can hardly be seen as the focal point of the village. But the same could be said for the pub: it is occasionally lively, but staff are as likely to be serving meals to strangers as pulling pints for “locals”. Perhaps the only two generalisations that can be made about the pub are that amongst “locals”, it is almost an entirely male gathering, and the preference is for the conservative Worthington Bitter (“woosh”) which is popular over much of North Pembrokeshire: it is usually only the visitors who drink the “guest beers”. Visitors, particularly females, are warmly welcomed by regulars who monopolise the stools around the bar, and will be drawn into conversation. One of the local farms is now an outdoor pursuits centre with a regular lively clientele from U. S. A. colleges who visit the pub at weekends. Because of the way the regulars are seated at the bar, it is a typical behaviour to turn around whenever someone enters the bar, necessitating a greeting. A conversation in Welsh will either switch to English, or a translation will be given, if the newcomer is English. This male group consists of both local Welsh and English incomers: labourers, skilled craftsmen, financier, businessmen, lecturer, management consultant, stores manager, and the retired. As with the Kettletoft Hotel on Langamay, it is a useful place to do business or exchange information or tools. It is not the sort of place where one could read a newspaper; indeed, this is frowned upon. Few of this group, however, come from the village but from elsewhere within and surrounding parishes. Farmers are conspicuous by their absence, as nonplussed journalists found when covering the G. M. crop protests. Quizzes and darts in winter draw a larger clientele, but those who attend the former could hardly be called “regulars”.

The search for a centre of village life fares no better when the community hall is considered. The saga of building the village hall will be discussed below; here, all that needs to be said is that it is seldom used despite attempts to set up a playgroup and other activities (although there are signs of activity in recent months- a play group and regular dancing). There are a couple of tables and benches on the green but they are seldom used; the village green is very attractive but it is “dead”, although the recent addition of a bus shelter has led to its use by children (but hardly anyone ever catches a bus there). In December, a Christmas tree and lights appears and there is a carol service around the

tree led by the schoolchildren; by mid-February (2002) the toppled tree still stood forlornly on the green. Apparently the green used to be livelier when the pond was there- parents always knew that their children would be playing with the ducks. The village would also have been enlivened by the annual “hiring” fair, which continued as a “fun fair” until recently, and regular court hearings at the Sessions House. The village shop doesn’t get enough trade to count as a centre. Perhaps, apart from the male-centred public house, it is the group of women who gather at the school waiting for their children at 3.30 each day who constitute a “centre”, but, judging by the four-wheel - drives outside the school, many of them live outside the village. There is also the W. I. Despite being written in the 1950s, Jenkins’ (1960) distinction between *Buchedd A.* and *Buchedd B.* still has some relevance here. *Buchedd A.* is no longer necessarily related to church or chapel going, but incorporates “respectable” practices such as the W. I. and the school; *Buchedd B* incorporates the local and incomer males in the village pub. But *Buchedd A.* would include the more respectable incomers, which would not, apparently, have been the case in Aberporth in the 1950s. This apparent lack of a centre seems relevant to the previous discussion about G. M. crops and will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

There are the usual disputes found in any village, and occasionally a police car is called. A secret in is all around the village in hours, as I was told on the bus, which is a good place for gossip. Some incomers may get pejorative nicknames, but this is because of personal characteristics, and not because they are English. Anti-Englishness is saved for the lively banter in the pub on “International Days”. There is a feeling amongst most workmen that their livelihood depends on incomers buying cottages in need of renovation. I have never seen the anti-English slogans, which are so common in North Wales. The burning of English-owned cottages has seldom been a feature of this part of Wales. Below the surface, and very occasionally, after a few “pints”, resentment that local people can’t afford houses rises up. One is just as likely to hear negative comments about local farmers whom, it is felt form a clique, particularly on the community council. The local people feel intensely “Welsh”, many speak Welsh, but they include outsiders who do not flaunt their Englishness. The 1991 census returns for the parish give a population of 517 of whom 256 speak, read or write Welsh; 70% were born in Wales.

Leaving the top end of the village the narrow lane, flanked by tall “Pembrokeshire hedges” (grassy earth banks roughly revetted by stone and topped by hawthorn), runs through potato fields and pasture to The Harbour, a cleft in the cliffs with moorings for fishing and pleasure boats. The mill has been converted into holiday accommodation, as has most of the hamlet, including The Blacksmith’s Arms. Tre-bryn stores once had a depot here, now converted into a house, appropriately called The Shed. There is a ruined granary on the cliff-top, and a warehouse beside the beach, which has now been converted to a holiday let. A large bungalow and concealed swimming pool belong to one of a large farming family. Of The Harbour, George (1964) writes:

(it) “was a small safe harbour in 1566. Sloops based there in 1811 took corn and butter to Bristol and returned with general merchandise....In the 1920s oats were still being shipped up the Bristol Channel and coal landed from Hook or Saundersfoot [South Pembrokeshire]”. (4).

Ships were grounded on the beach to allow the transport of limestone to the nearby limekilns, one of which still survives below the coastal path. Davies P. (1989) records three other kilns close to the foreshore, and describes The Harbour as a once “busy little port” (32). In 1891 there were at least three alehouses.

The road continues out of The Harbour, where it soon reaches the southern boundary of the parish at Longhouse Farm, with its fine cromlech- Carreg Samson.

Below Tre-bryn village the old turnpike road, now the main Goodwick-St. David’s road, passes Rehoboth Cross and Yr Ysgubor, which seems to have grown as a settlement since the 1881 census. Apart from a few houses and farms, it consists of a recently expanded garage/general stores and a pub (although the pub is just outside the parish boundary). After the Second World War, a number of prefabricated houses and a Roman Catholic Chapel were built for Irish immigrants, but have since been demolished for new houses (I am indebted to L.C., P. J. and T. C for this information.) This is the western edge of the parish. From Rehoboth Cross a lane doubles back to Tre-bryn , passing Rehoboth chapel, which is still used, and a complex of farms at Rhoslanog, now mostly converted.

East of the crossroads lies the hamlet of Cas, another cluster of houses around a village green. Pencnwc farm lies on the site of a mediaeval fortification. The pub used to be the village stores and post office. Although it lies only about two miles from Trebryn village, there is some friendly competition between the two communities (B.E. pers. comm.).⁴⁹ From here the road crosses the River Cleddau, some miles distant, and runs into the adjoining parish, where The Halt was built as a late addition to the Fishguard railway line, to allow cattle to be shipped eastwards. It had a short life.

The rest of the parish consists of gently undulating land through which the upper reaches of the Western Cleddau flow, and a dramatic cliff-line overlooking the Irish Sea.

Kelly's Directory for 1914 gives the following list of farms in the parish (the spelling is as found in the directory):

Trewallterlwyd, Penyfeidr, Tynewyddgrug, Llwyngoras, Barnsley, Parkynole, Parkynole [fach?], Lower Mabus, Long House, Priskilly Forest, Upper Farm, Torbant, Abercastle [this would be the mill], Waunbarry, Rhoslanog, Lower House [Ty Isaf], Priskilly Fach, Rhoslanog Fach, Penybank, Castle Cenlas, Mabus, Pencnwc, Ciliaden, Priskilly Fawr, Bryncleddau, Trefelyn, Carnachenwen, Ty Cant, Carnachen [l]lwyd, Tresaer, Llambled, Morfa, Gilfach, Tregidreg [1901 edition only]. Lochturffin appears on its own as a separate category; the Vicarage included 90 acres. There are a small number of farms that appear in other sources to be discussed below.

Most of these properties remain as farms today, although some have extended into golf or caravans. A few have been converted into non-agricultural properties, and some barns have been converted. Mabws Fawr, until recently, was a well-known country restaurant (now a gallery, but up for sale again) and Parkynole Fach is a privately run outdoor pursuits centre. Lochturffin is in the process of conversion (2002).

Many of these farms will play an important role in the following analysis of the Parish Council.

⁴⁹ In a recent election (April, 2002) for a vacancy on the community council, Cas residents were determined to have their representative elected.

Chapter 3. Lane, Cemetery and Common: civic inertia and occasional action in Tre-bryn Parish.

An attempt is made here to further explore stasis, “globalisation” and social change. This chapter is largely based on the minutes of the Parish Council of from its inception in 1894 until 1943, although reference is also made to school logbooks for the first two decades of the twentieth century. At a late date in this research, access was also obtained to the Parish minutes covering the period 1965 until 1978 by which time (1974), the new Community Councils took over (I am indebted to Jill Morgan of Carnachen-wen for these later minutes). It is suggested that even in the late nineteenth century, the parish was aware of itself as part of a wider *ecumene*, although the more mundane aspects of parish life predominate. Boundary maintenance and village identity were important *vis a vis* other parishes, the county, the United Kingdom and occasionally elsewhere. The parish also participated in the serendipitous events of Empire. Some councillors actively sought social change and although the evidence has to be found outside of these minute books a few, a very few, played a role in advancing Trade Unionism in Wales (Pretty, 1989)

It is contended that the use of parish records is a form of ethnographic fieldwork providing a “testimony” as valid as any other although it might not have the same attractions to the ethnographer as fieldwork. However, it is accepted that it can be a rather “thin” form of testimony, as Frankenberg (1990) acknowledges when he states that committee minutes in Pentrediwaith showed little detail, and rarely uncover what he discovered through participant observation as the “*familiar picture of economic class division and antagonism*” (67). But, as will be shown later in this chapter and the next, farmers monopolised parish politics in , and have done until recently, so there was not such antagonism, although the cause of the Welsh agricultural labourer was taken up outside of the council by a couple of councillors. It is also accepted, that until recently, it is a male voice in politics. The language is terse and formal, and in English –the first language of most councillors would have been Welsh (1891 and 1901 Census).

Is the material of any interest to ethnography? There is little of consequence in the minutes, but they do relate to parish identity. Cohen's (1986), model of community identity, and the importance of the boundary, suggests an entity, which is reactive to others. Occasionally, however, these minutes demonstrate that councillors were proactive, actively seeking to participate in the "progress" of the late nineteenth and twentieth century. The tone is often one of "us" versus "them" due to the frustrations of having to wait a long time for a reply.

The parish council is a focus, a formal space, in which a range of intra- and inter- group concerns can be dealt with: road repairs, land ownership, clearance of litter. It is obviously not a forum for village intimacies, although these presumably sometimes motivated individuals over issues such as encroachment on the village green by a the local publican in the 1930's, or the highhandedness of a long serving councillor who was also a county councillor which led to the one recorded reprimand in the minutes. The council can sometimes sanction behaviour: the dumping of building materials or the attempt of the publican to close the village well.

Usually, year after year, generation after generation, the system works smoothly. Often attendance is small, sometimes a new member has to be co-opted when someone dies or leaves the area. Occasionally the framework seems close to collapse; on just a couple of occasions in the 1930s there was a large attendance at the parish meeting to elect councillors, and a large number of nominations were received. It was claimed that the voting was "fixed", and a motion put for a formal, costly ballot. Just once the county council had to step in to redress affairs.

This was the only excitement, at least until the G. M. protest in 2001, when the council *was* active. A reading of the minutes gives an overwhelming impression of almost glacial inactivity (see Tindall, G., 1996 for a remarkably similar situation in rural France). Resolutions are passed, at the next meeting no progress is reported. Letters are sent to national bodies but receive no reply....Further letters are sent.....Years go by....This slowness, and the fact that most councillors were farmers seems to account for the apathy and cynicism found amongst parishioners (certainly over the last forty years. T. C. pers. comm.).

There are a whole series of recurring themes (aside from the important sociological fact of farmer domination):

- The Cas pump. It is always breaking down.
- Cwncaidd Lane. It always needs tidying up to make passable for children going to school.
- The village road. Who is responsible for its upkeep?
- The cemetery. Who owns it, who is responsible for its upkeep?
- Waste on the roadside.
- Encroachment on the village green.
- Water pollution from Upper House farm.
- Poor transportation- rail or bus.

Today, the Cas pump is purely ornamental and Cwncaidd Lane a “green lane”. To an outsider such items seem parochial in the negative sense of the word. But they can still resonate within the parish. I spoke to one resident about an overgrown lane, which had been refused planning permission for re-opening in the 1970’s- he was beside himself with anger at the decision the council had made. A village road is still dangerously narrow because of old disagreements. Cwncaidd Lane has had to be repaired recently by villagers themselves. Upper House farm still causes problems with the smell from its slurry pit, and one resident recently had water samples taken of water draining from the farm past his house. It is alleged rightly or wrongly, but with some force that a recent landlord, encroached on the village green. Road junctions onto the main road are still dangerous. Who is responsible for cutting parts of the village green is an on-going dispute as I write.

Other recurrent themes have to do with “progress”, particularly transport- a railway halt was finally built, but is now closed; the request for a light railway to St.David’s got nowhere; mains water and electricity were provided.

There is something of ethnographic interest here, however parochial. And it is “parochial” in the more positive sense that these issues become the irritants and occasional small victories of parish life. It is also of more general ethnographic interest in that these councillors were busy men who presumably got things done on their own

farms, or in the schoolroom, pub or smithy. As councillors, they achieved very little. It is as if they were playing a game, and this is an analogy (a la Geertz, 1983) worth pursuing:

- Annually they elect each other to office; there is a formal vote of thanks; occasionally someone dies and there is a formal silence.
- They elect each other to sub-committees.
- They pass resolutions, write letters, and wait for replies.
- Once every four years there is an election but there are few nominations- except on those tantalising occasions when parishioners “rock the boat”.
- Every few months they walk, ride or drive from their farms, the couple of miles along dark country lanes to the meeting in the village.

Turner (1982) refers to social life as a “drama”, and the “theatrical” potential of social life” (9), they are equally good analogies here. The councillors obviously performed some functions but equally they seem to enjoy their privileges, few as they are. More importantly, one villager has referred to them as a clique who liked to keep their meetings a mystery. Geertz’s (1983) analysis of various attempts at interpretative anthropology is apposite:

“What connects them all [Goffman, Turner et al.]? is the view that human beings are less driven by forces than submissive to rules, that the rules are such as to suggest strategies, the strategies are such as to inspire actions, and the actions are such as to be self-rewarding - pour le sport.” (25)

Pour le sport! How else can these minutes be read but as a male sport? And it is an interesting point that the three main occasions when there was activity, the final building of the village hall, the threat of demolition to the parish church, and the recent G. M. crop protest, it was a woman who got things done. This may be unduly cynical, if politically correct, but to return to the sociological significance of the council, it maintains the boundary and a sense of identity *vis a vis* the outside world.

Put into a wider context, this is a Welsh-speaking council, speaking English (see Parry, 1999 for nearby Fishguard in 1891 and the census returns of 1891 and 1901 for); it is

north of the landsker and the County Council is in English-speaking South Pembrokeshire; other bodies such as the Great Western Railway and the Welsh Church are also English speaking. In its occasional pro-active mode it is grappling with outside bodies on behalf of the parish against the frustrations of bureaucracy. Literally and metaphorically it is maintaining the fabric of the parish, symbolically putting it “on the map”.

The history of local government in Great Britain has been described by Richardson (1974). The parish council grew out of the “select” or “closed” vestry. In 1888 the Local Government Act established county councils, and in 1894 district and parish councils were also established. This Act transferred the civic functions of the “old vestry” to a parish council, and a parish meeting at which councillors would be elected by a show of hands. All county and parliamentary electors could vote. *“Those electors, including women, who had been resident for twelve months were eligible for election”* (60). By 1918, there was a common franchise for county, borough, district and parish councils; men (and women) with six months occupancy of premises or land could vote; wives over the age of thirty were also able to vote. By 1928, women over the age of twenty-one could vote. The Representation of the People Act, 1945, extended the franchise to all those registered for parliamentary elections. It is something of a paradox that Richardson can note that the influence of these newly constituted parish councils diminished at the end of the nineteenth century as the municipal and county boroughs and rural councils were introduced.

The structure of the parish council activities can be gleaned from the minutes:

- 1 A public meeting initially held annually in March. Voting was by a show of hands, exceptionally by ballot. Eleven councillors elected.
2. This was followed by an annual council meeting at which councillors would be elected to various offices.
3. There was a clerk to the council who was not a councillor.
4. Sub-committees could be set up as required.
5. Delegates to other committees elected.
6. Ideally there should be four meetings a year. Extraordinary meetings could be held when required.

Analysis of the minutes suggest that three types of matters were dealt with:

1. The quotidian. The maintenance of the parish fabric.
2. The contingent. Responses to outside events- wars, coronations, jubilees.
3. The “progressive”. Attempts to obtain better forms of transport, telephone, electric light, and mains water.

These three categories can be seen as being placed between the two polar types: the “local” and the “global”. These groupings demonstrate that the parish is not totally insulated against the outside world, and occasionally embraces wider issues. The parish can be parochial in the negative sense, but it is also part of a global (or at least British or European) *ecumene* in which parishioners play a distinctly Tre-bryn game. Roberts (1998) uses the expression “tributary patriotism” to describe loyalty to a local group, subsumed under a higher level loyalty to Great Britain etc. which certainly plays a part in parish life.

It is also possible to detect two cycles of time: the formal meetings based on the calendar and the older “farming year”. These two cycles sometimes clash when, for instance, meetings are inquorate because of harvest etc. (School Records also show this clash between the rational-modern and an older rhythm in the first few decades of the twentieth century, when attendance is low because the children are hay-making, gone to the fairs, or attending special chapel services). Contingent factors such as war can lead to the council almost ceasing to function. The cynical might add a third time cycle, council or bureaucratic time: after forty years it had still not been resolved who was responsible for the upkeep of the cemetery; the building of a community hall took a similar length of time.

The next section provides a categorised account of parish affairs keeping to the language of the minutes. The ethnographer has edited, but it remains a first-hand account produced by a small group of males, using the terse language of official reporting.⁵⁰ It can be compared to Le Roy Ladurie’s *Montaillou* (1980) or Lesy’s *Wisconsin Death Trip* (1973) in its reliance on original testimony. Admittedly, it lacks the drama of Montaillou’s tragic clash with the Papal Inquisition, and the Wisconsin

⁵⁰ My own comments are included in square brackets.

farmers' flirtation with fire-raising, suicide and manic depression. In its deliberate descriptive detail and dullness, however, it gives a "feel" for the ordinariness of parish affairs from 1894 until 1943, and 1965 until 1978.

Type 1. The quotidian. Internal parish maintenance.

Example 1. The burial ground.

The parish church is surrounded by a cemetery. Across the road, next to the school, is a second burial ground which is still in use. A number of the council minutes deal with responsibility for maintenance of the grounds, of greater significance is its ownership. One present community councillor said to me in 1999 that "*we are still not sure who owns it*", and at various times in the last thirty years local people have taken it upon themselves to mow the grass, irrespective of ownership, and denominational affiliation. Although the council is largely re-active, at times it wrestles with getting a response from outside bodies, and occasionally there are fund raising events to pay for improvements. The first entry in the minute book deals with the burial ground.

13th December 1894. *Rules of the burial ground should be provided.*

November 1895. *Does the council have management of the burial ground?*

9th August 1898. *Proposed by J. Lloyd Lewis sec. by W. Lawrence that the clerk write again to Home Secretary asking him to confirm the rules, sent to him some time ago relation to burial ground, and in the event of his refusal to communicate with the county member regarding same. [Over two years have passed, and the council is understandably irritated by the Civil Service]*

The issue of the burial ground now disappears until the 1920s. Nothing was done about ownership. One assumes that for a time the site was maintained but by 1920 it has become an issue of who should maintain what was now an overgrown area, and the question of ownership arises again:

30th December 1921. [There was a long discussion about the cemetery and it was agreed] *that the Parish Council organise a concert for the purpose raising a fund towards placing the cemetery in a state of repair, and also the approach to the cemetery.*

27th June 1922. *That the Parish Council be asked to carry out the work of putting the cemetery into a good state of repair and that a house-to-house collection be made immediately.*

27th February 1925. *That the question of the cemetery transference be held over to the next meeting.*

13th March 1925. *Transfer of cemetery deferred as currently under consideration in Parliament.* [It is not mentioned again until July 16th, 1928 when again no action is taken. In the 1930s the issue of ownership continues. From 1935 until April 21st, 1943, the last date for which these minutes were analysed, there are no further references. In a later set of minutes (1965-1978) it is not a major issue, although there is an entry for 16th September 1974 when the bad state of both cemeteries is deplored; the vicar had not replied to a council letter. Older members of the village remember taking the initiative and cutting the grass themselves in the 1970s. As early as 1922, The County Echo (Jan. 5th.) reported that councillors felt that: "It was regarded as a sad reflection on the parish on account of its awful state, and also its approaches."

Example 2. Cwncaidd Lane.

Today Cwncaidd Lane is a green lane bounded by a typical "Pembrokeshire Hedge". It rises steeply into the village from a road, which serves some of the coastal farms. At its lowest point it crosses boggy ground and a stream; a long piece of stone acts as a crude bridge. Pembrokeshire County Council occasionally trim the hedges, but any other maintenance is done on a voluntary *ad hoc* basis. It is passable for pedestrians, although one local man still somehow gets his pony and trap up and down the lane. It used to be the school route for children from the many farms in the lower part of the parish, and school records (circa 1920) document the headmaster's concern for how wet they sometimes got, walking the overgrown lane. As the headmaster was often a parish councillor, it is not surprising that its overgrown condition is often a subject of council minutes and becomes a concern of the County Council. As with example one, it is a recurring maintenance problem, in which the council is re-active.

9th August 1898. *Footbridge over Cwncaidd to be repaired.*

6th October 1928. *The committee which was appointed to inspect Cwncaidd Lane expressed their regret for not having been able to meet owing to the busy harvest time and the same committee was again appointed to inspect the lane and carry out the necessary work*

12th September 1935. *Trim Cwncaidd Lane to make it passable and that the attention of the County Council be drawn to same by pointing out to them that a number of children have to use this daily.*

21st November 1938. *A complaint was read from the schoolmaster regarding the unsatisfactory state of Cwncaidd Lane which stated that it was impossible for children to attend school without getting wet feet. County Councillor G. S. Roberts undertook to attend to the matter immediately.*

There is one further reference to the lane in the minutes up until 1943 and at least one reference in the 1965-1978 minute book.

Example 3. The Water Supply.

It might seem at first sight that, in an area with such a high rainfall, water supplies would not be a problem. The main sources of water were private wells and public pumps and wells. Once again the council is reactive and there is a tedious regularity with which the Cas pump breaks down. Attempts are made to involve outside bodies, or outside bodies contact the council about unsatisfactory supplies. The overuse of water by the village baker or the attempt by a publican to lock up the well presumably caused rifts in the parish.

17th June 1911. *The Clerk to the Rural District Council be written to, asking him to explain as to whose charges would the maintenance of water be put, whether to the R. D. C. or to the particular parish concerned.*

22nd August 1924. *That the necessary repairs be done to the pump at Cas.*

26th January 1927. *It was reported that the pump at Cas was out of order again.*

22nd April 1932. *A letter from the Sanitary Inspector was read complaining about the condition of Cas pump and urging the council to take immediate steps to provide a new pump....should be done immediately in view of epidemic of diphtheria in the locality. After some discussion it was decided that the Chairman and clerk ? out a letter explaining the council surprise at this complaint in view of the Sanitary Inspector report re the Cas water supply at the last meeting of the R. D. C.*

Example 4. The village green

As with a number of other parishes in North Pembrokeshire, church, pub, shop and cottages cluster around a village green. Ownership is complex but, today, the County Council takes responsibility for ~~trimming~~ the grass. The minutes show that on a number of occasions, the green has become an issue, and it is not always a matter of maintenance but of encroachment by individuals. As with the previous example it is just

possible to make out rifts in the community. Surprisingly, it is not until 1925 that problems involving the green become an issue.

15th April 1925. *Attention was called to the litter that continually disfigured the village. It was pointed out that the council did not wish to make it public who the guilty persons were, but strongly desire to remedy this unsatisfactory state of affairs.*

22nd April 1932. *A complaint was also read by the clerk which had been received from a ratepayer. Re. The erection of a shed or fowl-house on the Village Green and it was decided that the matter be referred to the District Council.*

the Green it was decided to refer the matter to the County Council for further information....

20th April 1933. *Refer the encroachment to Clerk of Tre-bryn Bench.*

16th April 1934. *The question of the village green encroachment was next considered. The chairman mentioned that this had been the burning question of the council for a long time and that steps should be taken to get the matter cleared up. [No reply had been received from solicitor, R. T. P. Williams.] Mr. Evans was asked to produce the deed to council....he did this and clerk was instructed to discuss the matter with R. T. P. Williams [who, it was reported on November 2nd, 1934, explained his unwillingness to give a decision.] The council was obviously faced with a dilemma and wanted to remove the encroachment under the 1899 Commons Act; the motion was defeated and an amendment accepted that a Map of Rights of Way be procured. The problem doesn't seem to have been resolved.*

There are no further references to the village green in these minutes up until 1943. The criticisms surrounding John Evans' alleged encroachment, the public reprimand of a senior councillor who had exceeded his powers in getting the green cleaned up, and the existence of T. E. Richards' Village Improvement Society suggest that there were divisions in the community, which may be reflected in the problems associated in the nominations and elections in the 1936 and 1938 Parish Meetings (discussed in the next chapter.).

Example 5. Village roads.

North of the village green, a road surrounds the churchyard. To the northeast lies the school and Cwncaidd Lane. The following examples refer to the village only, although there are many other references to the need for road improvements.

21st August 1896. *J. Lloyd Lewis to call attention of the council to the state of the road leading from to Cwncaidd at the next meeting.*

22nd October 1928. *Draw attention of Rural District Council to the road leading from the village shop to the school.*

[The road is mentioned again in May 1931, when rubbish blocking the road caused problems at a funeral. There is then an attempt to get District and County Councils involved in other road problems.]

30th December 1931. *A concert is to be held to improve the road. It was also decided that the clerk should write to the county surveyor stating that this council wishes to know what would be the requirement of the county council before taking over the road.*

Example 6. The community hall. ⁵¹

The growth of the “village hall movement” is described by Monger, G. (1993) who notes its development after 1918. For some it had been seen as a safe alternative to the village pub, which was a male space, and in particular it became a meeting place for the W I. In Tre-bryn the desire for a village hall is not recorded in Parish Minutes until a relatively late date, 1935. The existence of a village improvement society in the 1930s has been referred to above; a village hall committee has now to be added. There seems to have been an overlap, and some friction between these groups, with the councillors obviously considering themselves the senior partners. T. E. Richards, the schoolmaster, tendered his resignation as a councillor in June 1937, as a protest over poll irregularities, and criticism of his organization of the Jubilee committee; at some point he then becomes active on the hall committee. The original plot of land bought for the hall was subsequently sold for house building. Today a plot between the general stores and the ex-vicarage houses the village hall. Originally it was a small stone structure used as the school canteen, at a later date more recent extensions were erected. It is a

⁵¹ Parish council minutes refer to a village hall committee but now has a “community” hall to accommodate the sensibilities of all parts of the parish.

18th March 1940. *The question of payment for the plot of land for the village hall was discussed and it was decided to write to the solicitors for an explanation of the delay. It was also suggested the money should be invested in war savings certificates. [An amendment called for a joint meeting with village hall committee first, but the original proposal was passed.]*

22nd April 1940. *The Annual meeting. Mr. V. J. G. John solicitor informed the clerk that he was waiting for further particulars from the secretary of Village Hall Committee. It was decided to write to the secretary asking him to forward these particulars immediately. The council was also asked to reconsider its previous decision regarding war bonds. Agreed that there would be a joint meeting with village hall committee.*

17th June 1940. *Special meeting. To complete and sign conveyance documents.*

8th August 1940. *The plot should be marked out and a post erected on each end. £7-10-6p. to be paid to V. G. John.*

30th January 1941. *It was resolved that we proceed along lines authorised by secretary Village Hall Committee. re. investing money in National Savings. The vicar and Mr. T. E. Richards authorised to apply for repayment when required. Also apply to Education Authority re. fencing of plot if it should be taken over as a school garden.*

There were no further entries relevant to the hall up until 1943. There was a war on, and it seems reasonable that the plot should be used as a vegetable garden. I assumed that soon after the war the hall was built in its present location. It was only at a late date in this research that I discovered through conversation that the plot of land described above was in a different part of the village and had been sold as a building plot. Part two of the village hall story is contained in a minute book covering the period 1965-1978, which was lent to me in the summer of 2001. It would be too tedious to follow in detail but the entries for the Annual Meeting 1966 and 1967 contain remarks that negotiations for a proposed village hall are still in progress- some thirty years after the initial proposal. At the Annual Parish Meeting in 1968 it was stated that the 1939 planning consent was no longer valid; a new Village Hall Committee had been formed and planning consent had been applied for. It soon becomes obvious that there is a desire to sell the land bought in 1940 although there were ambiguities in the original conveyance. At a poorly attended parish meeting it was decided that money from the site could be used for a variety of improvements (June, 1968) to the village. The Welsh Office was now involved in the issue, making a number of provisos necessary to the sale. Finally,

in December 1971, the plot was sold to Mr. And Mrs. E. Flynn of Sevenoaks, Kent, for £900. After the sale there was £1600 in the account (Parish Meeting, 1972)]

Interest from this account was used as a Christmas bonus for O. A. P.s. Potential new sites had now to be found- the Sessions house was vacant, ~~as~~ was the old school canteen./old vicarage yard. By 1975 attempts were being made to secure finance to buy the latter site, which was on sale at £4,000. The complexity of the purchase led to the daughter of one of the councillors who acted as clerk, concentrating on the village hall purchase. It was at this point that there was acceleration in activity, although progress was far from straightforward. On September 19th 1977 the minutes record that the meeting was held in the new community hall- the old school canteen in the Old Vicarage Yard.

Forty two years after the plan had first been put forward had a *community* hall (not a village hall, this would have caused conflict with other hamlets within the parish). The room was small and in need of repair. In the years to come a large hall was added on, ~~and later~~ an annexe. There is some cynicism about both the building work and the lack of activities in the hall; on the other hand, attendance at parish and later community council meetings and public meetings was poor. The monopoly of farmers on the council is sometimes given as the cause. One respondent referred to them as “a click, fucking bees”, with a low opinion of the abilities of anyone else. There were events to raise money for the hall but people lost interest, and The Harbour was particularly annoyed at the concentration on Tre-bryn village. When a new building was built there was backbiting and problems with the design with farmer-councillors thinking they knew best. A planned nursery, surgery and youth club were unsuccessful. Apart from an amateur dramatic group and the community council, the hall is not a thriving focus of the community today, although recently a playgroup has been set up.

Type 2. The Contingent.

Type 2 examples are diverse, and depend on the capricious nature of history. Even peripheral areas of Great Britain celebrated the high points of Empire, and mourned its losses. As noted above, Roberts (1998) refers to this as “tributary patriotism”. As recorded in the minutes, the high points are marked by highly stereotyped celebrations: “teas”, games, and “jubilee” mugs. The parish participates in crises by sending some of its young men to war, collecting for the war effort, and taking on various roles. After World War One Tre-bryn was particularly zealous in the erection of a War Memorial. It is not mentioned in the minutes, nor is the fact that during the same war, many of the farmers were also magistrates and cancelled the essential war work status of troublesome labourers active in trade unionism in the parish (Pretty, 1989). Detail is minimal but can be of sociological interest: the council plays a major role in the organization of events but others are co-opted: their wives to form a teas committee, the vicar to lead a service, the headmaster to organise games. This overlapping, slightly wider, group gives an indication of influence in the community.

In World War Two the parish was close to the top-secret armaments depot at Trecwn and there were R. A. F squadrons at nearby Brawdy and St.David’s. Further south, Sunderland Flying Boats were stationed on the River Cleddau. A poignant reminder that even isolated rural areas were not immune from war was the recent discovery of three boxed gas masks hidden above a ceiling in a farmhouse in the village. Some of the older local people talk of German “U” boats landing at Abermawr to take on fresh supplies of water.

Example 1. Coronations and jubilees.

The council would be involved in these events but a separate committee would be formed which would be augmented with the vicar, councillors’ wives and a trawl of other farmers and their wives.

25th March 1935. *That we do celebrate the Jubilee of the accession of their majesties King George and Queen Mary. That a public meeting be called for Monday April 1st to make the necessary arrangements. That various suggestions....religious service, tea, sports, bonfire and fireworks, mementoes.*

6th April 1935. [This was a public meeting but it doesn't record attendance. Presumably the council attended. All present were to be on the committee plus:]

- Mrs Evans, Abercastle (miller and farmer's wife?).
- Mrs. Perkins, Trefelyn (farmer's wife).
- Mrs. Williams, Penfeidr (farmer's wife).
- Mrs. Phillips ?
- Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, Llochturfin (the major house in parish).
- Mrs. Rees, Garth.
- Mrs. Perkins, Longhouse (farmer's wife).
- Mrs. Richards, Schoolhouse.
- Mrs. James, secretary W.I.
- Mrs. Evans, Pencnwc (farmer's wife).
- Miss Rees, Castle Cenlas (large farm).
- Reverend Owen, Rehoboth.
- Mr. Lloyd Morse, Mabus Fach (farm).
- Mr. N.S. Perkins, Trefelyn farm, Chairman
- Mr. T.E. Richards, Schoolmaster, Secretary
- Mrs. Davies, Vicarage, Treasurer.

It is as neat a sociological picture of parish influence as you could get. All the parish councillors, most of whom are farmers, a group of farmers' wives, the vicar's wife, the schoolmaster and his wife, the Non-conformist minister, the secretary of the Women's Institute, and the owners of the large house, Llochturffin. The vicar is not mentioned but he would be responsible for the service. I am assuming that few parishioners attended.

There are a few more entries for 1935 regarding collections for The Prince of Wales National Jubilee (sometimes called the "Thank Offering") Fund and a list of subscribers, 20th December, 1935, which backs up the sociological implications of the previous list:

- G. S. Roberts 5/- [Farmer and County/Parish councillor]
- W. H. Thomas 2/6
- J. Evans Parcynole 1/- [Farmer]
- H. Morgan, Morfa 2/- [Farmer]

- H. Williams, Penfeidr 5/- [Farmer]
- G. Thomas, CastleMorris 5/-
- S. L. Lewis, Penybank 5/- [Farmer]
- N. S Perkins, Trefelyn 5/- [Farmer]
- A. T. Jenkins 2/6
- T. L. Thomas, Llochturffin 5/- [Landowner]
- Rev. T. T. Davies, Vicarage 5/-
- J. B. Philips, The Shop. 5/- [Stores]
- S. J. Rees, The Garth 2/6
- T. Lloyd ? 1/-
- T .E. Richards 5/- [Schoolmaster]
- J. Evans, Pencnwc 5/- [Farmer]
- J.P. Lewis, Mabws Bridge 1/6

Example 2. The First World War.

? September 1914. *It was agreed that the meeting form itself into a committee for War purposes. The parish collection amounted to £46.16.9.*

6th November 1914. *A public meeting be called to decide best means to provide for a ? for the Belgian refugees.*

17th March 1919. *A special public meeting be held ... to consider a suitable memorial to the soldiers of this parish who have fallen in the war and also those who have served in different capacities throughout this great campaign.*

Example 3. World War 2.

22nd April 1940. *The question of the salvage campaign was next considered and it was felt that the matter should receive this council's support....arrangements should be made [in the] village to have a receiving depot.....subcommittee formed.*

7th December 1940. *Making a donation towards the Evacuees Children Social....*

.12th February 1943. *A certificate in commemoration of H.M.S. Nubian was presented to the chairman.*

[No entries analysed after 1943.]

Type 3. The “Progressive”.

Types 1 and 2 suggest a council, which is re-active rather than pro-active, responding to the needs of parish maintenance or the contingencies of British History. Type 3 demonstrates a greater dynamism and desire to participate in the technological changes of the late-19th and 20th centuries. Once again, however, limited powers, the structure of parish council meetings, and the bureaucratic nature of outside agencies meant that change could be frustratingly slow.

Type 1. Transport.

Because of the geographical location of Pembrokeshire, there was a pre-occupation with its poor infrastructure, and there still is. Jones (1982) recalls his childhood in northwest Wales which “*apart from the odd bus, steam engine and motor car, still [seemed] in the mid-nineteenth century...For the majority of people, communications, apart from the infrequent buses, were difficult.*” (19) Sea travel from the small ports and harbours was often easier than overland. The same applies to West Wales. John (1976) records that the South Wales railway reached Haverfordwest in 1854, but it was not until 1906 that a line to Fishguard passed within a few miles of village, near the eastern boundary of the parish. There were two main concerns for the council: to obtain a halt on this line at Heathfield (achieved), and to support demands for a light railway to run to St.David’s (not achieved). By the 1920s and 30s the main pre-occupation was an adequate bus service. The construction of a halt near Heathfield allowed the easy transport of livestock to markets further east. In the nineteenth century this had been a slow undertaking made by drovers (Godwin and Toulson, 1977). The role of railways in social change should not be underestimated as Raymond Williams’ novel about east Wales during the General Strike of 1926, *Border Country*, (1988) suggests (see also Pretty, 1989).

18th April 1904. *Proposed and seconded that a petition be forwarded to the Chairman of the Great Western Railway praying that they place a station at Heathfield for the convenience of this parish and others. [Support to be obtained from other parishes.]*

27th September 1904. *Write again to the Chairman of G.W.R. asking them to reconsider their decision with regard to their placing a station or siding at Heathfield Cross.*

[They evidently got nowhere with G. W. R. and the next request is not made for almost seven years;]

18th March 1911. *Petition asking G. W. R. for a siding and halt at Heathfield.*

16th April 1913. *Proposed that a subcommittee....petition asking the G. W. R. to grant to the locality a halt or siding as previously asked for at Heathfield or thereabouts.*

[It is understandable that there is now a hiatus as, after 1914 there are more important issues. Six years later a more ambitious plan is put forward, although it did not originate from the parish council:]

6th February 1919. *Proposal for a light railway running along this locality...*

[But there is still a desire for the more obtainable goal of the halt, and they get the support of the county council and later lobby other parish councils:]

15th April 1919. *Request for a halt sent to G. W. R. in Swansea, supported by county council.*

7th May 1920. *Petition be taken around suggesting to the G. W. R the necessity of a halt at or near Heathfield and that the clerk write to the following councils to help in the matter viz. Letterston, Llanrian, St. David's, Whitchurch.*

20th December 1922. *Proposal for a light railway from Heathfield to St. David's be sent to the Ministry of Transport and the County member.*

[The halt at Heathfield was finally built and after the abortive attempt to support a light railway interest moves towards bus connections from village to the halt, and bus services in general.]

Example 2. Electricity, telegraph, telephone, the G. P. O.

The telegraph and, later, the telephone opened up communications in isolated communities as discussed in the chapters on Orkney. Tibbott (1989) has discussed the importance of electricity for the Welsh farmer's wife, in particular electric light.

5th March 1901. *Clerk write to our county member that a telegraph office is much needed at*

6th November 1901. *Two letters from the county member re the above.*

22nd April 1902. *Communication with Sec. General Post Office with regard to having Telegraphic Comm.inform him that the District is prepared with Guarantors to meet half deficiency as suggested in their letter of July 26, 1901.*

[Electricity was first mentioned in the minutes on January 5th 1934:]

The question of installing electric light in the village of and District was considered and it was decided to write to the West Cambrian Electric Light Company asking them if they would consider the question of installing same in the district.

22nd February 1934. No reply. Write again.

21st November 1938. The question of the electrical supply of the village was brought forward....it was agreed to write to the West Cambrian Electric Company pointing out to them the urgent need of electrical supply for the villages in this parish. Also that the existing supply at had now been removed. [Write again on March 9th, 1939.]

This has been a long and sometimes tedious first-hand testimony of parish life edited by the author. It gives a faint indication of social life, although nothing of the concerts and self-help education groups which were once part of parish life. Change was slow, the parish council had its own momentum but it could occasionally be pro-active. It reveals something of those who were influential in the parish. The next chapter will use other data to consider the social dynamics of Tre-bryn parish, and aspects of change, before returning to the parish council and its role in parish life.

Chapter 4. Stakeholders in Tre-bryn.

This chapter examines Census material for the parish and further examines the parish council minute books. It attempts to discover the degree of geographical mobility and change in the area, to raise the question “Who are the “locals”?”, and to further develop the discussion of influence and openness within the community. Thus “stakeholder” is defined widely as longevity in parish, ownership of land or political influence. Unfortunately, the 1841 Census only records county of birth, the 1851 Census is incomplete and the 1861 Census is difficult to read, but the 1881 Census is both legible and gives parish of birth. The 1891 Census gives the first (controversial) statistics for the use of the Welsh language, as does the recently available (2002) Census for 1901, which is also difficult to read. The “language question” of 1891 throws interesting light on cultural identity in Tre-bryn.

| Tre-bryn Parish | Inhabited houses. | Males | Females | Total | Household size |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------|---------|-------|----------------|
| 1841 | 195 | 483 | 529 | 1012 | 5.2 |
| 1861 | 194 | 454 | 522 | 976 | 5.0 |
| 1871 | 182 | 392 | 477 | 869 | 4.7 |
| 1881 | 162 | 375 | 424 | 799 | 4.9 |
| 1891 | 144 | 332 | 372 | 704 | 4.9 |
| 1901 | 121 | 297 | 321 | 618 | 5.1 |
| [1991 | | | | 517] | |

Table 1. Overview of the population of Tre-bryn 1841-1991

Place of birth, Tre-bryn Parish 1841-1881.

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-------|---------|
| 1841: | Born in Pembrokeshire | 1010. | (99.8%) |
| | Born in Scotland | 2. | |
| 1861: | Born in Pembrokeshire | 962. | (98.5%) |
| | Elsewhere in Wales. | 8. | |
| | Born in England. | 5. | |
| | Born in Ireland. | 1. | |
| 1881: | Born in Pembrokeshire | 779. | (97.4%) |
| | Elsewhere in Wales | 12. | |
| | Born in England | 6. | |
| | Born in Ireland | 1. | |
| | Born in New Brunswick | 1. | |

Table 2. Place of birth, Tre-bryn, 1841-1881.

It is no great surprise to find that in this isolated peninsular of Wales the vast majority of the population was born within Pembrokeshire. These figures do not give an indication, however, of mobility between parishes. Because of difficulties with decipherment, only the village was analysed for parish of birth in the 1861 census. Here, an interesting change occurs: out of 351 people, only 138 were born within the parish (39%); not surprisingly, the figures for the island parish of Langamay are far higher. However, Tre-bryn village may be atypical, as later figures will suggest.

A much fuller analysis was made of the 1881 Census made possible because of its greater legibility. The following is an attempt to ascertain the degree of geographical mobility, and to answer the question; who are the true “Tre-brynites”. It is also expected to pick up the “landsker effect” described in Part Three, chapter 1.

Place of birth was divided into 9 categories (by this author):

- Tre-bryn Parish.
- Adjoining parishes: Llanrhian, Llanhowell, St. Lawrence, St. Dogwells, Llanstinian, Manorowen, St. Nicholas, Granston, Llandeloy, Hayscastle, Trevine, S.Edrics, Llanreithian. The distance from village to these parishes is approximately four to five miles.
- Next but one parish: Jordanston, Llanwnda, Llanychaer, Treffgarne, Fishguard, Camrose, Roch, St. David's, Llandeloy, Whitchurch, Brawdy. Distance from village to outer edge of these parishes approximately eight miles, St. David's peninsula, about twelve miles.
- Other parts of North Pembrokeshire including Dinas, Newport, Henry's Moat, Nevern. Newport would be about fifteen miles away.
- Pembrokeshire south of the Landsker – south of Roch, Camrose, Spittal, about 8 miles.
- Pembrokeshire unreadable, or enumerator notes "n.k."
- Other Welsh counties. In the case of Ceredigion this would be about twenty-five miles from village.
- England, Ireland, Scotland.
- Outside British Isles.

The results are as follows:

| Tre-bryn | Next | Next but one | N.Pemb. | South P. | Pemb unk. | Wales | U.K. | Other |
|----------|------|--------------|---------|----------|-----------|-------|------|-------|
| 439 | 144 | 111 | 36 | 20 | 29 | 12 | 7 | 1 |

Table 3. Place of birth of persons living in Tre-bryn Parish, 1881. Population: 799.

54% of the population were born in the parish; a further 33% were born in the adjoining, or next but one parish. Thus 87% of the population lived within about twelve miles of where they had been born. 91% came from North Pembrokeshire with the border with Ceredigion some twenty miles away. Of great interest for the earlier discussion of the landsker in Pembrokeshire society and culture, less than 2% of the population come from south of the landsker, at its nearest point only about eight miles

away (if all the Pembrokeshire “unknowns” are added it rises to just under 5%). Only twenty people were born outside of Pembrokeshire, of these ten came from three households:

- The Vicarage, Tre-bryn village. Vicar, his wife, governess.
- The Drapers/Store, Tre-bryn village. The draper and draper’s clerk.
- Trefelin Farm, just outside the village. Farmer’s wife, son, cousin, governess, dairymaid.

The effect of the landsker is equally apparent when married couples are analysed (see Part Two, chapter 4, Orkney.) To make the analysis manageable, and to emphasise the possible landsker effect, categories two and three were grouped together, as were “Wales”, “U.K.” and “Other”; the couple of people from Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire were placed in the “North Pembrokeshire-other” category as it was considered that the Welsh-speaking culture of these counties was similar to North Pembrokeshire. There were 109 couples. The results are found in tables 4 and 5.

Table 4 Couples born in North Pembrokeshire.

| <u>Tre-bryn Parish, 1881</u> | | |
|-------------------------------|----|----------|
| Both Tre-bryn | 20 | (18.3%) |
| Tre-bryn male, female | | |
| born “near” parish. | 14 | (12.8%) |
| Tre-bryn female, male | | |
| born “near” parish | 12 | (11.0%) |
| Both born “near” parish | 43 | (39.4%) |
| Tre-bryn male, female | | |
| North Pemb. other | 0 | |
| Tre-bryn female, male | | |
| North Pemb. other | 1 | (0.9%) |
| Both North Pemb. Other | 1 | (0.9%) |
| [North of the <u>landsker</u> | 91 | (83.5%)] |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Tre-bryn male, female | | |
| South Pembs. | 1 (Milford Haven) | (0.9%) |
| Tre-bryn female, male | | |
| South Pembs. | 2 (Milford Haven x 2) | (1.8%) |
| Both South Pembs. | 1 | (0.9%) |
| Tre-bryn male, female other | 1 (New Brunswick) | (0.9%) |
| Tre-bryn female, male other | 1 (Ireland) | (0.9%) |
| Both other | 2 | (1.8%) |
| Unknown/indecipherable | 9 | (8.2%) |

Table 5. One or both of couple born outside North Pembs

From one point of view the picture is one of remarkable, if not unexpected, stability. Most parishioners are from Welsh-speaking North Pembrokeshire: there would have been culture shock in terms of language, clothes and other aspects for anyone coming from south of the landsker. When looking at marriage patterns one is reminded of the derogatory remark made by a South Pembrokeshire man about those from the north being “little black Welsh from the mountains” recorded in the Royal Commission Report of 1893. Of course, this analysis can say nothing about those who left the area to find work in South Wales or elsewhere. There is considerable movement, however, between parishes in North Pembrokeshire.

This stability is emphasised by the results of the 1891 Census analysed by Parry (1999) for the neighbouring small market town and harbour of Fishguard where 38.7% of the population was monoglot Welsh speaking and 52.7% bi-lingual. Ninety percent of the population had been born in Pembrokeshire, and of these 68.2% were born in Fishguard. Out of a total population of 1396 (aged two or above), only 29 came from England, and 12 from countries as diverse as Scotland, Ireland, Russia, Barbados, Chile and Australia. She makes reference to T. L. Evans’ The People of Pembrokeshire published in 1910 where it is noted that Pembrokeshire men rarely leave their own environment in search of wives. The figures for Tre-bryn parish are even more startling where 80.7% of the population *claim* to be monoglot Welsh speakers and 15.7% bilingual (two large groups- one a travelling cutler and his family and some gypsies are excluded). The 3.6% (29) of monoglot English consist of:

- The police constable and all his family (most born in South Pembrokeshire).
- The vicar's wife and children; he was bilingual.
- The schoolmaster although his wife was bilingual.
- The butcher was bilingual but his wife and two of his children were monoglot English speakers. The eldest son was bilingual.

All these lived in the village. Of the rest of the parish the results are as follows:

- Agricultural labourer from South Pembrokeshire monoglot English.
Wife bilingual.
- Morfa farm. Farmer, mother and sister monoglot English. Wife from North Wales bilingual.
- Parcynole farm. All family bilingual except two younger sons.
- Lamed farm. Monoglot Welsh speakers but two sisters from Ireland, both servants, English speaking.
- Priskilly Forest farm. Family bilingual but two farm servants from South Pembrokeshire monoglot English.
- Rhyd-yr Harding farm. English speaking farmer but wife and children bilingual.
- Llochturfin. Niece of farmer from South Pembrokeshire monoglot English.
- Longhouse farm. Family bilingual, nurse from Dorset monoglot English.

As Geraint Jenkins (in Parry and Williams, 1999) points out the 1891 Census needs to be interpreted with some caution. The supplementary question "Language spoken" is ambiguous although the enumerators had been briefed as to its meaning; there was also considerable pressure in the Welsh language press for householders to emphasise that they spoke Welsh. Some elementary detective work comparing the Census returns with membership of the Parish Council (the minutes, as noted above, were in English) shows that some councillors and their families claimed to be monoglot Welsh speakers; it is also difficult to believe that someone born in Canada or the Midlands of England was a monoglot Welsh speaker. Certainly by the 1901 Census only 52% of the parish claims to be a monoglot Welsh speaker, 46% bilingual, and 2% monoglot English (this is a much larger figure for Welsh-speaking than that given by Davies, R. for most of Pembrokeshire in 1901. In Jenkins, J.G., 1998) Nevertheless, whatever the ambiguity in

the 1891 Returns the evidence usefully emphasises the almost total identification with a Welsh-speaking culture.

Is there one group that is less likely to move, that has more of a stake holding in parish?

Householders. There are 165 households in Tre-bryn parish (1881 Census) The enumerator defines the head of the household; it is usually, but not always, male:

| |
|--|
| Heads of household: 61 born in Tre-bryn parish (37%) 18 partners born in parish, where head was not. |
|--|

Table 6. Householders in Tre-bryn, 1881

Out of 165 households, 79 contained head and/or wife born in parish (48%).

The Farms. The 1881 Census includes 47 households where the head of the house is described as farmer. These holdings would have ranged considerably in size (Jenkins, D. 1971). A stake in the land does not necessarily mean longevity in the parish as it has been recorded that Welsh farms frequently changed hands (Jenkins, D. *ibid*, but see Davies, J., 1975, for a growing tendency towards farm ownership and a possessive attitude to a particular place).

| |
|---|
| Heads of house born in Tre-bryn Parish: male 10 female 1. Head and wife born in Tre-bryn Parish: 8. Wife only born in Tre-bryn Parish: 3. Out of 47 farms head, wife, or both born in parish: 22 (47%) |
|---|

Table 7. Farmers in Tre-bryn, 1881

The villages/hamlets. Analysis was made of three clusters of houses, which have been called Trebryn village, Cas, and The Harbour:

Heads of household, The Harbour. 13 households.

Head of household born in parish: 6 (46%)

Head and/or spouse born in parish: 11 (84%)

Heads of household, Cas. 15 households.

Head of household born in parish: 5 (33%)

Head and/or spouse born in parish: 8 (53%)

Heads of household, Tre-bryn village. 17 households.

Heads of household born in parish: 4 (23%)

Heads and/or spouse born in parish: 7 (41%)

Table 8. Heads of household: The Harbour, Cas, Tre-bryn Village

The small hamlet of The Harbour contains the most “locals” as defined by place of birth. In one sense this is not surprising as it is tucked away in a small *cwm*; on the other hand it was a small trading port and one might have expected more intermixing. If one looks more closely at the returns and include the children, out of a population of 56 living in 13 houses, 51 were born in the parish. Of the exceptions, 4 came from nearby Llanrhian parish, and one, a weaver, from Carmarthen.

From this analysis, Tre-bryn village appears to have fewest “stakeholders”. If one excludes the farms there are 14 households but only 2 of these have heads born in the parish. This is not surprising; households in the village included those of the vicar, schoolmaster, police constable, and the drapers. Out of the 20 people born outside of Pembrokeshire, 7 lived in the village. As with Orkney, schoolmaster, policeman and vicar probably had minimal impact, except on some forms of formal behaviour (again, the Tre-bryn School day books for the early twentieth century stress the difficulties found by the schoolmaster in keeping children at home during the harvest, fair days and weekday festivals in the chapels); material culture was probably effected by the presence of a large general store importing a wide range of goods.

Who are the “locals”? The following analysis is a breakdown of all heads of household born in Tre-bryn parish or elsewhere, or their spouses. Farmers are not included. Some attempt is also given to document occupations:

| Born in Parish | Born outside Parish. |
|--|--|
| Males: 17 labourers 10 tradesmen /craftsmen (i) | Males: 29 labourers 10 other (iv) |
| Females: 10. (ii) | Females: 14 (v) |
| Spouse only born in parish: 10 labourers wives 7 other (iii) | |
| (i) Clog-maker, tailor (x2), miller, carpenter (x4), mariner. | (iv) schoolmaster, vicar, policeman, blacksmith (x2) |
| (ii) collier's wife, mariner's wife (x2), charwoman, labourers widow (x3), general servant (x3), dressmaker. | draper, boat-maker, tailor, corn merchant. |
| (iii) tailor's wife (x2), mariner's wife (x2), jockey's wife, gardener's wife, blacksmith's wife. | (v) Auctioneers widow, master mariner's wife, mason's widow, stocking knitter, domestics (2) charwomen (2) dairymaid, ag.lab. wife, ag.lab.widow. |

Table 9. Heads of household, Tre-bryn parish. Excludes farmers. 1881

There is nothing of great significance here, although it is interesting to see 24 households with a female head. More labourers come from outside the parish; if labourers are excluded then there is a tendency for those born in Tre-bryn to be skilled craftsmen, and outsiders to be what would later be termed “clerical” or “white collar”.

Who are the “locals”? Farm employees. This analysis excludes head of household and spouse, and all children. It includes sons and daughters if the enumerator has given them an occupation on the farm, and also includes some boarders.

| Parish born males (29). | | Males born outside parish (48) | |
|--------------------------|----|----------------------------------|----|
| Farmer/sons | 7 | Farmer/sons | 5 |
| Indoor servant/ | | Indoor servant/ | |
| Agri. Lab. | 19 | Agri. Lab. | 31 |
| Cow-boy | 1 | Cow-boy | 1 |
| Saddler | 1 | Jockey/huntsman | 2 |
| Cooper | 1 | Groom | 3 |
| | | Huntsman | 1 |
| | | Boarders: mason | 2 |
| | | carpenters | 2 |
| | | engineers | 1 |
| Parish born females (26) | | Females born outside parish (29) | |
| Nursemaids | 4 | Nursemaids | 2 |
| Domestic/General | 10 | Domestic/General | 14 |
| Maids | 5 | Maids | 3 |
| Dairymaid | 6 | Dairymaid | 7 |
| Dressmaker (daughter | | Cook | 1 |
| of farmer) | 1 | Governess | 1 |
| | | Farmer | 1 |

Table 10. Farm employees. 1881.

Of a population of 132 living on farms, 55 were born in the parish and 77 outside of the parish. Amongst males there is a tendency for labourers to come from outside, and some of the specialist activities such as jockey. Amongst females, general domestics and

dairymaids are just as likely to be from the parish as from outside but, again, specialists such as governess are likely to be imported.

A little more flesh may be put on the Census returns by considering statements made by respondents to D. Ll. Thomas' Royal Commission Inquiry (1893), who met him in Tre-bryn in 1892. D. H. Bowen of Ffynon Druidion farm (just outside the parish) deposed that:

“I employ three labourers and two servant men. Labourers are employed in this district more often than young servants are. I pay my labourers 1s.2d. and their food, each has a cottage and garden and a share in a large field which they hold jointly hold of me, each paying 6L. a year (without rates) for all. On this they keep a cow each, but have also the right of turning it on to a moor occasionally. They are also allowed 1 strang of barley and ¼ strang of oats, I providing the labour, seed, and manure. They grow no hay, but get a bundle now and then when required. The mowing, carting, and thrashing of their corn is done by me, as well as the carting of culm and furze for fuel. To one of the servant men (who is 18 years) I pay 15L. and some four or five pounds of wool. In some other places labourers who find their own food get 14s. to 15s. a week. Up to a year ago 12s. to 12s.6d. was the average wage of men. They pay about 1 L. a year for their cottages, but they get other customary allowances.” (71)

A Tre-bryn respondent stated:

“...the ordinary custom is to board labourers at the farmhouse. The wages are 8s. a week and food, cottage and garden (estimated at 2 L.) rent free, the setting of 3 cwt. of potatoes valued at 2L. 10s. and culm.. Day labourers who do not work regularly at the same place are paid 1s.8d. a day, excepting the winter months, when they get 1s.6d..... Road labourers receive 12s. a week.....There are a great number of farmers owning the land they occupy in the district.” (72)

Of the area generally, Ll. Thomas remarks that relations between employer and employee are good, and that the servant is treated as one of the family, which to a modern observer might seem to have drawbacks in that the farmer ensured attendance at chapel and Sunday School. **This paternalism** also has an architectural dimension: one farm in Tre-bryn (Ty Isaf) has a window from the main bedroom through to the storeroom where labourers would have slept. One also wonders about the effect on voting habits of labourers in open parish meetings at a later date. Ll. Thomas believes that there are few social cleavages between the “two orders”- the main division being

between them and the “landowning class”. Poor accommodation for the single labourer was seen as a problem.

Some of the farmers who figure in the 1881- 1901 Census would have owned their farms. Davies (1975) describes the dramatic changes in landownership in Britain from the 1870s onward. English landowners were particularly keen to sell in Wales in order to consolidate their English holdings, and as Liberal demands for Land Reform grew, landlords lost their nerve. Land hunger was particularly acute in Wales and tenant farmers were willing to saddle themselves with large mortgages. Ll. Thomas (1893) sees this as a mixed blessing. Tenant farmers in Wales wanted independence from English landlords, but shortage of cash caused by large mortgages led to a shift in the sociological make up of farms- a greater onus was placed on family members to stay on farms. Ll. Thomas suggests that this is a cause of de-skilling of the workforce, as the farmer could no longer afford skilled men⁵². By 1970, freehold ownership of farms in Pembrokeshire generally had risen from 10.3% in 1887 to 64.2% (Davies, 1975).

Davies suggests that the relationship to land in Wales was far closer to that of peasant communities in Europe than to England. Land was seen as giving independence, status, and a hill farm had “value”. A number of comments by him are relevant to the previous discussion of stakeholders:

- At auction sales the tenant farmer was cheered on by his neighbours to bid for “his” farm. He was reclaiming the “land of his people”.
- As a result he often paid more than he could afford for the farm but a poem written circa 1900 by William Roberts and translated by Davies expresses the sentiment:

“Four hundred, you say, is more than the worth
of the home of my children, the family of my birth.
It wasn’t the roof and the walls I was buying
Or the piece of land around them lying.
Four hundred, you say, is more than the worth
Of the home of my children, the farm of my birth.”

Given the earlier Census findings for place of origin of farmers, where there was considerable inward movement, this process of consolidation was more complex in

⁵² This same lament about dying craftsmanship was taken up by the folklorists of a later generation. See Part One, chapters 4 and 5.

than Davies suggests. A survey of eighteen farms between 1841 and 1931 using Census and Electoral rolls gives a wide variation in continuity and change on farms (initial in column denotes continuity of family):

| Farms | 1841 | 1853 | 1861 | 1871 | 1881 | 1891 | 1903 | 1911 | 1923 | 1931 |
|------------------|----------|---------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|--------|---------|-------|
| <u>Barnsley</u> | Davies | ? | ? | Edmunds | Edwards | E | E | E | E | E |
| <u>C-Lwyd</u> | Phillips | Roberts | R | R | R | Rees | Rees | Rees | Rees | Char. |
| <u>C.-wen</u> | Davies | Harries | H | H | Witcher | Clay | Harries | ? | Jenkins | Ed. |
| <u>Gilfach</u> | Walters | W | W | Martin | Williams | W | W | W | W | W |
| <u>Lambed</u> | Matthias | M | M | Symmonds | S | S | Roberts | R | R | R |
| <u>Longhouse</u> | Lloyd | L | L | L | - | Griffiths | G | G | Thomas | Perk |
| <u>Mabws</u> | Evans | E | E | ? | Matthias | Griffiths | G | G | G | Bat. |
| <u>Ty Isaf</u> | Richards | R | R | R | R | Rees | Lawrence | L | L | L |
| <u>Parcy.</u> | Davies | D. | D | D | Matthias | Phillips | Thomas | Griff. | Evans | Ll |
| <u>Pencnwc</u> | Evans | Penn | Evans | ? | Matthias | M. | M | M | Reyn | R |
| <u>Penfeidr</u> | Thomas | T | T | ? | T | T | Davies | D | D | Grif. |
| <u>Trefelyn</u> | Davies | D | D | D | Thomas | T | Perkins | P | P | P |
| <u>Tregid.</u> | Thomas | T | T | T | Miles | M | M | M | M | M |
| <u>Tresaer</u> | Nicholas | N | N | N | Richards | R | R | R | R | R |
| <u>TreW.</u> | Richards | R | Griffiths | Morg. | Charles | C | C | C | Price | Bat |
| <u>Ty-grug</u> | ? | Davies | D. | Roberts | Davies | D | D | D | George | G |
| <u>Waun-B</u> | John | J | J | J | J | J | J | J | J | J |
| <u>Penyb.</u> | Beynon | B | B | Williams | Matthias | Ll | Ll. | Ll | Ll | Ll |

Table 11. Farm Occupancy 1841-1931.

A crude averaging of occupancy between 1841 and 1931 suggests that each farm changed hands 3.7 times. Some farms rarely changed hands (Waun Barry, Tresaer, Tregidreg, Trefelyn), Parcynole Fawr and Carnachen-wen changed fairly frequently. Tresaer was farmed by a Richards in the 1881 Census and it is still in the same family in 2002 (pers. com., T.C., J.M.)

Some farms remained within related kin groups but unfortunately these figures do not allow for such precision in identification. Evidence based on discussion with local people (T.C., J.M), internal evidence from the Census, and a paper by Francis Jones

(1970) on the history of Mabws Fawr give a much clearer picture of the dynamics of change and the inter-locking of certain families. An attempt at “the natural history” of some farming families is given below although it is no doubt a much more complex web than suggested here. The linked farms are underlined.

Mabws Fawr. This is a large holding of 360 acres (1871 Census) and atypical in that it produced some illustrious names who have provided footnotes to history. Jones traces it back to 1326 and it came into the possession of the Evans family at least by 1715. A considerably simplified history is given here. They are linked through the Matthias family who occupied a number of parish farms in the nineteenth century to the ancient Pembrokeshire family, the Wogans, and through a strong Baptist connection to the Richards of Ty Isaf. Three generations of John Evans “ruled” the farm until a fourth, Morgan Evans, was forced to sell sometime after the 1861 Census through over-expenditure. There is linkage of Mabws Fawr, Ty Isaf, Pencnwc, Carnachen lwyd farms but equally some of the off-spring moved out of the area to Cardigan and Haverfordwest, and further afield to London. A number became sailors (the family had shipping interests) and another the Master of the West India Docks, London.. Morgan Evans’ siblings are particularly interesting: one farmed a huge tract of Southern Africa where he is credited with the invention of barbed wire, another became editor of The Sunday Times; the sister, Rebecca, was a major international speaker for the Baptists, writing in both Welsh and English, and deserves further study by Welsh historians. However those who stayed and farmed at Mabws Fawr were also important, involving themselves in farm improvements and were responsible for some of the fine barn complexes in the area (e.g. Carnachen-wen, J.M. pers. comm.).

Carnachen Lwyd. This is a holding of 100 acres (1871 Census) and is situated along the cliff tops to the north of the parish. Although there have been a number of changes of tenure it is associated with the related Charles, Lawrence and George families. It is mentioned as a farm in the fourteenth century.

The 1881 Census gives a young farmer, William Lawrence, living on the farm with his two sisters and an agricultural labourer. They had moved from the nearby Garn farm where another older Lawrence farmed (father, uncle?). At the small farm of Rhoslanog Cross a third Lawrence lived with his family. By 1891 William Lawrence had moved from Carnachen Lwyd and in 1903 he is recorded at Ty Isaf farm in the village which

remained in the family until 1945 (?) when it was bought by George Thomas who farmed there until his death in the mid 1990s. Ty Isaf was then sold as a house and barn complex for renovation, although the land still remains in the family who farm in a neighbouring parish.

Carnachen lwyd was bought by Thomas Charles for £2,500 circa 1931. He had moved from TreWalter Lwyd.

Ty Isaf. (180 acres, 1881 Census) Henry Richards is recorded here in the 1841 Census but was farming Ty Isaf well before this date: his granddaughter married John Evans 3rd. of Mabws Fawr. The 1881 Census records a Thomas Richards and family employing 8 labourers, dairymaid, a general servant, and indoor farm servant. By 1893 a Daniel Rees is recorded.

TreWalter Lwyd. The 1881 Census records a 90-acre holding farmed by Thomas Charles and family. There was one labourer, and the unmarried children presumably carried out most of the farming tasks. There were also a number of lodgers. Thomas had moved from a neighbouring parish and his son carried on after his death (another name recorded 1923); his grandson bought Carnachen-lwyd, as noted above.

Trefelyn. (430 acres, 1881 Census). Jones (1970) refers to a mediaeval origin of the name *Tre Mab Bethelym*. It is apparently a large Georgian/Victorian structure and the 1881 Census is worth quoting as it gives a good picture of the household of a large Pembrokeshire farm:

- Margaret Thomas. Head 40 years old Farmer's wife.
- Four female children aged between 1-7
- Mary Thomas Cousin Unmarried Age 35 No occupation
- Charlotte Good Boarder Unmarried Age ? Governess (?=unreadable)
- Mary Ann Roch Servant Unmarried Age ? Dairy maid
- Theodosia Edwards Servant Unmarried Age ? Parlour maid
- Phebe Thomas Servant Unmarried Age ? Farm servant
- Charlotte Jinkins Servant Unmarried Age 17 Nurse maid
- James Evans Servant Unmarried Age 24 Indoor farm servant
- Thomas Morse Servant Unmarried Age 19 Farm servant
- William Martin Servant Unmarried Age 14 Indoor farm servant
- David Lewis Servant Unmarried Age 16 Indoor farm servant
- William Griffiths Servant Unmarried Age 15 Indoor farm servant
- James Thomas Boarder Widower Age 38 Jockey

Fig. 1 A farm household in 1881.

Evidently Mr. Thomas was absent on the day of the Census as he is recorded there in 1891; presumably there were also a number of other farm workers but this information usually accompanies the entry for the farmer.

David Perkins had taken over Trefelyn by 1901, having moved from South Pembrokeshire. By 1931 he had moved to Longhouse leaving his son to farm Trefelyn until 1983 when it was bought by the Williams of Jordanston parish. Both these families formed large farming “dynasties” in the area, which are still influential (one part of the Williams family intended to sow G.M. crops.)

Davies (1975) argues that whereas farmers in England found common cause with their landlords, because of the language difference and absentee landlordism: “The larger Welsh farmers were not members of the lower ranks of the gentry society, rather they were leaders of a different kind of society.” (210). As the following analysis of the Parish Council will show, Davies’ point is a good summation of the situation in from the 1890s onwards.

If “stakeholders” are defined in terms of place of birth the situation is complex. The hamlet of Abercastle seems most grounded in the parish. Certain specialist occupations seem to be taken by those from outside. Tre-bryn village appears to be the most “open”. Perhaps a different perspective is required: stakeholders are those with influence in the community? The Census returns have been useful in giving a sense of geographical

mobility, the demographics of the parish, and an overview of occupations; it is now time to return to the parish minutes.

As it was suggested in the previous chapter, farmers control the parish council. From 1894 until 1943 details are given of the addresses of all those elected to office; the later minutes for 1965-1978 do not include this information but I have been able to ask local people. Apart from a few doubtful cases, it is possible to see which councillors were farmers.

The first parish council election took place at the end of 1894 at the inception of the new councils. S. Lloyd Evans of Penybanc and S.J. Protheroe of Trefelyn proposed and seconded J. Griffith of Castle Canals to chair the meeting. It is not clear how the meeting proceeded but eleven parish councillors were elected:

- Miss Katie Griffith- Castle Cenlas. [Farm]
- Henry Griffith- Longhouse. [Farm]
- Thomas Griffith- Mabws Fawr. [Farm]
- Benj. Griffith- Maws Fach. [Farm]
- Thomas Griffith- village.
- John Jenkins- School.
- David Lloyd- Coppa. [Farm]
- George Matthias- Pencwnc. [Farm}
- S.J. Protheroe- Trefeyn. [Farm]
- Thomas Richards- Rhoslanog Fach. [Farm]
- Mrs. M.A. Thomas- Llochturfin. [Farm and large estate.]

Fig. 2 The first council

This set the sociological tone up until the recent past, although the election of two women was exceptional (it is assumed that one was the daughter of the chairman of the meeting, and Castle Cenlas is a “superior” farm; the other lived at the most prestigious house in the parish. They do not appear to have played a role in the first council, and neither stood again. It was to be forty years before another woman was nominated, and she was not elected.)

Between the first election in 1894 and 1946, 21 elections were held, initially every year, and then tri-ennially. On two occasions, 1934 and 1937, the initial election was judged “null and void”, the latter resulting in the supervising of the re-election by outside authorities. Analysis is based on all elections except that of 1946 when addresses were no longer included in the minutes.

| | Farmer | Schoolmaster | Publican | Shopkeeper | B'smith | Miller | Other | Other | Other | Other |
|----|----------|--------------|----------|------------|----------|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Tre-bryn | Tre-bryn | Tre-bryn | Tre-bryn | Tre-bryn | Tre-bryn | Cas. | Harb | | |
| 10 | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| 9 | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| 6 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | 2 |
| 7 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| 7 | 1 | | | | | | 2 | 1 | | 1 |
| 8 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | |
| 9 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| 5 | | | | | | 1 | | 2 | | 2 |
| 7 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| 6 | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| 9 | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| 6 | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | 2 |
| 6 | | | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 | | |
| 6 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 2 | | | 1 |
| 6 | | | | | | | 3 | | | 2 |
| 5 | 1 | | | | | | 4 | | | |

note: there were also 7 unidentified addresses

Table 12. Those elected to the Parish Council. 1894-1946. (“Tre-bryn” refers to the village).

Between 1894 and 1946, there were 21 elections (the last should be excluded). 220 councillors were elected: 143 of these were farmers (65%). The schoolmaster was elected 10 times (50%); he was John Jenkins in the early councils, after the First World War D. T. Lloyd served two terms but he was more involved in Labour and Trade Union politics. T. E. Richards also served two terms but became more involved in other local groups. Pretty (1989) identifies a David Lloyd as a parish councillor and trade union activist around the time of the First World War- he is presumably the David Lloyd of Rhoslanog Cross and Rehoboth.

As discussed earlier, the amount of power the council possessed was limited, and it is always possible that most people considered that it was irrelevant (as they do now). However it could be a stepping-stone to other committees and to county politics. It is a reasonable candidate for major stakeholder in Tre-bryn parish, and it was a farmers' council. But not all farms were involved. The 1881 Census identifies 47 farms, only 24 sent representatives. These were:

| Farm | No. of times represented | Approx. walking distance |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (20 possible) | (20 possible) | from village venue |
| Lambled | 12 | 15 minutes |
| Castle Cenlas | 10 | 20 |
| Mabws Fawr | 9 | 20 |
| Mabws Fach | 9 | 15 |
| Upper House | 9 | 2 |
| Penybank | 9 | Horse ride |
| Parcynole Fach | 8 | 15 |
| Rhoslanog Fach | 8 | 20 |
| Trefelyn | 8 | 15 |
| Morfa | 7 | 15 |
| Coppa | 7 | Horse ride |
| Lower House/ Ty Isaf | 6 | 1 |
| Parcynole | 6 | 20 |
| Longhouse | 5 | Horse ride. |
| Llochturffin | 3 | 25 |
| Ferncastle | 3 | 15 |
| Penfeidr | 3 | 20 |
| Gilfach Fach | 2 | 20 |
| Mabws Bridge | 1 | Horse ride |
| Priskilly | 1 | Horse ride |
| Llwyngoras | 1 | ? |
| Priskilly Forest | 1 | Horse ride. |
| Carnachenllywd | 1 | 25 |

Table 13 Farms represented on parish council

Fourteen farms provided representatives on 5 or more occasions (114 out of 220 possible councillors). Between 1894-1946 these fourteen farms provided 52% of all councillors. Castle Cenlas, Mabws Fawr, Trefelyn were major holdings, Lower and Upper House farms are near the venues. Lambled figures so prominently because of the long service G. S. Roberts gave to the council. Large farms such as Priskilly and Priskilly Forest are on the eastern edge of the parish. Llochturffin is socially distinct.

Interestingly there appears to be a shift in representation over the half century from the south side of village to the north, although it is far from perfect:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Castle Cenlas until 1913. | South of village. |
| Mabws Fawr until 1919 . | South of village. |
| Mabws Fach until 1919. | South of village. |
| Coppa until 1907. | South of village. |
| Penybanc until 1919. | South of village. |
| Parcynole until 1904. | North of village. |
| Rhoslanog Fach until 1922. | West of village. |

Fig. 3. Farms represented from 1894-1919.

Lambled is represented from 1899 until 1946 and lies east of the village.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Morfa from 1913 until 1946. | North of village. |
| Parcynole Fach from 1919 until 1946. | North of village. |
| Pencnwc from 1928 until 1946. | East of village. |
| Trefelyn from 1925 until 1937. | N. West of village. |

Fig. 4. Farms represented after 1913 until 1946.

Longhouse, Upper House and Lower House (Ty Isaf) are more sporadic in their representation.

Personal interest and popularity presumably account for much of parish council activity, but there is perhaps more to this far from perfect shift. The parish council in 1894 appears to have been set up by the “big” farms of Castle Cenlas, Mabws and Llochturffin, all close together in the south. 1919 seems to produce a change when only five farmers were elected to the council (on the previous council there had been nine). This is the period of maximum activity of the Agricultural Labourers Union (Pretty, 1989); Pembrokeshire County History (Howell, 1993) describes real militancy amongst farm labourers in the spring of 1919. For a time the farmers’ hegemony was broken and although it rebuilt itself, the 1920s and 30s are notable for the large number of

nominations, which suggest greater interest in the council and, perhaps, a greater range of opinions:

| <u>Nominations and farmer representation, 1919-1937.</u> | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <u>Year of election.</u> | <u>Farmer s voted on council.</u> | <u>Nominations.</u> |
| 1919 | 5 | 16 |
| 1922 | 7 | 17 |
| 1925 | 6 | 16 |
| 1928 | 9 | 20 |
| 1931 | 6 | 24 |
| 1934 -1 | 6 | 34 Poll called for. |
| 1934 -2 | 6 | Slightly different group take office. |
| 1937-1 | 6 | 29. Poll "null and void". |
| 1937-2 | 5 | 17. |

Table 14. Farmer representation on council.

Further evidence for this interest in local politics is found in The West Wales Guardian on March 12th, 1937 where there is a headline "*Heavy Poll at [Tre-bryn]*". This refers to the County Council elections at which two of the parish councillors/farmers stood against each other: G. S. Roberts and D. Perkins. There was a 90% turnout of the electorate and the newspaper reports that crowds waited during the evening for the result (G. S. Roberts 320, D. Perkins 146). The same newspaper fills in a few details about the voting irregularities at the parish meeting. On April 9th. it reports: "*Alleged irregularities at Pembrokeshire meetings*": *three councils, , neighbouring Llanrhian, and Crundale had had their results declared "null and void"*. New elections were to be held at which the Clerk to the R.D.C. would be present. Of the newspaper states:

"In the case of [Trebyn], where 26 candidates were nominated 19 withdrew, leaving only seven candidates for 11 seats on the Parish council. A letter from.... Parish Council described the parish meeting as a farce,"

A letter to the newspaper from Llanrhian denied impropriety but one elector had called for a ballot rather than a show of hands. Although there is little evidence it is suggested

that the withdrawal of nominations in Tre-bryn was a tactic to draw attention to the lack of secret ballot which was certainly a concern of the local schoolmaster, T. R. Roberts, which he protests at later after the Second World War. It is hard not to believe that the large farmer presence did not influence this call for a secret ballot.

There was not another election until after the Second World War but some of the same problems re-appear. There were 26 nominations, although three withdrew; once again there was dissatisfaction with a show of hands, and a request for a secret ballot, which did not obtain enough support. Unfortunately these minutes do not include addresses and it can only be stated that the first vicar was elected to the council.

The later parish minutes, 1965-1978, demonstrate that the domination by farmers continued during this period. I have been able to obtain addresses from a local source:

March 15th, 1965.
H. Morgan, Morfa. [Farmer]
A. T. Jenkins, village stores.
T. I. Rees. Castle Cenlas. [Farmer]
W. D. Griffiths, Vicar.
R. Thomas, Castle Morris stores.
D. J. George, Cross House. [Farmer]
T. R. Williams, Penfeidr. [Farmer]
J. Stephens, Bake-house. Tailor.
T. Evans Richards, retired teacher.
W. J. Murrow, Coppa. [Farmer].
Rhys Jenkins, Upper House. [Farmer]
(Six farmers)

Fig. 5. Council members

December 6th, 1971.

W. J. Murrow, Coppa. [Farmer]

D. George, Cross House. [Farmer]

S. J. Morgan, TreWalter. [Farmer]

T. I. Rees, Castle Cenlas. [Farmer]

G. Thomas, Church View. [Farmer]

Mr. Griffiths, Starways. [Farmer]

B. Raymond. [Farmer]

J. G. Thomas, The Harbour, Mill.

L. Davies, Harbourmaster, The Harbour.

W.R. Evans. ?

Y. Thomas, Corner House, .

(Seven farmers).

Fig. 6. Council members

The new Community Council, 1974.

The declaration and signing of office to the new council was held in April 1974. No addresses are given but I have obtained most of them (T. C., 2001):

W. Murrow, Coppa. [Farmer]

G. Thomas, Church View. [Farmer]

W. D. Rees, Farmers Arms.

W.R. Richards, Penybank. [Farmer]

A.D. Raymond, Gilfach. [Farmer]

T. J. Davies, Abercastle.

J. G. Thomas, Abercastle Mill.

R. Griffiths, Starways. [Farmer]

D. J. George, The Garth.

Y. Thomas, Bryn y Mor,

S. J. Morgan, Trewallter. [Farmer]

(Six farmers on new council).

Fig. 7. Community Council members.

It is obvious that the social fabric of Tre-bryn community life has only been touched on here. That there was once a vibrant social life is demonstrated by newspaper reports of winning choirs, concerts, eisteddfodau, picnics and voluntary organisations. In 1923, The County Echo reported (August 30th. P. R. O) that Mr. D. T. Lewis emphasised the importance of three winning choirs, which bridged the gap between denominations and politics (itself a telling comment which was not picked up in the Parish minutes). Outside of the council, the schoolmaster played an important role. The regular court hearings at the Session House would have brought outsiders into the village. A trawl of The West Wales Guardian (P. R. O) in the 1930s records:

- The cricket club, which uses a field owned by the farmer at Upper House (W. W. G., March 12th. 1937.)
- The village hall committee at which G. S. Roberts (Lambled farm) and D. Perkins (Trefelyn farm), and the vicar played prominent roles. (W. W. G., June 18th.1937).
- The W. I.
- Air raid precautions group as early as 1937. (During the ensuing war, air raid wardens were the vicar and a farmer from Ty Isaf).
- The nursing association.
- A number of award winning choirs. The West Wales Guardian reports an Eisteddfod held in (27.8.38) that John Stephens (the baker) conducted the winning choir, and his son conducted the male voice choir.
- A Cwrdd Adrodd (singing etc.) held at Blaenllyn chapel (21.12.34).

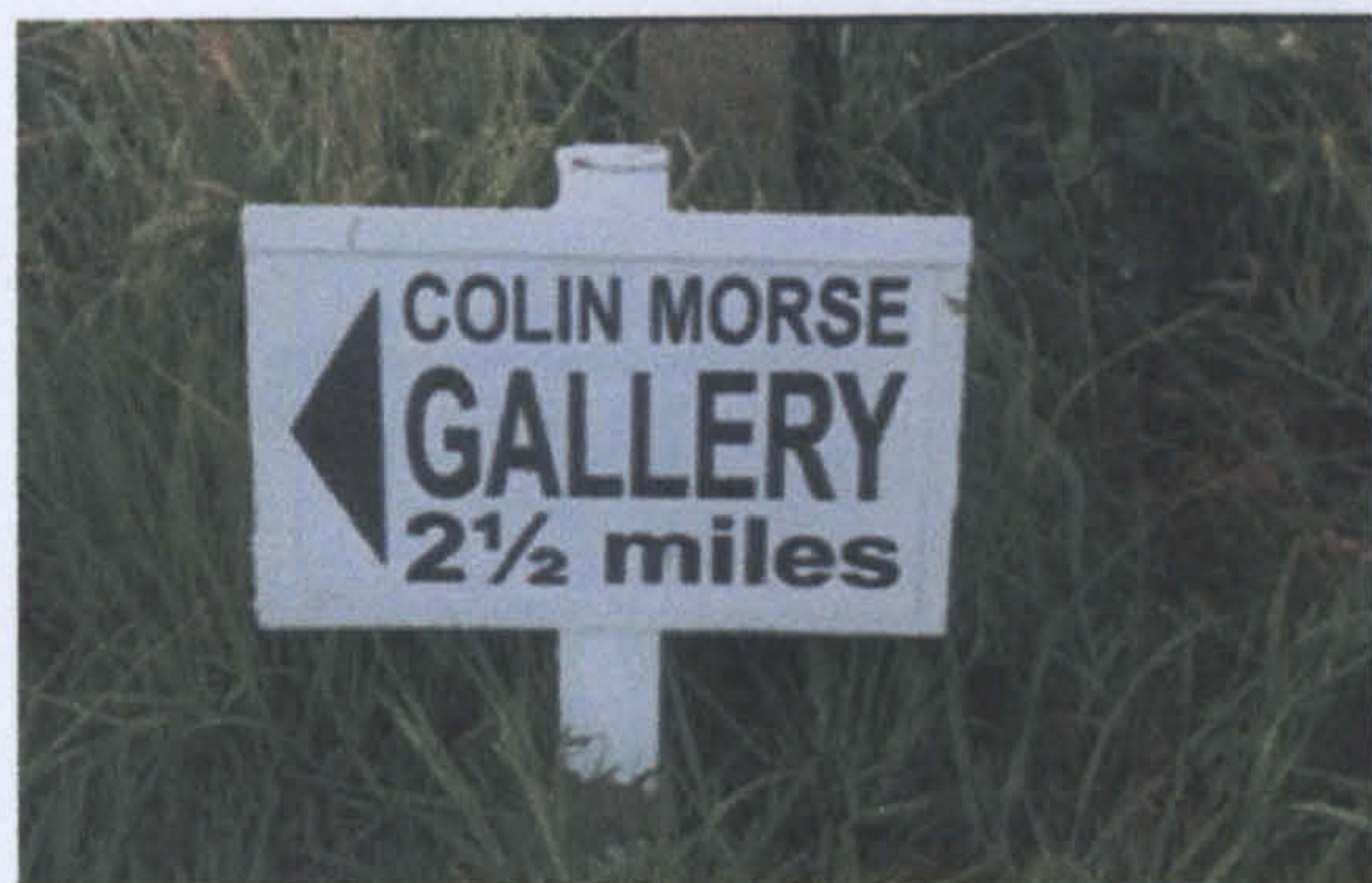
It is difficult not to see the central role of farming families in many of these activities however. Today there is nothing but apathy or cynicism for the council amongst many parishioners⁵³. It is worth comparing the Tre-bryn situation with that reported by Emmett (1964) in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area, and Frankenberg (1990) in Glynceiriog, both studies dating from the 1950's. Emmett argues that class conflict was replaced by English-Welsh conflict in her area; this seems reasonable as the major employers in

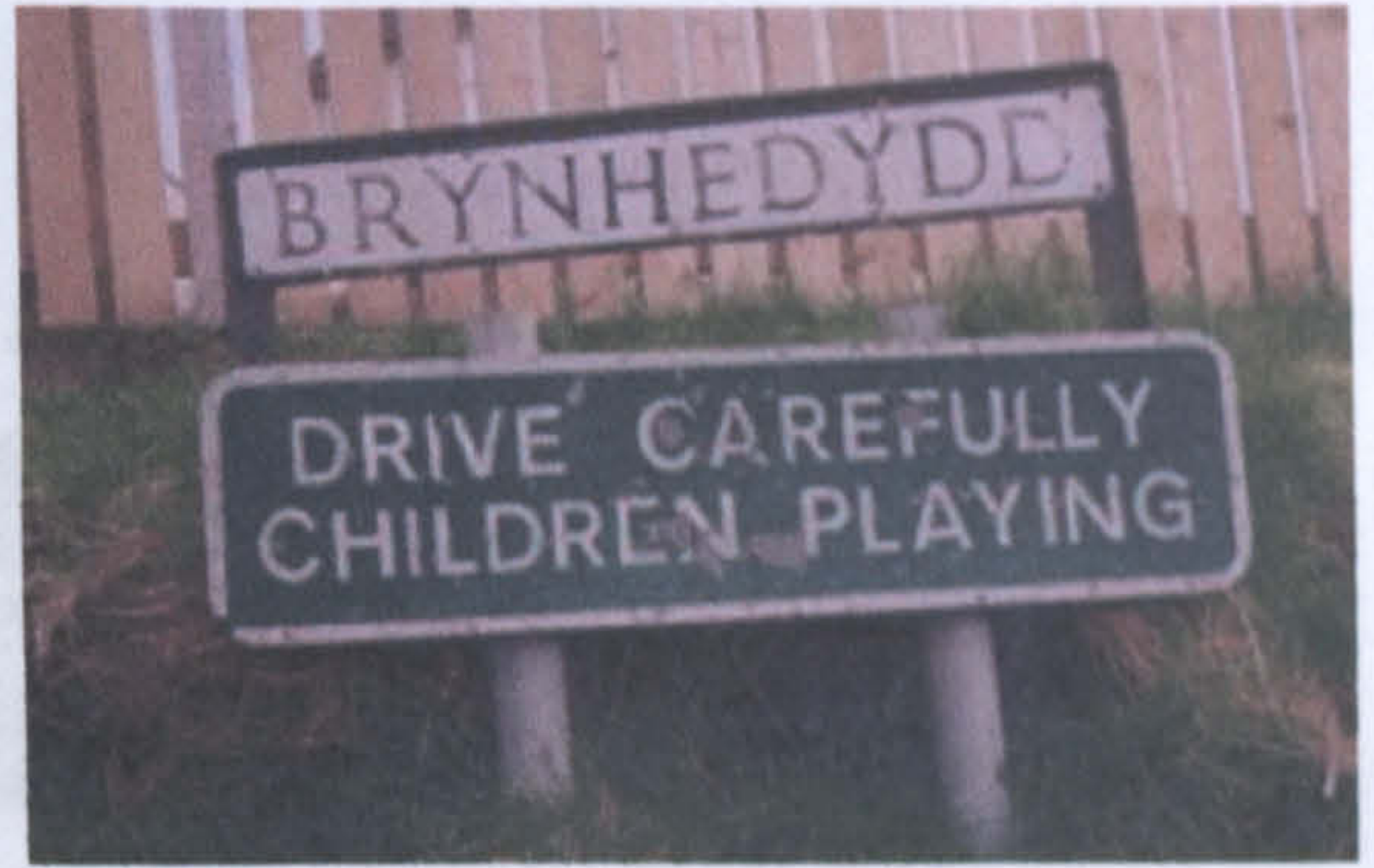
⁵³ On April 11th, 2002 there was actually an election for a seat on the community council. This was a rare event and a number of people spoken to felt that this was an opportunity to make the council more pro-active. The turnout of just under 30% shows a reasonable interest in local politics. One of those spoken to felt that there was a lack of communication in the parish and the council could act as more of a focus. A point, which seems of central importance to me.

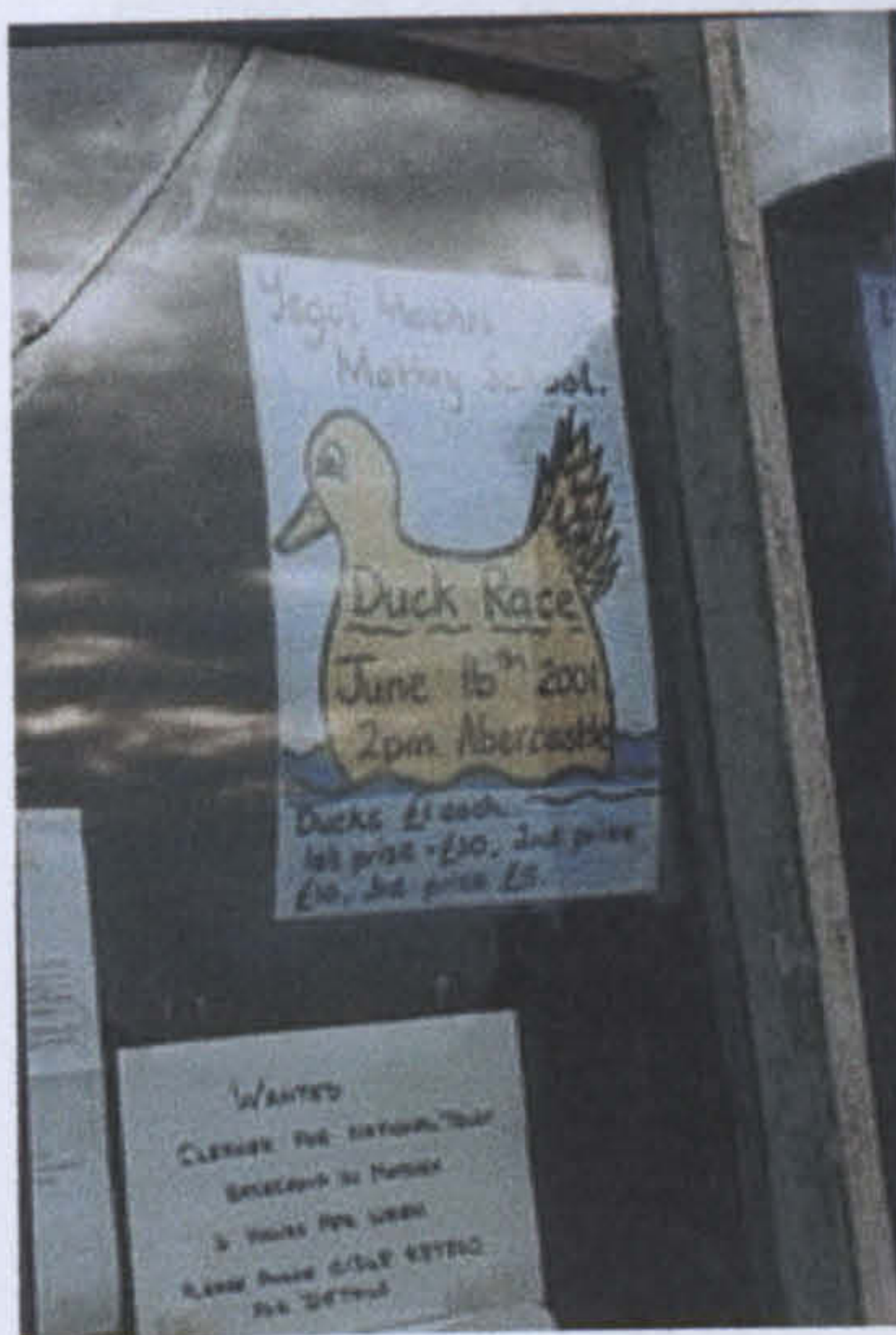
North Wales, were monoglot English quarry owners, who often owned the large rural estates (R. Merfyn Jones, 1981). In a sense this substitution of English –Welsh conflict for class conflict is more apparent than real. Frankenberg records that outsiders played a major role in parish politics and could be used as scapegoats. That was not the case in Tre-bryn , and the major irritant for some is the strong presence of local farmers on the council. It is only speculation, but the demand for a secret ballot in the 1930s and 40s may be a reflection of this. This seems to have led to the present inertia in parish life, particularly as the other parish leader, the schoolmaster (later mistress) no longer lives in the schoolhouse and there is no resident vicar or minister. Whatever, one can only record the lack of a vibrant centre demonstrated by the lack of use of a community hall which took almost four decades to get built.

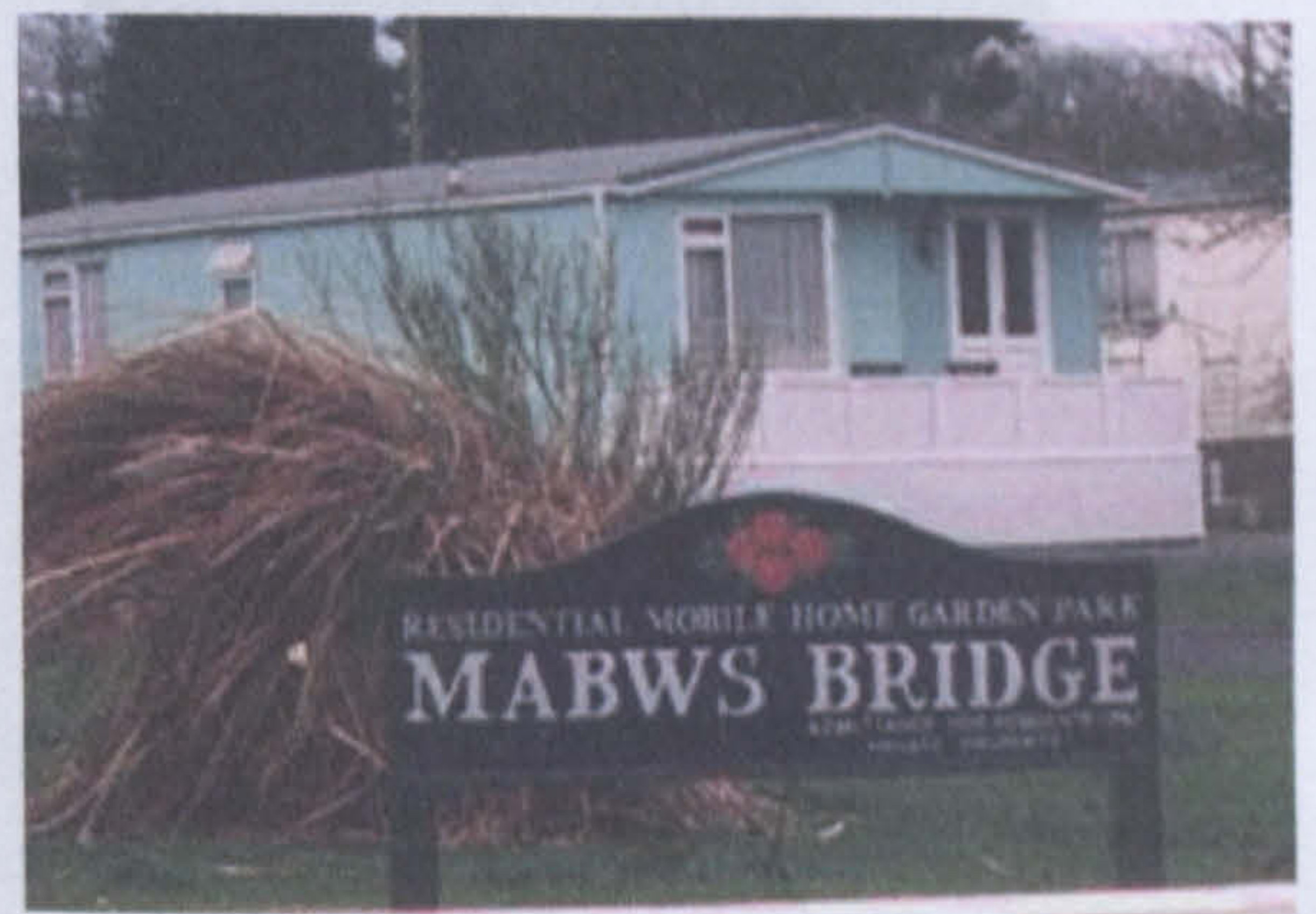
Chapter 5. Visual aspects of Tre-bryn Village.

Tre-bryn is still a working village- just. Council house building and a row of privately owned bungalows and houses provide accommodation for local people. The pub, the community hall, school and church remain largely untouched. The village is now undergoing change through the renovation of a farmhouse and barns, the derelict blacksmiths, and the growth of tourist-based industries. There has been a “creeping gentrification”, which is still resisted by the general stores, but the corrugated iron radio and television repair shop has now been demolished. New renovations are changing hands quickly and often these become “holiday cottages”. This series of photographs demonstrates some of these physical changes in the last years of the twentieth century, which must affect the sociology of the parish.

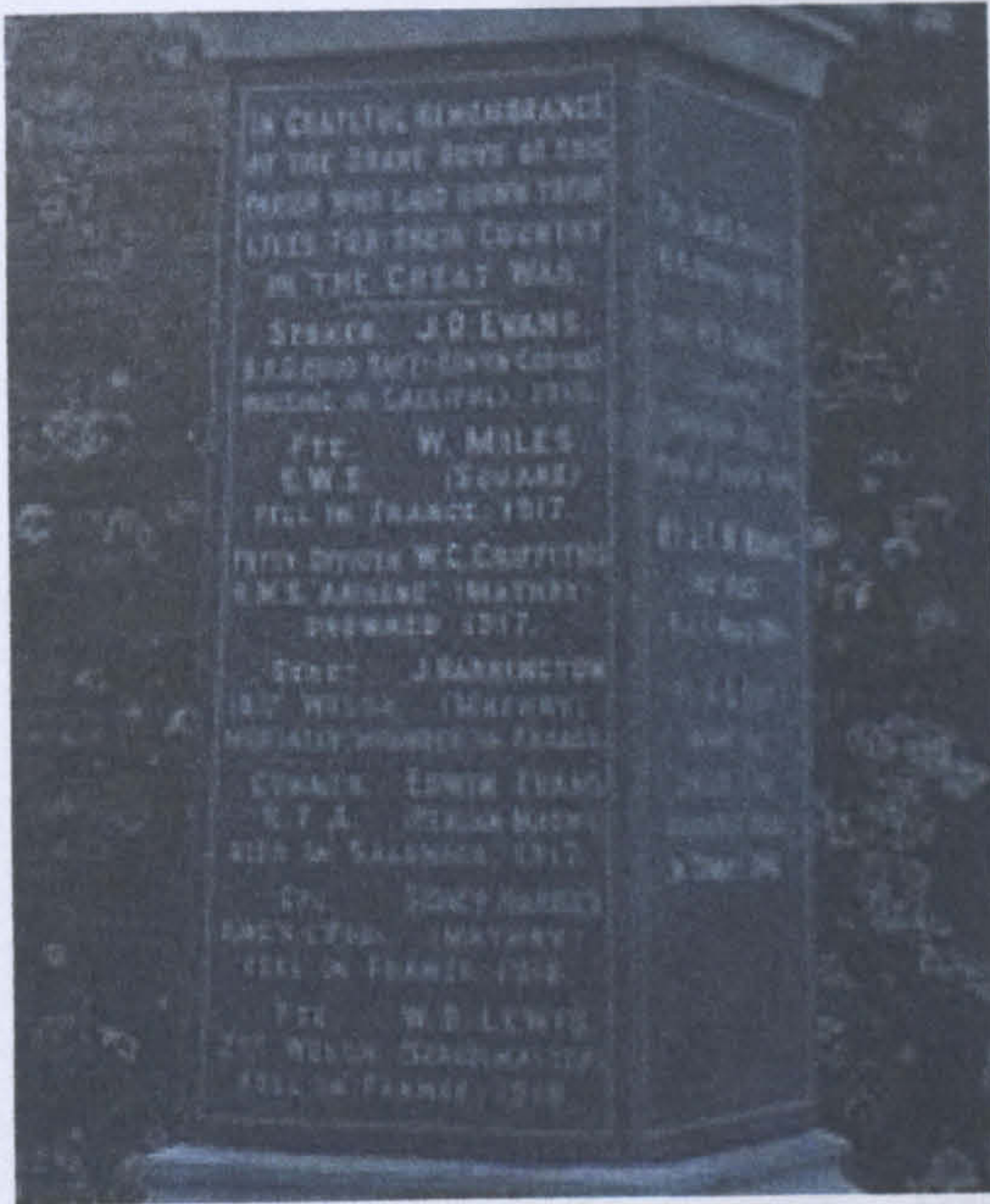








PART FOUR



PART FOUR.

Peripheral Communities in an “Age of Globalisation”. Reflections of a Marginal Anthropologist.

This has been a study of place, people, culture, and identity. It is a description of two parishes conventionally described as marginal to the U.K. It is worth comparing it to Glassie’s Passing the Time in Ballymenone (1995). In his introduction Glassie writes:

“My task was not to write another ethnography but to write accurately and usefully about the workaday reality of other people. I wanted to know how people who share my world make it despite boredom and terror” (15)

Earlier he states:

“Ethnography is interaction, collaboration. What it demands is not hypotheses, which may unnaturally close study downIt is vain to attempt ethnography without a knowledge of the language of daily life.....Using it [English] I would be able to find the community’s wise speakers, and while scanning broadly to test their generalisations, I would let them guide me. They know.” (14).

Glassie’s Ballymenone is in the borderlands of Northern Ireland, and knew real terror. In my study areas the only terror could be an existential one. Glassie’s “wise speakers” were story-tellers, mine were ordinary men and women who were willing to discuss their community with me and a range of intellectuals, past and present, who have published work about areas that fascinated them. Both studies are about “workaday reality”. I am less sure about “writing accurately” and “They know”: ethnography is about editing and the author has to accept responsibility- there are many “accuracies” as discussed in Part One. Based on a broad scanning of both Tre-bryn and Langamay generalisations have been made; later in this chapter various hypotheses will be considered.

Earlier the work of Carlo Ginsberg (1990) was discussed in which he suggested that art historians, psychoanalysts and fictional detectives used the same method of inquiry as hunter/gatherers –a search for traces. A wide range of “clues” has been considered here. “Interpretative ethnography” must be sensitive to the nuances of culture, speech, and the man-made. But there are dangers. Geertz (1983) may be correct in his assessment that

anthropology is no longer a “social physics”, and is open to “some of the most advanced varieties of modern opinion” (4), but who is to say that “my” interpretation is “better” than “yours”? Cohen (1986) raises the question but does not answer it satisfactorily. Friedman (1998) discusses an expanded notion of ethnographic reality which is “something between fact and interpretation,” (39). It is left to Douglas, B. (1998) to suggest a “severely qualified realism”, empowered by *reflexivity*, which is exposed to critique; this is the position taken here.

My pre-occupation has been with groups on the geographical margins. This does not necessarily make them tradition-oriented and hermetically sealed against social change. The Census Returns for both Tre-bryn and Langamay show some movement into the parish from surrounding areas but until the recent past there has been a shared culture, and in local political control has remained in the hands of farmers until recently. Councillors did attempt to get the parish involved in twentieth century technological change. The various surveys, reminiscences and guidebooks to Langamay demonstrate a recognition of wider society. Rural communities may not be “hot beds” of innovation, and change may occur slowly; they are an idiosyncratic mix of stability and change (this has also been pointed out by Oceanic anthropologists, Wassman, 1998). In his essay, Druids and Democrats (in The Welsh and their History, 1982), G. A. Williams describes the anti slavery campaigner, Thomas Clarkson’s, journey across Wales in 1823. Clarkson was shattered by the experience: eastern Wales was fifty years behind England in its politics, the west fifty years behind the east. And yet within twenty years Williams can describe the successful guerrilla activities which grew out of the West Walian secret societies- *Rebecca*, “the Mau Mau of West Wales” which exposed turnpike abuses; *Tarw Scotch* in the Monmouthshire iron belt. For all its quietism, Williams can also describe the political radicalism of Unitarian Merthyr and Welsh links with the new democracy in the U.S.A.

There is also a need for historical perspective when talking about peripheral communities- it is a relative concept. Iona and the St. David’s Peninsula have been major centres from which Celtic Christianity emanated. Orkney was once a centre of the Viking world. Indeed there is nothing necessarily new about globalisation in some of its manifestations. As G. A. Williams (1982) notes, The Gododdin was written in the 6th century in what is now called Scotland, about a battle between Romano Celts and

Northumbrians, and is now claimed as an epic by the Welsh. “In the seventh century, a Welshman could serve as a bishop in Spanish Galicia; lives of the Welsh saints were written in Brittany. St. David was possibly as Irish as St. Patrick was Welsh.” (191)

More prosaically, a farm within view of where I write, Mabws Fawr, was owned for generations by the Evans family. In the nineteenth century, a daughter became the first woman to speak at major religious meetings in Wales and sons became an editor of The Sunday Times, a Master of West Indian Docks, and a minor poet. Another brother who emigrated to South Africa invented a form of fence wire (Evans patent fencing), which is now called barbed wire (Jones, F., 1970). On 9th January, 2002, a Radio Cymru reporter came to the village to do a piece on the subject of barbed wire, which proved a lively talking point in the village pub, and revealed a pride in the parish. In recent years the same farmhouse has been a nationally acclaimed restaurant, and is now an art gallery, which is advertised, in the national press.

On Langamay, Walter Traill Dennison was a father of British Folk Lore, and local clergyman wrote about the island’s history and society. A number of nineteenth century landlords were responsible for interesting examples of agricultural experimentation. In the last couple of years it has become the home of an internationally renowned classical composer whose work is deeply rooted in both Modernism and Orcadian culture. Other islands have produced major literary figures, the most recent being the Booker-nominated George Mackay Brown.

The term “community” needs serious re-consideration. It has been defined into absurdity by sociologists as Bell and Newby (1971) have noted, removed from discourse and then slipped back in again. The dangers of using the term are accepted as it does have unacceptable normative connotations, which form part of a British Pastoral tradition, and has even been taken up by Conservative politicians trying to “improve” cotemporary society (e.g. Oliver Letwin, 9.1.02. The Times). But community does seem to mean something to people and it is difficult to think of an alternative term for face-to-face interactions in a small group living in the same place. There is an easy antidote to all forms of romanticism – a cross sample of studies of small groups shows that many of them are unpleasant places to live. St. Kilda imploded (Maclean, C, 1998); both Lesy’s (1973) farmers in Wisconsin and Scheper-Hughes’ (1982) in County Kerry ended up in

mental institutions; Birkett (1997) was glad to leave the intrusiveness of Pitcairn. Turnbull's *Ik* (1974) are hardly Wordsworthian "noble savages". Jeffrey's essay, Snakeskin Rhapsody, is as good an example as any of *American Gothic*:

"This remote part of the south is still limping into the the twentieth century. In rural West Virginia, instead of a Seven-Eleven at every intersection, there's a broken street light which looks like it might recently been used for a lynching, and the remnants of a mining village. The people are not friendly. In the local dialect the words for "stranger" and "enemy" are probably the same." (1998, 81).

Gothic novels and films play on the supposed eccentricities and dangers of outlandish places. A. Maclean (1986) is aware of the dangers of romanticism in his study of the crofting community of Ardnamurchan. Crofting was a particular short-term historical response to landlordism in the Highlands; it was a hard life, but "when I reflect that I knew that way of life... I am filled with pride and love."(44). It is difficult to avoid the normative. Indeed, in Keywords (1984), Raymond Williams ends his entry on "community" by stating:

"unlike all other terms of social organization (state, nation, society etc.) it seems never to be used unfavourably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term." (76)

It is a biologist rather than a sociologist or anthropologist who has put "the community" to centre stage in recent years. Matt Ridley's work is based on Dawkins' selfish gene theory and mathematical biology. In The Origins of Virtue (1996), Ridley tries to account for the evolution of human altruism. It is to the advantage of calculating primates to form alliances, reciprocity becomes the norm, and a trusty nature is just that- something you can trust. He does not use the term community but this is exactly what he is describing when he contrasts human groups with that of other primates. Brainy animals live in groups:

"Indeed, so tight is the correlation [with brain size] that you can predict the ~~natural~~ group size of a species whose group size is unknown. Human beings, this logic suggests, live in societies 150 strong. Although many towns and cities are bigger than this, the number is in fact about right. It is roughly the number of people in a typical hunter-gatherer band, the number in a typical religious ~~commune~~, the number in the average address book....It is, in short, the number of people we each know well." (70).

The historian Parker (1979) computes 200 as the size of the average English village in the Middle Ages. Ridley continues:

“Reciprocity only works if people recognise each other. You cannot pay back a favour, or hold a grudge, if you do not know how to find and identify your benefactor or enemy.” (70)

It is this alliance between biologists, mathematicians and economists using games theory in simulated exchange situations, which provides a theoretical backing for the contemporary use of “community”. Sigmund, Fehr, and Nowak (2002) discuss the inadequacy of the economic model of Homo economicus, a rational individual intent on maximising rewards for self. Instead experiments in small groups show that individuals can be generous and have a sense of “fair play”, irrespective of the culture in which the experiments took place (although there is cultural variation.). Not only do participants share, but they punish “free riders” who do not. They conclude:

“Ethical standards and moral systems differ from culture to culture, but we may presume that they are based on universal biologically rooted capabilities, in the same way that thousands of different languages are based on a universal language instinct.”
(2002, 85).

They, too, do not use the word community, but it is the social context within which calculations, reciprocity and ethics occurs.

In fact, it is difficult to see either Tre-bryn or Langamay as “classic communities”. Frankenberg (1966) uses the definition put forward by MacIver and Page: “an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence. The bases of community are locality and community sentiment” (15); it is studied through personal observation and face-to-face methods. These generalisations cover both studies, but other aspects of his analysis fit less easily:

- “They work together and also play and pray together” (ibid, 238).
- “ Its economy is simple, but this itself engenders a complexity in social life” (ibid, 238).
- “ It is a characteristic of rural society that the performers of other roles in an individual’s many role-sets are likely to be the same people” (ibid, 240).
- Each individual performs multiple roles.

- “ Each person sees himself at the centre of his own particular network of friends, and each will himself overlap into someone else’s network.” (ibid, 243).

None of these points necessarily characterise Tre-bryn or Langamay. This is not to suggest that Frankenberg’s analysis is wrong, but that both parishes are now far from being the “ideal type” .On Langamay the fact that approximately 50% of the population is made up of incomers, and most children leave to finish their schooling in Kirkwall at fourteen, modifies the possibility of the central role of close ties of kinship for many. But it must be emphasised that this research has not looked at contemporary patterns of kinship, which are probably still strong amongst the indigenous population. However, J.D. Mackay’s criterion of a strong community (Miller, 1985; see Part Two, chapter 3) was the number of “associations” on the island, many based on the school/leisure centre- on this basis Langamay is a thriving community. Unless one becomes a recluse, which is a very real option, it is impossible not to be involved in face-to-face interactions on the island.

Tre-bryn seems less of a community, in the sense described by Mackay, in that there are fewer “ associations”, and not being an island, entertainment, social and economic life is more dispersed outside the parish. In his discussion of the Village Hall movement, Monger (1993) distinguishes between three types of community foci:

- The un~~official~~ official. The village pump, the bus shelter.
- The ~~semi~~ official. The pub.
- The official. The village hall, the school, the church.

In Tre-bryn there is no longer a village pump, sweet shop or duck pond, but a new bus shelter is proving an attraction for teenagers; the public house will be discussed below. The troubled history of the community hall was discussed in Part Three chapters 3 and 4. Monger sees it as the main focus in contemporary parish life. This is not the case here, and it has already been suggested that this may be related to the perceived monopoly that farmer/councillors have had on parish affairs.

In neither place is there pressure to buy locally, to attend concerts, or to be “involved”. But they are both pleasant places in which to live, and it would be a genuine surprise if

a smile or a greeting was not reciprocated. Car keys can still be left in the ignition overnight, and house doors left unlocked- just. Any crime, apart from a brawl, will usually be caused by outsiders. As noted in Part Two Monger concludes:

“We can therefore construct a social model of a village as consisting of a series of social and kin networks- small, overlapping communities- which are more or less active in providing activities within a wider community. Within this network the village hall...often provides a cohesive focus...(1993,74)

Leaving aside the fact that Monger is using the term community about two levels of social interaction, the idea of small, overlapping groups within a wider community is an interesting one. One might conclude that Langamay is more active, and Tre-bryn less so, with the “village hall” playing a central focus in the former, and very little part in the latter. A problem in Tre-bryn is the lack of communication in a large parish, which might be solved by a more active village hall committee or community council. At present this seems unlikely and the Jubilee celebrations of 2002 would have been a good opportunity to embrace a sense of “wider community”, but this has not occurred. All one is left with is a consensus amongst “locals” and incomers that it is a good place to live.

The local has to be placed in a wider geographical, economic, and social context as most recent commentators have suggested. Both parishes have suffered from depopulation, and populations are much smaller than they were a century ago; this is in part due to changes in agricultural practice. Job opportunities are poor- Pembrokeshire in 1998/9 had a 61.9% employment rate, only Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr were worse (Digest of Welsh Local Area Statistics, 2001). Incomers have bought up cottages and houses, and in Try-bryn some of the farms. Transport is poor in both areas- there is a need to “duel” the A.40 and improve train services in Pembrokeshire; the cost of ferry and air services in Orkney is high.

Neither community is strongly stratified in the sense of a landlord, “big house”, or the existence of a squirearchy. On Langamay outward signifiers of high status such as clothes or cars would be frowned upon; however there are a number of well-off farming families with relatively new Land Rovers. There are a few large farmhouses and a few new bungalows. In Try-bryn housing certainly reveals status differences: council

housing, a row of modern bungalows owned by prosperous tradesmen, converted farmhouses, barns and cottages for incomers. Outside the village there are a number of prestigious farmhouses. “Posh” or fashionable clothes would not draw the comments they would on Langamay. Unlike Emmett’s study in North Wales in the 1950s English/Welsh and Incomer/Orcadian do not apparently substitute for class antagonisms. Neither do incomers monopolise committees as noted by Frankenberg (1990). Farmers controlled the council in Tre-bryn .

Most remarkable about both communities is the easy relationship between “locals” and incomers. Langamay appears to be about 50 % incomer. The 1991 census for Tre-bryn shows that 362 out of a population of 534 were born in Wales; 256 either spoke, read or wrote Welsh; the 2001 Census *may* show some startling changes. In both communities “locals” readily change speech:

- On Langamay the Orcadian dialect may be modulated when speaking to incomers.
- In Tre-bryn not all “locals” are bilingual, but Welsh speakers will either switch to English, or translate what they are saying when in the presence of non- Welsh speakers.

Fitzgerald (1998) reports similar bi-cultural code switching amongst Cook Islanders in New Zealand.

“Keep off” and “private” signs in one part of Langamay are disliked and associated with (a few) English; persons who tried to push themselves forward would be disliked. In Tre-bryn one irritation for English incomers is what the “ locals” themselves laughingly describe as “the Pembrokeshire Promise”: a promise to do a job of work that isn’t kept or is delayed (this works two ways, however, in that when the work has been done bills are also delayed). Help in difficulty, and either deferred payment or no payment, are typical of both parishes.

In some ways Orcadian culture is “refreshed” by incomers. Most incomers have “bought into” variations on the rural idyll and enjoy the quiet, the landscape, and the natural history, as do the “locals”. There is a feeling of privilege- if you want café society you live elsewhere. Incomers have built up the fiddle club, which many island

children join, although admittedly it is a more public version of an older cottage-based tradition. The same sense of privilege is found amongst incomers in Tre-bryn and this is something, which the "locals" share.

Mass culture is a feature of both communities. This study recognises the importance of Fenton's major work on traditional farming practices in Orkney and Shetland (1997), and the similar range of work covered by St. Fagan's in Wales. However radio, television and video seem to me to be the lifeblood of a small isolated community. In the ten years since I first visited Langamay there has been a bloom of satellite dishes. Lady post office has a small selection of videos, which are mentioned in Langamay Sound magazine. Whatever the pundits of tradition may say, and George Mackay Brown is one of them ("Much of the old story-telling has withered away before the basilisk stare of newsprint, radio, television. Maybe, the ancient people reckoned, after 1873, it was better to forget the ancient sorrows and joys...Every community on earth is being deprived of an ancient necessary nourishment". Foreword to Winter Tales, 1996), television or video helps in the long winter evenings, and is better than the "bottle" or a stay in the mental hospital in Aberdeen. The computer and the Internet are crucial, and the school has a sophisticated interest in all aspects of computing. probably differs little from other parts of U.K. in its consumption of electronic media.

However, to return to the quotes from Glassie at the beginning of this chapter. If an ethnography does not begin with an hypothesis it would at least be useful to test a few before the end of research, in order to attempt a "fix" on the social life of Tre-bryn and Langamay, and, hopefully of "community" in general. It has been part of the agenda of this work that human social groups can be seen within an evolutionary framework, not in an attempt to prove some sort of dubious Social Darwinism, but because the data base of primate social organisation can be used to compare and contrast with the species Homo sapiens. A survey of the literature shows that most primate species live in "closed groups"; the one partial exception is Homo sapiens, groups of which intermix or accept strangers, sometimes. "Balkanisation" has ancient primate roots; "openness" is a relatively new innovation in the evolution of the primates and worth exploring further. This should be grist to the mill for "community studies".

As suggested above, Ridley (1996) has put forward convincing arguments for the evolution of altruism based on an intellectual/calculating awareness of reciprocity in the hominids. He uses reciprocity in the form of trade to explain the development of alliances larger than the local group. It is a reformulation of the views of a sociologist such as Tonnies who discusses *gemeinschaft*-like mutuality as “What I do for you, I do only as a means to effect your simultaneous, previous or later service for me.” (quoted Titmuss, 1973,238. See also Mauss, *The Gift*, 1954). Kinship is easily explicable in terms of Dawkins’ (1976) “selfish gene” as are trade and political alliances. There are other, less easily explained examples involving strangers. Ginsberg’s (1962) “Who is my neighbour?” has been restated by Titmus (1973) as “Who is my stranger?” in his analysis of blood donorship to strangers in the U.K. Titmuss argues that:

“the self is realised with the help of anonymous others; they allow the biological need to help to express itself.” (239)

Whereas Ridley doesn’t seem to be of much help in this sort of interaction, Titmuss’ “biological need to help” rather begs the question. However, Titmuss has also emphasised the importance of social institutions in the growth of gift giving:

“We speak here, of course, of those areas of personal behaviour and relationships which lie outside the reciprocal rights and obligations of family and kinship in modern society. We are thus chiefly concerned – as much of social policy is- with “stranger” relationships, with processes, institutions and structures which encourage or discourage the intensity and extensiveness of anonymous helpfulness in society; with ultra obligations, which derive from our own characters and are not contractual in nature.” (240)

The acceptance of strangers is not only a sociological question to do with the openness of groups, and an ethical one to do with altruism, but also involves the potential for openness to a change in ideas and artefacts.

An hypothesis adapted from research in applied anthropology into tourism may be applicable here. Mansperger (1995) suggests that:

“changes in local land tenure and utilization are crucial variables in affecting the extent by which tourists alter their host societies.” (87)

Mansperger looked at three societies: the Yap, the Masai, and the Yagua. In the last example, the tribe had been moved from its traditional hunting grounds in the Amazon,

to areas near tourist hotels; in the other two examples land rights remained intact. The Yagua disintegrated. The Masai continue their traditional economy and are in control of photographs taken of them; the Yap are largely in control of their land rights and tourism. If “incomer” or “stranger” replaces the word tourism there are some interesting parallels, and the hypothesis may have more general applicability.

To repeat: what is being attempted here is an explanation of the openness of societies such as those found in Tre-bryn and Langamay. Part of the answer lies with reciprocity as Ridley suggests but there is something else.

In Tre-bryn farming is still largely in the hands of local people. More importantly, a sizeable proportion of the local males who might once have worked on farms are self-employed tradesmen: carpenters, electricians, plumbers, builders, and plasterers. They own their means of production, share knowledge, tools and regularly work for one another. Most are homeowners. Mansperger’s hypothesis seems to hold here. Further there is no competition over the housing supply as incomers buy old cottages or renovated properties. Ridley’s reciprocity comes into play here as well, as it is these cottages that the tradesmen spend their time renovating. Apart from “the Pembrokeshire promise” incomers get a good personal service. Reciprocal altruism seems to be working here, and local tradesmen are bitter on the odd occasions when outside labour is employed. Other privately owned businesses in the village cater to the tourist trade.

A. Maclean notes that “It is too often forgotten, also, that if strangers are buying up houses in the Highlands it is because Highlanders are selling them”(1986, 192), and equally pointedly that: *“It is simply and largely that they are, like working class people everywhere more concerned to live in new houses than old cottages. The buying and the renovation of old cottages is, tragically, a middle class thing almost exclusively”*. (191). This does not mean that housing could not become a focus for symbolic disputes, and there are one or two idyllic Pembrokeshire seaside villages where price rises are claimed to force young local people to leave.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Since this was written the local newspaper has carried a front-page report describing an Internet site in Haverfordwest, which advocates repatriation of the English who, it claims, force local people out of the market. The large number of letters in response emphasised tourism and a welcome to strangers, December 2001. In February 2002 the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Planning Authority decided to

On Langamay there are so many empty houses that it seems unlikely that incomers buying houses could be a source of dispute. Farms are owned by locals and employ some local labour. The larger farmers happily sell or rent redundant cottages. Incomers are either retired, young families trying to make a go of the “good life”, or oddball loners. Youngsters will leave the island irrespective of incomers, because there are no jobs or island life is seen as boring.⁵⁵

This discussion could be widened out to include other communities. On Iona the inhabitants retained possession of viable crofts *and* welcomed tourism, both as extra income and for the fun (MacArthur, 1995). On St. Kilda the old “bird” economy based on the exploitation of seabirds declined and there was no alternative but a grudging acceptance of charity and finally total evacuation in 1930 (C. Maclean, 1998).

Titmus refers to social institutions (although he is dealing with the development of public institutions). On Iona it was guesthouses and hotels which extended outward to include visitors in island sports days, regattas etc. On Yap educational visits by tourists to islanders’ houses gave the visitors insight into island life. Archaeologists are very aware of prehistoric sites which are best understood as “free ports” or entrepot sites, which facilitated movement between peoples (see, for instance, Burl, 1979).

On Langamay the large number of associations are open to both “locals” and incomers. The industrial show allows for competition, although the prestigious agricultural part of the show is largely in the hands of “locals” in the beef and sheep categories, but not ponies and goats, which are mainly exhibited by female incomers. The island community centre, which is also the school, and swimming pool, acts as a focus for “openness”.

restrict new building and renovation to those living and working within the Park. By December 2002 the number of holiday homes in has increased dramatically.

⁵⁵ If I were to speculate about the potential for conflict in Orkney generally, it would concern the plight of the fishing industry and the seal. Fishing is a dying trade; common seals are increasing in huge numbers. “Do-gooders”, both local and incomer may one day face the fishermen over the “symbolic” seal for the future of Orcadian identity.

In Tre-bryn village the pub is the only main focus apart from the poorly attended church and the W. I. (of which I confess to having no data). Although Welsh historians such as G. A. Williams see the importance of the pub, it has been rather ignored by Welsh ethnographers, and gets no architectural space at St. Fagan's. Jenkins, D. (1960) refused to discuss it at length, but actually hit the nail on the head when he stated that it was an institution frequented by *Buchedd* B who met English incomers. It is not necessarily an "open space" and can be hostile towards women. Audrey Middleton's fieldwork in a Yorkshire village made this very clear. Between 1979 and 1981 she lived alone in the village and found that the W.I. and Tupperware parties were the only publicly accepted places for women to meet; her attempt to visit the local pub met with male gossip, ridicule, "chatting up" and ultimately physical violence. She was only accepted in the pub in her last year of study when she returned to the village with her daughter and could be categorised socially (Deprivation and Welfare in Rural Areas, undated).⁵⁶ In it is very much a male space, wives only visit the pub occasionally with their partners, but one in which locals and incomers interact. The ritual of buying cards, which act as tokens for drinks, means that cards fly from one side of the bar to the other- and there is no chance of richer outsiders patronising the locals as they will find cards almost magically appearing next to their drink. It is a good example of Ridley's reciprocal altruism, a rough and ready democracy in which "the free rider" will soon be found out. It is a common ground for drinking, discussing, the sharing of trade skills and the hiring of services; and also the gentle "sledging" of the English, which is reciprocated.

The parish council might also be mentioned here. As described above it has hardly functioned as a community focus on most occasions. However it is the formal "front" for addressing the outside world. Of particular interest are the rituals associated with coronations, jubilees and other ceremonies of The British Empire and more recently the British State. Tre-bryn was, and to a great extent still is, intensely Welsh and yet the bonfires are lit, the mugs are presented, and the teas passed around in celebration of

⁵⁶ Interestingly, Scheper- Hughes (2000) reports that it took about three months before bachelor farmers in the local pub in County Kerry accepted her as an "honorary male"; she emphasises the importance of her "body language".

kings and queens: it is very much part of the British *ecumene*.⁵⁷ It is Roberts' (1998) "tributary patriotism" in operation.

A similar point can be made about the War Memorial. Unlike so many of the activities of the Parish Council, The County Echo (June, 3rd., 1920. Pembrokeshire Records Office) remarks that the parish responded quickly in intention and implementation of a memorial. As the local M. P. Sir Evan Jones, who unveiled the memorial stated, parishioners had been clear in wanting a memorial that "honoured the dead", not a hospital or a memorial to peace or war. The familiar names of councillors appears plus a number of other people, including three women as members of the committee; the headmaster, D. T. Lewis, was in charge of organising ceremonies. In his address, the Dean of St. David's referred to "*Those heroes from [Tre-bryn who] had readily responded to the call of their country*". *Hymns were sung and the school choir sang "O God our help in ages past."* A Union flag was unveiled. Afterwards tea was served in the schoolroom. There is an obvious local dimension- the deaths of seven local men killed in action in France, Salonica and Gallipoli- but the visiting dignitaries and the flag link the parish to the wider Empire. A faint echo of the trauma felt by the war can be found in the Minute Books of the Church School: "*June 15th.1918.The news has just been received of the death in action of Mr. Lewis*". He had been a teacher at the school.

On Langamay the annual inter-island sports functioned as a space for competition and meeting between different islands. As important as the sports were the teas provided by the host island, each island trying to outdo the others in terms of a welcome.

But there is another element that is not explained by either Maspurger or Ridley; Titmus called it "the biological need to help" which I earlier appeared sceptical of but can find no alternative explanation. Constantly respondents on Langamay described the support they got on arrival to the island- a box of groceries, information or practical help. I have received it myself in a much-needed lift to my "digs" after a couple of hours in a motorboat or a newly baked loaf of bread. In Tre-bryn a serious problem with electricity, plumbing or roof slates lost during a storm will get immediate ~~attention~~ attention and

⁵⁷ The lack of activity for the Queen's Jubilee in 2002 is another example of the absence of community activity in . The one event- a lunch to raise money for commemorative coins for the children- was not publicised generally within the parish.

there may be no bill. This is not a matter of reciprocity. To the extent that anthropologists have been accepted into a strange culture it is something they usually take for granted rather than seeing that it is of crucial sociological and biological importance.

It is also culture. Mansperger (1995) admits that although his model is based on economic substructure, ideological superstructure also plays a part. It is apparent that part of the Yap ability to cope with tourism depends on the strength of their unwillingness to sacrifice tradition. A particular culture can also predispose a people towards acceptance of strangers and social change. As noted in an earlier chapter Orcadian culture can be described as one of wait/weigh up and see: you don't do anything quickly; you judge; you observe; and all around you is the serendipity of the ocean. But you do not reject incomers.

There is a danger here in over-emphasising the "rural idyll", but such altruism to strangers does exist. There is always a need, however, in this oscillation between "openness" and "closedness": to repeat The League of Gentlemen⁵⁸ mantra "This is a local shop for local people" (Royston Vasey is the archetypal *English Gothic*) and I well remember the cold stares, which met me when I first visited a Langamay hotel (not The Belsair). A recent anecdote related to me concerned the setting up of a local history group in a parish in North Pembrokeshire. It consists mainly of incomers and when an old lady was asked if she would like to contribute, she said no. Why, she asked, were incomers interested in the past? So that it won't get lost, was the reply. "But it's our history, and it's ours to lose if we want". Communication between "locals" and "incomers" is closed down in this case (See Strathern, 1994, for a similar stratagem against intrusion). It is here where another hypothesis comes into play- that of Cohen (1986) who in his attempt to protect British communities from the taint of mass cultural uniformity seems to emphasise the "closed group": social identity produced as a response to conflict on the boundary. And it is important to recognise that despite the recent emphasis on the porosity of boundaries (Wassman, 1998), there is also a possible "closing of the ranks" in contemporary Europe (Boissevain, 1994).

⁵⁸ B.B.C. Television, 1999. It is an admittedly uncorroborated part of Pembrokeshire lore which states that the inhabitants of the isolated village of Llangwm would still stone strangers at the beginnings of the twentieth century. Borrow (1982) describes a similar occurrence happening to him in the 1850s in mid Wales.

Two “crises” were identified in the present study: the G. M. crop protest and the problem with D. H. S. S. claimants on Langamay. Neither event is simple, and although they do not necessarily contradict Cohen, they don’t fully support him either.

The G.M. crop protest in Tre-bryn was not a simple response by local people to outsiders (“English entrepreneurs and French agri-business), which led to a stronger sense of local identity, as the Cohen model might suggest. On the side of G. M. planting there was part of a large local farming family-the Williams; Davison’s, a company owned by English landowners and builders who had lived in the area for many years; Avantis, the French multinational. The N. F. U. also supported planting, although the local chairman farmed nearby and had his doubts. The British parliament played an ambiguous role, whereas local representatives were far more honourable.

Davison’s at Gaer Farm, a ten-minute walk from the village, owned the land. Opposed to the planting was the County Council with an interest in “green tourism” and organic farming; there is a history of self-sufficiency in North Pembrokeshire. Local organic farmers, and other farmers were worried that their crops would be seen as “tainted”, Many people have moved to the area because of its “green” connotations. A number of major international scientists became involved.

The opposition became an ecumenical movement, which largely passed the village by, although there may have been tacit support. Its strength lay in the use of e-mail, the Internet, and the mobile telephone. Leadership was diffuse, deliberately so. It used a post-modern eclecticism in the use of symbols drawn from “Wales”, paganism, “Rebecca”, and Christianity.

It has been successful, at least temporarily, and out of the local campaign in which some individuals gained considerable expertise, a national campaign has developed. The Tre-bryn campaigners have a web site and are consulted nationally. On this issue, the periphery became the centre.

A simplistic reading of Cohen would expect that a local community in West Wales would articulate its identity through symbols and actions when confronted by

Global/English outside influences. This was not the case- community only has meaning here if it is seen as linked to a wide-ranging *ecumene* based on both local and global interests, connected by electronic means of communication. “Togetherness”, “closeness”, terms associated with community were expressed, and Plows (Unpl.), with a great deal of experience of direct action, suggests that a collective identity can develop based on shared meanings amongst protest groups. In its emphasis on keeping Pembrokeshire “green”, its protest against an International company, and its roots in Tre-bryn parish it is an example of Cohen’s symbolic identity but it drew on a wider group of interests than Trebryn community. Indeed, as described earlier, most villagers remained inactive and the protest actually exacerbated existing cleavages within the village.

The island dispute(s) on Langamay were more localised, although they gained coverage in the Scottish and English press. Orcadians are slow to get involved and political demonstration is a rare event (the Rousay crofters dispute in the 19th century, described by Thomson (1981) is a rare exception). A sizeable proportion of parents, both locals and incomers, kept their children at home because of the disruption caused by a couple of children from the north of England. The dispute was enough to involve Orkney Island council, the court, and led to the early retirement of the headmaster. Although it was an incomer family that caused the dispute, it was not incomers generally who were singled out. There was a consensus shared by Orcadians and incomers as to what was appropriate behaviour on the island: it was not narrowly parochial.

The second incident also involved an outsider. Enough has been said in a previous chapter to show that Orcadian culture is flexible enough to cope with serious disruption without resorting to knee-jerk reactions. Both events led to hostility being re-directed on Orkney Island Council. If the Cohen hypothesis holds, then it involves the re-affirmation of local values of “a sense of place” of a small island made up of “locals” and “incomers” against a bureaucracy based on a larger island in the same archipelago.

This chapter concludes, as it began, with a quote from Glassie, which seems to encapsulate, not only the spirit of this work, but the appropriate project for ethnography:

“ The reason to study people, to order experience into ethnography, is

not to produce more entries for the central file, or more trinkets for mi-lords cabinet of curiosities. It is to stimulate thought, to assure us there are things we do not know, things we must know, things capable of unsettling the world we inhabit. The success of anthropology in the first half of our century proved that that the great verities are beyond the grasp of middle-class intellectuals whose enclosed meditations can but spin endlessly into themselves. Only serious investigation of the human reality, in the highlands of New Guinea, the green hills of Ireland, the back alleys and boardrooms of our cities, can form the basis for rational and decent values.” (1995, 13).

Two very ordinary communities on the periphery of the United Kingdom have a lot to teach ethnography.

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