

**Surf's Us: constructing surfing identities through
clothing culture in Cornwall.**

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ABSTRACT

Surf's Us: constructing surfing identities through clothing culture in Cornwall.

Critical literature on surfing is concerned primarily with its development as a competitive sport, focusing on 'stand-up' surfing in the USA and to some extent in Australia, resulting in a body of work populated almost exclusively by young white males. However, in Cornwall, forms of surfing including belly and body boarding have been enjoyed for almost a century by all ages and ethnicities, both sexes, at every level from international competition to non-competitive leisure, from daily practice to holiday novelty. The area has developed a distinctive clothing culture stemming from this plethora of surfing activities. This study asks, how has the material culture of bellyboarding and surfing in Cornwall developed historically, and how does the clothing culture in the area relate to the global phenomenon of surf style? The contemporary scene is evaluated by means of a visual ethnography of a Cornish seaside village where surfing is the focus of social events and commercial endeavours. Through an examination of the clothing culture in the area, it explores how gender and sexuality, class and consumption, community and belonging are negotiated and articulated.

The historical and cultural contexts in which this complex relationship developed are discussed with reference to archival material from regional museums, personal collections and interviews with amateur and professional surf historians. Oral histories of surfing, bellyboarding, bodyboarding and beach life compiled for the study and from existing collections are additionally used to interrogate existing narratives of surfing history. Drawing on and extending theoretical perspectives on subculture, taste, consumption, space and place, this will be the first study that investigates how the clothing culture of surfing explores and constitutes, constructs and reconstructs gender, class and regional identity, and how it defines and redefines the region's surfing locales by its visible presence.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Mat, Lola and Bunny, whose unwavering support sustained me throughout the project.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AWBBC. Annual World Bellyboarding Championships
BCCCS. British Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies
BSA. British Surfing Association
ISA. International Surf Association
RCM. Royal Cornwall Museum
SLSA. Surf Life Saving Association
SLSC. Surf Life Saving Club

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the literature and the research

When I relocated to Cornwall from London many years ago, I was struck by the pervasiveness of surfing in the day to day life of many of its inhabitants, which was practiced in great numbers year-round off many of Cornwall's beaches. Closer examination revealed that the figures in the water were actually practicing a wide range of surfing activities. The variety of surfing with which I was most familiar, increasingly featuring in mainstream sports journalism in the early two-thousands, could be seen off the Cornish coast and was identified as 'stand-up surfing' (see figure 1.1). On long or short boards, usually made of fibreglass with fins underneath for control, stand-up surfing is practiced standing upright and barefoot in the breaking waves, beyond which stand-up surfers wait astraddle the boards for a wave that can be ridden towards the shore. Closer to the shore were the body-boarders, awaiting smaller breaking waves, lying prone on their flat-bottomed foam boards and riding them in the same position (see figure 1.2) or with one finned foot between the hands and the knee drawn up under the chest.

I had tried these activities, briefly and with limited success, while living abroad, but in Cornwall I witnessed the widespread practice of a third variety of surfing I had never tried or even seen before. Here, surfers wait in the water chest deep for broken waves and ride them right up to the shore on thin plywood boards (see figure 1.3) almost fully inside the wave rather than on top of or in front of it.



Figure 1.1. Pro Surfer and English, British, and European Champion as well as British Team Captain 2008 Ben Skinner, here demonstrating conventional or 'stand-up' surfing.



Figure 1.2. Bodyboarding in Newquay, 2009. Note the bodyboarder is prone on a foam board.



Figure 1.3. A bellyboarder at the World Belly Boarding Competition 2015. The rider is again prone on the board, which in this case is made of plywood. Note that the boarder rides the broken whitewater rather than the 'face' of the wave.

I was told by locals that bellyboarding, as the pastime is known, had been practiced in the region long before the other varieties.

I found that the distinctive practice of the elsewhere little-known activity was by no means only thing that distinguished the local culture. From the perspective of an outsider with an interest in fashion, the clothing preferences in the region were of particular interest. The laid back 'surf style' worn by a large proportion of surfers and non-surfers alike bears little resemblance to the mainstream seasonal styles visible in Britain's urban centres that might be considered mainstream fashion. Cultural historian Elizabeth Wilson states that 'fashion is dress in which the key feature is the rapid and continual changing of styles' explaining that 'in modern Western societies no clothes are outside fashion' (Wilson 1985:3), because of the rapid turnover of consumer goods that results in fashion setting 'the terms of all sartorial behaviour' so that even 'to be unfashionable is not to escape the whole discourse' (1985:5). I wondered how best to situate the local style within this discourse? My earliest probes into the clothing preferences of the region were greeted with incredulity. People spoke of having no style, of not knowing anything about fashion and about bearing their appearance no mind, dressing in a casual or as they termed it a 'scruffy' manner. 'Fashion' which as theorist Jo Turney points out, 'alludes to the glamorous, the ephemeral and the avant-garde...an unattainable ideal' (Turney 2013:1) was thought of as something that happened elsewhere.

Whilst it may not be self-identified as 'fashion' per se, the local style is not 'costume', a term better suited to 'small scale and peasant communities', in

which, as dress historian Lou Taylor points out, 'textiles and clothing are powerful indicators of the most subtle, complex and important facets of... life... acting as stabilisers reflecting the unity and strength of cultural practices and the social cohesion of a community (2002:199). Nor can this dress be characterised as the spectacular garb of a subculture resisting the mainstream (Hall & Jefferson 1976, Hebdige 1979 et al) since it is worn by three generations and all social classes of surfers. Rather, the dress preferences in the area as well as tastes in hairstyles, tattoos and beauty regimes are closely tied up with surfing and the activities around it and can be best understood as part of a local 'clothing culture' (Turney 2013). In order to understand it, practices of consumption and production as well as the embodied display of everyday clothing must be considered in historical, cultural and geographical contexts.

Viewing the local style in this way led to the formulation of three research questions.

Research Questions

How are surfing identities constructed through clothing cultures in Cornwall?

How do cultural and commercial communities mediate between local, global and virtual cultures of surfing?

What is the interplay of influence between the clothing culture of surfing in Cornwall and wider cultures of fashion and style, both in and out of the water?

Literature Review

This will be the first study that systematically investigates the development of surfing clothing cultures in Cornwall, and the first to address the lack of critical literature on bellyboarding and the clothing culture that accompanies it. My field of enquiry into the surfing community in St Agnes covers the values shared by the group, the clothes and adornments they wear and consume, the bodies inside the clothes and the spaces and places they inhabit. In what follows, then, I examine literature drawn from diverse academic disciplines, including social and dress history, fashion studies, geography, anthropology, psychology, sociology and economics that contribute to the understanding of the consumption, display, uses and preferences in clothing in the construction of identity, in order to establish their specific relevance to this small clothing culture centred around the beach and surfing activity. I go on to survey texts around surfing itself drawn from these areas as well as from sports studies to establish their relevance and to underscore the originality of my study's focus on clothing culture and on the role of bellyboarding in its development in Cornwall.

I begin by locating this study in the context of research around fashion and dress, the body and identity, in particular, studies of everyday clothing and the mundane, evaluating the extent to which they pertain to the day-to-day dress of a group inhabiting a remote, sea-swept corner of the British Isles. Whilst fashion and practices of fashionable dress have been studied fairly extensively (Barthes 1983, Ash and Wilson 1992, Davis 1994, Breward 1995, Crane 2000 Steele 2000 et al), attention to the everyday has been limited. As fashion theorists

Cheryl Buckley and Hazel Clark point out, 'there remains a predominant interest in the fashion "syntaxes" of the young, the novelty of the look and the currency of the latest style' rather than 'the ordinary and mundane practices of wearing that draws items from the personal wardrobe in a routine manner' (Buckley and Clark 2017:4). The first section of the review, then, summarises the field of relevant writings in respect of wider theoretical approaches and smaller studies that relate to the under-researched area of day-to-day clothing and locates this study's contribution to it.

The extraordinary nature of the clothing worn by 'spectacular' subcultures is another aspect of dress that has been widely researched (Hebdige 1979, LeBlanc 1999, Thornton 2003, Muggleton 2004, Gelder 2005, Kawamura 2006, Young 2016 et al). Acknowledging that even in Cornwall, surfing itself remains a minority activity, whilst at the same time surf style is more widespread, the following section of the literature review surveys works that have sought to explain taste preferences.

The work of Pierre Bourdieu, particularly *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1986 [1979]) is also discussed in some detail, since it provides some of the key theoretical underpinnings of this study and much of the literature surveyed in this section. Bourdieu's ground-breaking work, which sought to theorise the taken for granted taste preferences of different social classes in France in the 1970s provided analytical tools for the emerging field of subcultural studies which had first come to prominence through the work of the Chicago School. Taken up by the British Centre for Contemporary Cultural

Studies (BCCCS), the study of youth subcultures was a fruitful area for social science in the 1970s and 1980s, which is explored in this section. Key theorists whose work developed and problematized the notion of subculture are discussed, including Stuart Hall (1976), Stanley Cohen (2002 [1972]) and Dick Hebdige (1979), whose work on the resistance strategies of spectacular youth subcultures is evaluated in respect of the inhabitants of the sample site. More recent scholarship on post-subculture by David Muggleton (2003) and others is also considered here, in order to establish which contemporary theoretical underpinnings of the notion of subculture can be applied in the methodology.

Finally, I consider texts concerned with surfing, which began to emerge in the 1970s following a huge rise in the uptake of the activity outside of its Pacific origins. The earliest works on the subject are purely historical in their approach (Finney 1966, Young 1984 [1979], Warshaw 2005, Kampion 2003 [1997]) and contribute to an understanding of how surf culture emerged, developed and prospered in the South West, an aspect of my first research question. Later studies taking a more critical approach (Westwick & Neuschul 2013, Laderman 2014) are then discussed, acknowledging their persistent focus on surfing locales in Australia and the USA (Ormrod 2008). The chapter goes on to investigate literature around subcultures of surfing (Pearson 1979, Booth 2001, Stranger 2011 et al), which has developed to incorporate lesser known surfing locales (Preston Whyte 2002, Beaumont 2011 et al) to acknowledge gender and sexuality as pertinent to surfing (Stedman 1997, Henderson 2001, Comer 2004, 2010, Heywood 2008, Evers 2009, Olive 2015, 2016) and to apply intersectional approaches (Roy 2014, Roy and Caudwell 2014).

The second research question is, how do cultural and commercial communities mediate between local, global and virtual visual and material cultures of surfing? Literature which goes some way toward answering this question is assessed under the broad heading of interdisciplinary studies (Skinner, Gilbert & Edwards, 2003, Canniford 2006, Ford and Brown 2006, Ormrod 2008, Westwick and Neushul 2013). The contribution of my own research to this field is established in the discussion of these texts. The lack of any substantial historical documentation of bellyboarding in any of these texts is also brought to light, further signalling the originality of my research.

Fashion

According to sociologist Yuniya Kawamura, ‘the terms “fashion” and “clothing” tend to be used synonymously, but while fashion conveys a number of different social meanings, clothing is the generic raw materials of what a person wears’ (Kawamura 2005:3). Fellow sociologist Ingrid Brenninkmeyer suggests that ‘clothing and dress are [just] the raw material from which fashion is formed. Fashion is the prevailing usage of dress adopted in society for the time being (1963:4) and since it comes about as a result of the acceptance of social values, it is open to change at the same pace as the shifts in attitudes and opinions occurring in a given society. Indeed, cultural theorist Ted Polhemus (1994, 1996) argues that fashion develops most readily in societies where social change is a welcome aspect of the dominant ideology.

Fashion as a phenomenon arising from a desire for novelty or newness has been widely explored. René Koenig (1973) sees the changing styles in fashionable dress as a disavowal of the inevitability of age and decay and emphasised society's concerns around fashion as consumption. Philosopher Roland Barthes (1967) described fashion as belonging 'to all the phenomena of neomania which probably appeared in our civilisation with the birth of capitalism' (1967:300). Psychologist John Flügel notes (1930) that the 'modish' dress of western capitalist societies is in contrast to the 'fixed' traditional dress found elsewhere, in which change for its own sake was not celebrated, although such societies and unchanging styles of dress are less easily spotted today. The clothing culture in St Agnes is far from fixed, responding to widespread shifts in style preferences such as variations in the cut of jeans or skirt lengths, as will be demonstrated in later chapters, but the local preference for worn and scruffy clothing discussed in chapter five undermines the notion of such responses as being driven merely by the desire for change itself.

Early work by Georg Simmel (1957 [1904]) and Thorstein Veblen (1957 [1899]) on which I will expand later, approaches fashion from an economic basis which focuses on social class. Fashion, both authors argue, has developed from the need to demonstrate prestige and social status. Veblen perceives fashion as the embodiment, by bourgeois women, of a vicarious display of their male relatives' wealth and power in capitalist society. Fashion as a gendered aspect of capitalist modernity has subsequently been widely explored (Bell 1976, Finkelstein 1991, Flügel 1930, Laver 1969, Polhemus and Proctor 1978, Wilson 1985, Rouse 1989, McDowell 1992, Tseëlon 1992).

Subsequent work has demonstrated that social status is not only reserved for the upper class but also, according to Sarah Thornton (1995) those who can demonstrate their position in a subcultural hierarchy. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1979), Thornton's analysis of 'subcultural capital' is crucial to this study and examined in detail in subsequent chapters, in which I establish that in the group studied, social status does not necessarily depend on social class. According to cultural theorist Malcolm Barnard (1996), status is only one of many qualities and values demonstrated by the wearing of fashionable clothes. He examines fashion as communication, taking a psycho-sociological approach, finding that the meanings produced by fashion clothing are not static and fixed but a product of the context in which they appear. Davis (1992) Lurie (1981) Rouse (1989) et al concur, attributing communicative qualities to dress, sometimes even going as far as claiming that fashion is a language (Lurie 1981) but as Tseëlon (1997) demonstrates, it is not one that appears to be easily understood by all. However, decoding dress has been a productive means of analysis since Roland Barthes' (1983) semiotic approach provided a means to 'read' garments from the distance of the educated observer. In doing so, many studies have moved away from discussions of fashion per se as an expression of newness or modernity or as a gendered status marker, and towards an examination of dress which may or may not be considered fashionable. This is closer to my approach here, in which I investigate the day-to-day clothing of ordinary people, many of whom express little to no interest in fashion.

However, Barthes' methodology is not adopted in this study. As the following chapter details, rather than 'reading' or 'decoding' garments as texts, I take an interpretivist stance that requires an examination of clothing in context. My study examines surfing clothing as it is worn by living bodies in identifiable places, discussed and described by the wearers themselves.

Fashion and the Body

Surfing is an embodied practice, unlike, for example chess. Surfing bodies, which demonstrate their connection to the activity and locate their identities in relation to it, are at the centre of this study and are visible presences on the beach and the streets of the ethnographic area. Therefore it is important to examine relevant aspects of the considerable corpus of writing that theorises the body. Marcel Mauss writes of 'techniques of the body' (1973:70) which determine how people walk, dance, eat, dress and inhabit their physical selves in the way approved by their own group, a notion which has been explored by subsequent authors in the field of sports studies including surfing and bodyboarding (Markula 2003, Olive 2015 et al). Historian Norbert Elias (1978), whose work is discussed later with reference to the process of 'sportification', insists that the body is shaped by the processes which gave rise to, and arose from, modernity, such as the requirements by Western Christian societies to focus on order and discipline in order to maximise civility and minimise violence and chaos, resulting in productivity and progress.

Michel Foucault (1976, 1977, 1979) puts the human body at the heart of his history of modernity. He argues that the body is shaped through disciplinary and institutional practices in order to monitor and control both individual and groups of bodies within cultures. His work of late has been extensively applied to sports studies, in which the disciplined and culturally constituted body has been examined (Markula 2003, Roy 2011 et al). Additionally, Foucault's work on embodiment and subjectivity has been applied here in order to examine participation in 'lifestyle' sports (Markula and Pringle 2007, Thorpe 2008, Crocket 2015), a category which includes surfing and bodyboarding.

Like Elias, Mary Douglas (1973, 1976, 1984) believes that the body is shaped by social forces and that societies use the physical body as the raw material from which the symbolic body is made. The body therefore is required to act and be judged according to social pressure, such as the pressure to succeed in sports, as I explore in later chapters. Another way in which the body acts is in dressing and adornment. In anthropology, which has been influential in establishing the body as an object of study (Featherstone 1991, Featherstone and Turner 1995, Frank 1990, Polhemus 1988, Polhemus & Proctor 1978, Shilling 1993, Turner 1985, 1991), Polhemus and Proctor (1978) have argued that all human beings adorn themselves in some way. Even the naked body of the surfer contributes to the clothing culture, in respect of its suntan, hairstyle and tattoos, as I will discuss in later chapters.

Mike Featherstone (1991), whose work with Hepworth on ageing is investigated in later chapters, examines the relationship of the body to consumer culture,

suggesting that we now see the body as an ongoing project. He argues that self-care regimes require us to engage with diet, cosmetic, exercise and fashion industries as well as with the media and therefore the dominant ideology.

Anthony Giddens sees the body both clothed and naked similarly, as a project to be worked on (1991).

Extending Taylor's (1998, 2002) use of the word 'dress' to encompass fashion, costume and everyday clothing, Joanne Entwistle (2015 [2000]) uses the term to include clothing and other adornments such as tattooing. She proposes dress as a 'situated bodily practice', both the process and the result of 'getting dressed' (2015:24). But because this study concerns a specific taste community, I am instead using the term 'clothing culture' to suggest that my field of enquiry covers the values shared by the group, the clothes and adornments they wear and consume, the bodies inside the clothes and the spaces and places they inhabit.

The body in space has been examined in Maurice Merleau Ponty's philosophical work (1981), which takes a phenomenological approach, insisting that, since we experience the world from inside the body, we must acknowledge that the mind cannot be considered as separate, and the self is also indissoluble from the body. As Entwistle points out in her analysis of Merleau Ponty, 'dress in everyday life is always located spatially and temporally' (Entwistle 2000:29); this is a theme I examine in chapter five, Space and Place.

Fashion and Everyday Life

Taylor discusses the persistent focus of museum collections and academic research on 'special' garments, pointing out that 'occasion wear' such as wedding dresses and ball gowns as well as couture and high fashion items are generally of superior quality, costly, infrequently worn and often emotionally relevant to the wearer and thus survive for longer. Therefore the lack of attention to the mundane and everyday in dress history can be at least partly attributed to the lack of significance afforded to the clothes by wearers and collectors (2002, 2004). Many ordinary clothes that do remain, including those with a connection to surfing, have acquired value with age and are now often highly sought after by vintage enthusiasts, as I explore in chapter five. Pertinent to my study, there are a number of texts that explore the historical development of everyday dress that has come to be associated with surf culture (Steele 1984, Hope and Tozian 2000 et al), a theme I explore in chapter four. But none explore clothing cultures of surfing in the present day, signalling the originality of my project.

Whilst I do examine residents' attitudes towards 'dressing up' for formal occasions in chapter seven, I mainly focus on clothing visible in the street, on the beach and in the sea, at work and at leisure in the pub or community events. The mundane practice of dressing for everyday life and the garments selected from existing wardrobes are aspects of material culture that have only recently begun to attract academic attention. As Judy Attfield observes in her ground-breaking work, *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life* (2000), design history has widely discussed the origin of man-made objects but

‘what doesn't seem to attract much attention is that larger part of the designed object's biography when it is no longer sacred, when it forms part of the disordered everyday clutter of the mundane, and joined the disarray of wild things that doesn't fit anywhere - the undisciplined’ (2000:5). She points out that ‘textiles present a particularly apposite object type to illustrate how things are used to mediate the interior mental world of the individual, the body and the exterior objective world beyond the self through which a sense of identity is constructed and transacted within social relations’ (2000:123). My study draws strongly on this approach in subsequent chapters, hence Attfield’s work is explored more fully in the methodology chapter, as well as subsequent work by Daniel Miller (2000, 2010, 2012 et al) and colleagues that is aligned to Attfield’s findings.

There is little research to date on the mundane wearing of everyday clothing in ordinary circumstances. In a recent book by Cheryl Buckley and Hazel Clarke the authors state that ‘scholarship in fashion has tended to focus on the *avant garde*, the extraordinary and the unusual. Indeed, within fashion’s discourses, the truly “ordinary” remains elusive’. (Buckley and Clarke 2017:4). Elizabeth Wilson (1985) explores the relationship between fashion and everyday dress, arguing the counterfactual of Brenninkmeyer’s (1963) observation, that the fashion system provides the ingredients for everyday dress. The clothes produced by the fashion system are available in the shops, as is information about prevailing trends via shop windows and mannequins; the same information is available through magazines and fashion shows that are also part of what makes clothing fashionable (Leopoldo 1992). As Entwistle has pointed

out, 'not all fashions are adopted by all individuals: at any one time, some aspects of fashion may be taken on board while others may be rejected' (Entwistle 2000:48) and indeed garments which in certain contexts might be considered fashionable can be consumed for no other reason than their availability and suitability for purpose, teamed with existing garments in the wardrobe that would qualify as unfashionable, or worn long after any novelty has worn out. This is what Judy Attfield has termed fashion design 'in the lower case' (2000:45): the ordinary and mundane wearing of one's own clothes, a practice discussed and explored in the context of the clothing community of St Agnes in this study.

Pamela Church Gibson has written of the ordinary as 'the hinterland beyond scholarship' where 'cheap, ubiquitous clothes which lack any artistic merit are consigned...to the landfills' (Gibson 2012:18). As I will establish, a range of price points are consumed in the everyday clothing culture of St Agnes, from high-end performance sportswear labels such as Finisterre and Patagonia, through high street 'fast' fashion from Primark and New Look, as well as vintage clothing including vintage surf and skate wear, with a corresponding variance in quality and design of garments. But everyday dress in the community I studied, whilst considered by the wearers as "ordinary", is rarely cheap in the sense of 'trashy', a quality suggested by the landfills that Gibson refers to, although it may not have cost much to buy. 'Artistic merit', as I discuss in later chapters, is far from being the prime motivator for selection of the garments worn here, where practicality takes precedence and adds symbolic value (see chapters five to seven). Finally, the clothing culture here defies Gibson's definition of the

ordinary in that, whatever their initial cost, garments are often kept in good repair for long periods and cherished throughout their use.

Aspects of the distinctive local clothing culture are sometimes, but by no means always, what would pass in a city as 'fashionable'. David Gilbert has suggested that the inhabitants of provincial cities and marginal areas may be 'fluent in the Esperanto of high fashion' but that this is mixed with 'a local dialect of (often affordable) street labels and locally derived brands' (Gilbert 2001:71).

'Ordinary' contexts have also been discussed by Entwistle, who has observed that 'the spaces of the street, the office, the shopping mall operate with different rules and determine how we present ourselves and how we react with others' (2000:74) which is borne out by my research and discussed in detail in chapter five.

These contexts have also been considered by Cheryl Buckley and Hazel Clarke in *Fashion and Everyday Life: London and New York* (2017). Following Attfield (2000), they introduce their study observing that 'several historians have already begun to map the shifting geographies of London fashion in particular... but, in doing this, they have mainly considered Fashion (in the upper case): major brands, iconic department stores, pre-eminent streets and designers' (2017:3). In *Critique of Everyday Life* (2008 [1941]), Henri Lefebvre argues that 'everyday life is what is left over after all distinct, superior, specialised, structured activities have been singled out for analysis' (Lefebvre 2008:97). For ninety percent of Britons, simply being in the capital city is in itself a distinct

activity. The majority of everyday life is lived not in great metropolitan centres but in suburbs, towns and villages like St Agnes (Census.org).

To date, the study of dress in small towns, villages and places that are not usually associated with fashion, in either the 'lower' or the 'upper case', remains largely neglected, along with the distinctive styles of dress formed from readily available mass-produced goods, or 'clothing cultures' found in them. However, like Buckley and Clarke, here I aim to examine the 'everyday use, appropriation, circulation, re-making and constant re-modelling of fashionable [and non-fashionable] clothes' that can be 'anti-modern and non-progressive; exemplify continuity and tradition; responsive to local regional and national subtleties as well as global ones and disruptive of fashion's structures and systems as well as visual codes and norms of consumption' (2017:4). I achieve these goals by presenting a history of the development of the 'regional and national subtleties' (Ibid) in the clothing associated with surfing in a global context (chapter four), and through the discussion and analysis of the ethnographic fieldwork in which the everyday, mundane use of clothing is observed in St Agnes in the chapters to follow.

Focused studies of clothing in specific contexts, and the identities articulated by the practices of its wearing are beginning to emerge. For example, Entwistle discusses the dress of professional women (2001), and Rebecca Bailey (1992) writes on maternity wear in public places in the United States 1850-1990. Eileen Green (2001) discusses how ordinary women (in this case academics) use clothing at work to signal their authority, and Julia Twigg writes extensively on

ageing women (2002, 2006, 2013) including an examination of how elderly women with dementia use dress to communicate identity (2014). Daniel Miller and Sophie Woodward (2011, 2012) look closely at the wearing of denim jeans, an everyday phenomenon which they argue is truly global, and Woodward (2007) carries out an ethnographic study of women's relationships with the clothes they already own. Samantha Holland (2004) uses a similar ethnographic approach, examining the wardrobe choices of ageing 'alternative' women. All of these studies look at the actual respondents and their milieu rather than 'reading' or 'decoding' the clothes. The latter might be described as what Irgun Klepp and Mari Bjerck term 'wardrobe studies'. 'The wardrobe study as a method aims to include the materiality of garments in clothes research in a more direct way. As they point out, analysing the materiality in connection with the social and cultural aspects of clothes gives us a better understanding of the relations between materiality and practice' (Klepp and Bjerck 2014:378).

Whilst the topic of everyday dress has begun to interest academics in recent years, the metropolitan milieu of the researchers has led to an absence of texts that deal with clothing cultures that exist in other locales. Surfing can only be practiced where suitable waves occur, including the South West of England and Cornwall in particular, an area to which little academic attention has been paid regarding clothing in spite of the distinctive clothing culture that I address in subsequent chapters.

Identity and Subculture

Surfing is widely practiced in St Agnes but remains a minority activity in the UK as a whole. Owing to its niche appeal and the distinctive dress, argot and activities that accompany it, surfing is often described as a subculture, for example in the literature discussed below. In the field of subcultural studies, notions of identity and dress have been widely discussed (Hebdige 1979, Polhemus 1988, 1994, Muggleton 2004, Gelder 2005 et al). The notion of subculture *per se* is also worth dwelling on here, in order to evaluate the usefulness of the concept for discussing the St Agnes surfing community.

Deriving from criminology, early approaches to subculture associated it with deviance (Cohen, AK 1955, Polsky 1967), a connection developed by studies undertaken at the British Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS) at Birmingham University (1974-2002). Here, Marxist analyses of 'spectacular' youth subcultures such as Mods theorised the means by which they were able to resist the mainstream through dress, speech, music, and ritual (Hall and Jefferson 1976, Willis 1977 McRobbie and Garber 1977, et al). Subsequent work specifically addressing fashion and style continued to focus on the notion of a coherent mainstream or parent culture against which the subcultural style of youth groups offered visible evidence of opposition. For example, Dick Hebdige's seminal 1979 work *Subculture: The meaning of Style* proposes that resistance to the capitalist hegemony presented by subcultural dress is doomed to incorporation into the mainstream, and Phil Cohen's work on Mods and skinheads (1984) reads their dress as an attempt to articulate marginalised working-class masculinities, while Kobena Mercer (1987) examines black youths' hairstyles in the 1980s as resisting Eurocentric notions of beauty.

But surfing is by no means a 'youth' subculture: three generations surf the same waves today, and in the community I study, 'parent culture' and youth share many values. Sociologist Neil Campbell more recently argues that youthfulness is no longer confined to the young, suggesting that the category of youth subculture might be expanded to accommodate those who fail to move on, explaining that, 'baby boomers...refuse to let go of "youth" as a lifestyle choice and hold onto it through their choices of music, fashion and their struggles over body image' (Campbell, 2004:16). Campbell's analysis suggests that subcultural activity is part of a phase one would normally grow out of, but the participation in the surfing lifestyle, like comic book fandom and playing computer games, is something developed at a young age that can continue throughout one's life.

The notion of subculture itself has since been problematized (Redhead 1993, Melechi 1993, Rietveld 1998, Miles 1998, Malbon 1999, Muggleton 2000, Bennett 2000, Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003, Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004, Jackson 2004). Postmodern approaches to the study of groups sharing distinctive practices, styles of dress or interests have begun to question its 'value as a model for explanation [that] rests with its capacity to describe forms of solidarity that contrast with the dominant norms and values of society' (Blackman 2005:2). Sarah Thornton (1995), discussed in detail in later chapters, and Michel Maffesoli (1996) both question the existence of the mainstream, with Maffesoli arguing that the rise in identity politics had given rise to a society splintered into disparate 'tribes'. Alternative formulations for groups

with distinctive tastes have been proposed as neo-tribes (Kova and Kova 2001), brand communities (Muniz and O Guinn 2001), consumption micro-cultures (Thompson and Troester 2002) and hyper-communities (Kozinets 2002) among others.

Perhaps the most relevant investigation into subculture in the context of this research is Robin Canniford's doctoral thesis, *Civilising Surfers: A Historical Ethnographic Exploration of Subcultural Life Cycles* (2006). He acknowledges the difficulty in attributing the term 'subculture' to surfers, who are heterogeneous in terms of age, social class, gender and race, as I explore further throughout this thesis. He notes that at first glance there may appear to be little sense of deviancy or dispossession in surf communities, but suggests that there is still resistance. He argues that the values and practices associated with surfing in its early history, such as individual expression, hedonic pleasure and responding to nature's call were incompatible with the Western capitalist work ethic and thus surfing had to be, to use Norbert Elias's term, 'sporticised' (Elias 1986, in Canniford 2006). This meant that the activity was reformulated as a sport, with set rules by which to achieve agreed goals, constricted in space and time by regulations over beach use. By this process, the surfer was 'civilised' and the commodification of surfing could begin. Despite this shift in its focus from leisure activity to competitive sport in order to make it comply with Western ideals of organisation, hierarchy and reward, Canniford argues that surfing has never been fully incorporated into the mainstream, or as he puts it, 'civilised'. Canniford's text, whilst an excellent critique of debates around subculture, does not concern itself with the recent more widespread 'post-

sporticisation' incarnation of surfing, and nor is it an examination of surf culture. Rather, it is an account of social affiliations and embodied practices in the context of consumer culture.

Regardless of the approach of the researcher, and the nomenclature or formulation of the community in question, all of the groups examined in the field of subcultural studies are united to some extent by similarities in taste: the preferences for one style of dress, genre of music or leisure activity over another. Acknowledging that the heterogenous nature of the St Agnes clothing culture has no definable 'parent culture' to resist, and since the aim of the project here is not to establish the structure of the group but to examine articulations of identity within it, I will be using the term 'taste community' to describe the diverse and varied individuals who inhabit St Agnes, bound by a shared taste for the sea and for surfing in all its forms.

Taste

The work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu on taste, of crucial importance to this thesis, is worth considering in some detail here, in order to draw out some of the key concepts that are pertinent to the study. First published in 1979, Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique Of The Judgement Of Taste* (1986 [1979]) was an ambitious attempt to theorise the cultural preferences of over a thousand respondents from a wide cross section of French society. Peppered with short case studies and tables of quantitative data, *Distinction* draws on three years' worth of field work and a sample of 1217 people (Bourdieu 1986:13 [1979]). Bourdieu sought to produce a 'model of the

relationships between the universe of economic and social conditions and the universe of lifestyles' (Bourdieu 1986:xi), in which hitherto taken for granted preferences for art, literature, entertainment, food and wine are shown to 'fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences' (1986:7). Bourdieu insists that taste for particular objects has a direct correlation with overarching structures in society. We can extrapolate that this relationship extends to the philosophical ideas that underpin those structures; in this sense, Bourdieu's work prefigures the material culture approaches to understanding objects I will develop in the following chapter.

Bourdieu uses a model derived from economics to theorise the relationship between cultural preferences and social class, pointing out that 'legitimate culture' is highly valued by society as a whole, even by those who do not participate in it. Like a preference for diamonds, or a fondness for the Royal Enclosure at Ascot, 'the consumption of the most legitimate cultural goods is a particular case of competition for rare goods and practices' (1987:100). What Thorstein Veblen (2007 [1899]) would refer to as conspicuous consumption, the pursuit of rare and costly goods to reinforce social status, might require 'pecuniary strength', but the enjoyment and appreciation of such cultural goods also requires what Bourdieu calls 'cultural capital'.

Cultural and Subcultural Capital

Cultural capital is built up over a process of acculturation which Bourdieu calls 'habitus'. Bourdieu defines habitus as 'a system of lasting transposable dispositions, which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions' (1977:83), or, according to Bourdieu's student Loic Wacquant, is 'the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them' (Wacquant 2005:316). These socialised norms and tendencies shape our thoughts and behaviour but can shift according to context, or to use Bourdieu's terms, undergo transformation when moving from one social space to another.

Competition over cultural capital and expression of habitus, according to Bourdieu, is played out in 'fields', analogous to sporting fields. These can be cultural, religious, institutional or social, and roughly correspond to the 'heterogenous networks' investigated by Bruno Latour, to which I will return in chapter three. All individuals encounter a range of such fields in their daily lives, and thus experience the exercise of power to different degrees, in various ways, in different circumstances. Such 'fields' are applicable to the domains of fashion and style to which I refer in the research question at the beginning of this section. Furthermore, Bourdieu's interest in sport is not confined to the analogous; he also enjoys extensive discussion of preferences for one sporting endeavour over another in *Distinction*; and although he never makes specific reference to surfing, I will discuss these passages in more detail in chapters six and seven, since they provide fascinating insights into the stratified pursuit of leisure.

Bourdieu points out in the preface to *Distinction* that the book 'can be read as a sort of ethnography of France' (1987:xi), which can nevertheless 'be valid beyond the particular French case' (1987:xii). It is undeniable that his findings are firmly rooted in the place and period in which they were made: the author makes reference to respondents' enjoyment of folk dancing, stockings, mutton and other items even less appealing to the twenty first century reader, as well as to a French literary and artistic canon which has subsequently been challenged by globalisation and consumer culture. However, the central concepts of habitus, cultural capital and its exchange, and the competitive fields in which this process occurs remain incredibly powerful theoretical tools for the understanding of consumption and of power, and are used extensively in the analysis of ethnographic field data in chapters five to seven.

The group analysed in my study inhabit St Agnes, Cornwall, a small village with a shared love of surfing, rather than an entire nation, but as subsequent authors have pointed out, Bourdieu's conceptual tools can be applied in both general and specific contexts. His focus on social class necessitated conceptualising French culture as a single entity differentiated by social and economic division but sharing common values; despite having been written long after subcultures and countercultures came to the attention of social theorists, he makes very limited mention of these groups. However, Sarah Thornton's *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (1995) applies Bourdieu's conceptual framework to the Britain's underground club scene in the 1990s, proposing that in such oppositional groups there exists 'subcultural capital'.

Like cultural capital, subcultural capital is a means of establishing value on a symbolic, rather than economic level. Like cultural capital, Thornton argues, subcultural capital accrues through habitus, in this case derived from the subcultural milieu itself, and under certain circumstances can be converted into economic capital, but its value is primarily in establishing status and belonging within a specific group which describes itself as outside 'the mainstream'.

Thornton's contribution to the literature is also particularly germane to this study because of the ways in which she problematises the concept of the mainstream itself. For Thornton, the mainstream is that which clubbers define as 'Other', a subcultural imaginary against which their own identity is defined. She discusses the notion of 'Sharon and Tracy' as embodiments of this Other, young working-class women with adult values, lacking in subcultural capital (1995:87). Her acknowledgement that subculture resists values, rather than, necessarily, individuals or institutions is particularly helpful when considering surfing communities, which, as I established above, defy classification as subculture that resists a mainstream or parent culture.

Surfing Literature

In spite of the growing popularity of surfing since its resurgence in the early twentieth century, there is little critical writing on the subject. Most writing on surfing addresses the non-academic reader, focusing on the development and practice of 'stand-up' or conventional competitive surfing in the USA and Australia, resulting in a body of work populated almost exclusively by young

white males, and much of the earlier literature is written by a similar demographic. However, the activity is enjoyed by all ages, both sexes, in a huge variety of locations and at every level, from international competitive sport to non-competitive leisure, on long, short, belly and body boards (see figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3) as daily practice and holiday novelty. My research focuses strongly on identity and the consumption of clothing around surfing, rather than the activity itself, and therefore addresses this broader definition of surfing as practiced in the South West of England, since the clothing culture of surfing coalesces around all of these activities without prejudice, not on just one variety of 'wave riding'. None of the texts discussed below approach the culture of surfing on land, or examine those who inhabit the milieu of surfing but never actually take a board into the water; none examine bellyboarding as a legitimate surfing activity that continues to be practiced today as anything other than developmental milestone in the journey towards mastery of stand-up surfing. Nevertheless, they contain relevant contextual information that is evaluated below.

Histories of Surfing

Ben Finney and James D. Houston's *Surfing: The Sport of Hawaiian Kings*, (1966) was the first text to address the lack of a written history of surfing in the Pacific. Based on Finney's (1964) MA research at University of Hawaii, the book pieces together a pre-history of surfing derived from Hawaiian traditions, known as *kapu*, which have been maintained through oral histories, providing evidence for the early development of the activity. It goes on to trace the spread of interest in surfing across the globe in the post-war period, including a brief

discussion of the Hawaiian *paipo* boards that may have been the forerunners of the bellyboards used in St Agnes. Whilst offering a rich context for the study of surfing's origins and early development, the text, published in 1966, clearly does not engage with surf culture today and makes only cursory mention of the development of surfing contexts outside the USA and Pacific.

Few academic studies of surfing followed Finney until the 1970s (see section below), although Finney himself co-published *A Pictorial History of Surfing* in 1970. Popular texts by writers and editors of specialist surfing magazines such as the American publication *Surfer* (1957 – present, Grind Media, USA) and Australian *Tracks* (1970 – present, Next Media, Australia), only began to emerge much later, when surfing was already well established as a competitive sport, the first World Surfing Championship having been held at Manly Beach Australia in 1964, according to the International Surf Association (ISA). Several of these popular texts, discussed below, inform the research.

Nat Young, winner of the 1966 aforementioned World Surfing Championships, wrote one of the first 'new' histories of surfing, a 1979 study which treated 'surfing [as] an art form, a cultural statement on the state of our society as it is right now.' (Young, 2010:16). Written from an insider's perspective with undeniable authority on the subject, Young's work includes a wealth of additional articles and monographs on surfing (1983, 1984, 1986, 2000, 2001, 2008) His *History* sets out a more comprehensive picture than Finney's of the visual and material culture which grew up around modern surfing, and devotes much of its content to Antipodean surfing, a topic largely unexplored by Finney

and relevant to my research interest in the influence of Commonwealth nations on the development of a UK surf culture. However, Young's interest is solely in conventional, or 'stand-up surfing', as opposed to belly- or body-boarding, or any activity associated with surf lifesaving (discussed in chapter four), and thus fails to acknowledge any aspects of surf culture which may cluster around these activities.

Similarly, Matt Warshaw describes surfing as 'an honest-to-goodness sport, rather than a beachfront novelty' (2010:11) in *The History of Surfing* (2010). This focus on the competitive and potentially commercial aspects of the activity, rather than its role as a leisure pursuit, structures the analysis into a narrative, plotting the development of surf culture as a linear progression past milestones leading to contemporary sportsmen's mastery of the waves. Warshaw avows an interest in 'tracing and understanding the jagged fault line between surf culture and culture at large' (2010:11) and acknowledges that 'so many other narratives - equally important and a lot more colourful - have to be accounted for, most of them having little or nothing to do with sport. They involve Hollywood, politics, music, fashion and the great digital vastness' (2010:11). However, the author only takes account of these 'narratives' in as far as they contribute to the trajectory of surfing being established and recognised as a mainstream sport. In common with the other authors discussed in this section, Warshaw's work (1997a, 1997b, 2000, 2004) focuses on individuals whom he views as having had a significant impact on the sport, rather than on the mass of people just partaking in it. Whilst the former group must be considered in any study which aims to determine cultural influence, the latter

cannot be neglected when my specific object of study is not the activity of surfing, but the clothing culture which has developed in its wake.

Editor of *Surfer* magazine from 1968 to 1971, Drew Kampion is possibly the world's best-known surf journalist. His best-selling book, *Stoked, A History of Surf Culture* (1997) is co-written with Bruce Brown, director of surfing's best-known film, *The Endless Summer* (1966). A noted critic of surfing competitions, Drew Kampion was never himself a professional surfer, believing the activity was best enjoyed for the 'stoke', surfing jargon roughly analogous but not grammatically parallel to 'joy'. *Stoked* does examine the aspects of surf culture that occur out of the water and concern the ordinary, non-competitive fan of surfing, as one might expect, but concentrates on stand-up surfing to the exclusion of all other forms of the activity, and despite attempts to incorporate locations outside of the authors' preferred surf breaks in California into the narrative, the book leans heavily towards one side of the Pacific and makes only passing reference to the UK.

A similar criticism can be levelled at Scott Laderman's *Empire in Waves: A Political History of Surfing* (2013). Although the text locates surfing more firmly in critical discourse, positioning the activity as the locus of discourse around colonialism, globalism and sustainability, the focus is very much on American relationships with the rest of the world, and the UK does not figure in the narrative at all. The text does at least acknowledge that surfing is more than just a competitive sport, but bellyboarding and other forms of surfing that contribute to surf culture are absent from the discussion, as is clothing.

Following on from Kampion's success, several more non-academic texts have since been published on surfing, many of which rely heavily on the three well-respected texts discussed here, and few add substantially to the literature. To some extent *The World In The Curl: An Unconventional History of Surfing* (2013) by Peter Westwick and Peter Neushul occupies the middle ground in what dress historian Lou Taylor describes as 'the great divide' (2004) in academic publishing. It is a broadly popular text which draws on academic research, tracing a narrative of surfing history whilst evaluating received wisdom on the development of surfing. In tracing the early development of surf bathing and lifesaving in Australia, Kent Pearson comments that 'the foundations were laid for the development of two different forms of surfing spirit on opposite sides of the Pacific' (1979:45). Westwick and Neuschul appear to agree, omitting the UK entirely from their text.

One popular text which is of particular interest to this study, then, is Roger Mansfield's *The Surfing Tribe: A History of Surfing in Britain* (2011). Published by Orca Publications, based in Newquay, the text is remarkable both in its content and its provenance. Mansfield's text, like those discussed above, begins in Polynesia but rapidly shifts focus to the UK. Written with a wide general audience in mind, the book lacks any theoretical underpinning, but is nevertheless an exhaustive chronicle of the achievements of those individuals whom the author credits with having brought surfing to the attention of the mainstream in the UK. Unlike almost all other texts on surfing, the book does discuss bellyboarding, but only as a stepping stone in the development of

stand-up surfing, with which the majority of the text is concerned. The use of bellyboarding as a means of learning 'proper' or stand-up surfing is a trope which is echoed by some of the respondents in the ethnography in chapters five to seven, with analysis suggesting that the activity's marginalisation has a gendered aspect, a subject not explored in *The Surfing Tribe*.

Mansfield's account also touches on surf culture in the UK, devoting three short chapters to film, fashion and magazines. There is no critical evaluation of these phenomena in this popular text, but there is a wealth of local information, original photographs and references to companies and organisations long since defunct, all pertaining to the sample area of my study. In addition the book is of interest as a primary source: published in Cornwall, it is now in its second edition and was positively received in the surf and mainstream press (*Daily Telegraph* 15th June 2009); it might therefore be considered evidence of an emergent, authentic, indigenous and even influential surf culture in the South West, a theme which emerges strongly in the chapters to come.

Widespread enquiry into the history of surfing continues to be conducted online, with rigorous investigation requiring corroborating sources carried out on websites such as surfresearch.com and mypaipoboards.org. These online resources are produced collaboratively and, unlike the texts discussed so far, do examine a range of surfing activities without limiting their scope to serious stand-up surfers, competition winners or pioneers. The research on these sites is mainly concerned with compiling primary surf resources and as such contributes enormously to this study (www.surfingforlife.com,

www.surfertoday.com et al). Together with the historical texts discussed above they provide a wealth of factual material from which to draw.

Cultures and Subcultures of Surfing

The activities and practices that gathered around surfing as a pastime began to be studied in the 1970s from a sociological perspective, in which the distinctive interests and tastes of groups of self-described surfers were ascribed to the subcultural behaviours observed by the BCCCS noted earlier in the chapter.

Sponsored by the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia in 1973, Kent Pearson carried out sociological research and published *Surfing Subcultures in Australia and New Zealand* in 1979. Pearson's qualitative research aimed to trace the development of two distinct branches of surf culture which had come to public attention when widely publicised clashes between them took place in and around the Sydney coastline in the late 1960s. The two groups, colloquially known as 'clubbies' and 'surfies' (Pearson 1979), both identified themselves as surfing enthusiasts, but inhabited different 'milieux', much like Stanley Cohen's Mods and Rockers (1972). 'Clubbies' identified themselves with surf lifesaving and indeed were affiliated to a club; their surfing activity was intrinsically connected to service. 'Surfies' were unconnected to the SLSA and took to the waves for fun. The text goes on to examine the finer nuances of these groups, their attitude towards one another, towards surfing and towards the dangers inherent in what Pearson views as a 'ludic activity'. The basis for the schism between these interest groups is, according to Pearson, historical.

What is of further interest here is not only Pearson's focus on the Antipodes (rather than the USA), but his acknowledgement of surf culture, or subculture, as a phenomenon which emerges from variants of surf activity including, but by no means limited to, stand-up surfing, the ludic preference of the 'surfies'. Most subsequent studies of surf culture have failed to take up this point and are focused, like the texts on surfing history discussed above, on stand-up surfing, particularly as a sport, marginalising bodyboarding and bellyboarding, as well as non-competitive surfing. This is a further aspect of Pearson's work which this study seeks to extend, examining a small community who enjoy a wide range of surfing activities and are all participants in the local culture (see chapter two).

Writing thirty years later, Douglas Booth (1994) develops Pearson's work, re-categorising the groups in an examination of the 'dynamics of leisure relations at the beach' in the 1960s. He explains that consumer capitalism '

promoted greater freedom and tolerance in leisure...[but]...hedonistic leisure forms, such as surfing, generated anxiety about methods of disciplining youth' and that the tension 'between pleasure and discipline explains the dynamic social relations of surfing in the 1960s (1994:262).

Booth's argues that the 'surfies' in his study are countercultural rather than subcultural, actively resisting the mainstream, but by the time of the economic recession of the 1970s they are incorporated into consumer capitalism by means of having to make a living through surf related business, or else by their countercultural image being exploited to sell goods promoted as 'cool'.

Douglas Booth has written extensively on surf culture (1994, 1995, 1996 et al). His 2001 study examines the beach-based activities which developed in the

twentieth century in Australia, surfing among them. He positions sunbathing, swimming, surf -lifesaving, surfing and iron man contests in historical context using a wide-ranging approach to archival and media material. Booth uses the beach as a lens through which to view societal change in Australia in the twentieth century, examining shifts in attitudes towards public display of the body, leisure and recreation, gender roles and the environment, concluding that much of early Australian (beach) culture took its cue from Britain, of which it was from 1901 a dominion. It is from this aspect of Booth's research that this study can gain the most, because although Booth does not look at how far Australia may have influenced Britain, he does investigate Britain's influence the other way. Additionally, Booth's insistence that the range of activities associated with a locale must be considered together is of crucial importance to my study, which, as I have established, takes a similar stance, examining the culture around a range of surf related activities in a specific site.

Emily Beaumont is one of many researchers who have eschewed the broad sweep of surf culture as a whole and instead focused on one specific geographical area. Her work on Cornish surfers demonstrates the heterogeneity of surfers as a minority interest group, as well as the typological links between individuals (2014a, 2014b). Beaumont's ethnographic approach and the data gleaned around 'localism' are particularly pertinent to my study and its research area, known locally as 'the Badlands' (see chapter five).

Leslie Heywood, whose work on gender I discuss later in the chapter, is also concerned with identity and subculture. She writes, 'according to most

formulations of post-subculture, traditional emphasis on the resistant function of subculture has broken down as a result of the turn to individualism that accompanied consumer lifestyles associated with advanced consumer capitalism. Nowhere is this clearer than in ...surfing, where residual connotations of opt-out hedonism mix with its now dominant place in the cultural imaginary' (Heywood 2008:64). Examining representations of surfers, Heywood acknowledges the tensions between surfing's incorporation into consumer culture by both participants and non-participants and the resistance to capitalism implied by the lifestyle discussed by Canniford (2006) earlier in this chapter. Heywood's work, however, focuses on stand-up surfers in an American context.

As does that of Kristin Lawler, whose *The American Surfer: Radical Culture and Capitalism* (2011) examines representations of Californian surfers in American popular culture and like Booth, positions the archetypal image of the surfer as countercultural. The visual codes associated with the surfer, she asserts, are aligned with rebellion and freedom. Such codes are adopted by individuals or groups who feel resonance with those themes and are therefore the drivers of influence. Whilst focused strongly on the USA, Lawler's work nevertheless provides a theoretical context for my investigation of the spread of the imaginary of surfing through mass media.

Again extending Booth's work, Joan Ormrod's (2008) study examines the influence of American and Australian surf culture on that in Britain, in respect of the style, techniques and technologies of surfing as a lifestyle, through a close

examination of films and visual material produced in each of the three places. Although her examination also ends in the 1980s when 'the nature of the global/local relationship in surfing changed through discourses such as consumerism, globalism and communication which changed the nature of surfing' (2008:14), she provides an excellent analysis of the rhetoric encoded in the visual culture produced in each region up to that point.

As I will establish in chapter four, the South West Peninsula's development as a holiday destination and the commercialisation of its beach areas occurred in tandem with the development of its surf culture, whose material effects arrived in the hands of taste communities and tourists alike through capitalist production and which find their way there ever more readily now, assisted by globalism and the digital economy. Today, more than ever before, the brands and leisure pursuits enjoyed by Australian or American surfers can be seen on digital television or the internet anywhere on Earth and found in Cornwall's many surf shops.

David Lanagan has also acknowledged the role of consumer culture in surfing, and specifically addressing the clothing associated with surfers, observes that 'as surfwear proliferated and became separated from the beach, surfers began to receded from ownership of the pleasurable and playful lifestyle, surfwear became fashion wear, and no longer the argot of a marginalised leisure group, surfing capital now decides what is surfwear and this commodified form is the public face of surfing' (Lanagan 2002:290). This observation supports some of the analysis of brands in the chapters that follow, in which local preferences for

locally made surfwear indicate a rejection of commodified and clichéd 'surf style'.

Lanagan continues his research into commodification in 2003 (in Edwards, Gilbert & Skinner (eds) 2003), in which he identifies the surfer's as a 'commoditised body', that is, a 'lithe, sporting body, adorned in surfing merchandise and "rips" and "shreds",' (2003:173) increasingly positioned as spectacle by communications technology. Dave Arthur's research similarly finds that 'surfing has the potential to become overcommercialised [sic] (2003:164); he refers not just to the sales of related products but to the activity itself, the popularisation of which he believes is in danger of diluting 'the traditional concept of surfing and the cultural manifestations that underpin it' (2003:164), suggesting a preference for the more countercultural positions explored by Booth and extended subsequently by the other authors in this section.

Studies of surfing cultures and subcultures have strongly focused on stand-up surfing to the exclusion of other forms, signalling the originality of this research which acknowledges bellyboarding as a cornerstone of the surfing practice in the region I examine. This gap in the critical literature might, as I suggest earlier, be ascribed to bellyboarding's association with women surfers, none of whom feature significantly in the texts discussed above.

In addition the majority of these studies have accepted formulations of subculture as resistant to a mainstream that Thornton (1995) rejects as illusory. Whilst I acknowledge that surfing is a minority activity, it is practiced in many

forms by almost all of the respondents in my study and is central to the clothing culture in this 'taste community'.

Gender and Surfing

Gender in stand-up surfing and bodyboarding has of late become an area for academic enquiry. Women's relationship to surfing as a range of activities and also representations of women as surfers have been examined in the growing field of sports studies. Representations of gender in the surfing media have come under scrutiny, in particular by Australian scholars examining *Tracks* surfing magazine. In Leanne Stedman's (1997) case study of surfing subculture, representations of gender and sexuality in the publication are explored. Stedman concludes that sexist and homophobic discourse within the magazine operate in support of male surfers denying women access to waves. Margaret Henderson analyses content and themes in the magazine and concludes that, contrary to its countercultural roots and the increasing presence of women in the waves, the 'potentially emancipatory physical culture' (Henderson 2001:322) of surfing 'becomes stridently masculinist and commodified into a fashion lifestyle industry' (2001:323) by the end of the twentieth century. Douglas Booth, a prolific writer on surf culture, whose *Australian Beach Cultures* was discussed earlier examines *Tracks* magazine's appeal to readers by adopting 'a more grounded analytical approach' than 'structuralist analyses...that focus on a pre-established interest (ie gender)' (2008:20) such as Henderson's. He considers the affective responses resulting from the text and images in the magazine, concluding that the magazine's contemporary target audience 'comprises young, predominantly male, surfers

who belong, or aspire to belong, to a hedonistic, escapist and performance-based subculture' (2008:30). *Tracks* magazine is not distributed in the UK and is therefore unlikely to have made a significant impact on the clothing culture I examine. But in later chapters, I acknowledge that the arrival on UK shores of occasional copies of this and other international surfing publications was greeted with great enthusiasm by local surfers.

Rebecca Olive analyses the ways that social media can provide an alternative to mainstream surf media, 'images posted to Instagram by women who surf recreationally both disrupt and reinforce existing sexualisation and differentiation of women in surf culture' (2015:99). Elsewhere, she discusses 'how women in [her] hometown of Byron Bay, Australia, understand, experience and negotiate the male dominated culture of surfing' (2016:172) and finds that 'relationships with other women were central to their capacity to negotiate the male-dominated surfbreak' (2016:173). With McCuaig and Phillips (2012), she explores the 'patronising' ways in which male surfers 'help' female surfers catch waves. She goes on to argue in a further paper that 'marginalisation occurs through cultural understandings and expectations about male and female performances...female skateboarders and snowboarders find it difficult to accumulate cultural capital as their skating is not seen to be critical or risky, so even if they have cultural-participant status through their commitment to skating, they are still only "good for a girl"' (Olive et al 2015:261). This tallies with my own observations, that bellyboarding is commonly viewed as an entry level activity practiced by women and girls but shunned by men once they have 'graduated'. Robert Preston Whyte's work on 'whether surfers and

bodyboarders used separate surfing spaces, whether they perceived surfing space to be scarce, whether certain spaces had special significance for them, and whether spaces were contested' (Preston-Whyte 2002:319). The author touches on some of the issues explored in chapter five, Space and Place, but makes no mention of bellyboarders' place in the geography of the waves.

The ways in which female surfers disrupt the male-dominated domain of the waves has been explored by Waitt (2008); the means by which the female surfing body offers resistance to the hegemony by Knijink, Horton & Cruz (2010); and Clifton Evers (2009) suggests that the surfing body in action might escape significations of gender. All offer useful insights into the ways in which individual surfers' subjectivities might offer resistance to discourses of surfing which continue to enable sexist and heteronormative behaviour. Sexuality, too, has been investigated in the context of surfing, notably by Georgina Roy (2011, 2013 and with Jayne Caudwell, 2014) who has discussed the ways in which lesbian surfers in Brighton and in Newquay have opened up space for resistance in heteronormative environments such as holiday resorts. Spowart et al (2010) discuss the ways in which women negotiate the responsibilities of motherhood and the flexibility and free time required to enjoy surfing as Foucauldian 'technologies of the self' (Markula 2003). Mihi Nemani, a championship bodyboarder, has written of and theorised her experience of the intersectional issues of race and gender (2013, 2015). Bodyboarding is closer to stand-up surfing in terms of its legitimacy; international competitions are held and prize winners appropriately rewarded. In addition, as Preston Whyte (2010) notes, competition for the perfect wave between bodyboarders and stand-up

surfers is intense. However, no such competition exists between them and the bellyboarders that appear in this study, catching waves in the shallows, and no study has been made of them. In addition, none of the above texts deals with the culture of surfing on land or with those who inhabit the cultural milieu of surfing but rarely or never venture out into these contested waves.

Leslie Heywood's work on *Third Wave Feminism, the Global Economy and Women's Surfing* (2008) 'asks why and to what extent female surfers are being utilised as a sign for the positive aspects of the global economy (2008:63), finding that they 'reflect a representational nexus where the female body...has come to signify an independent sexuality that reflects women's potential as 'self-determining' wage earners and consumers' (2008:64). She asserts that 'instead of having to renounce femininity to prove themselves athletes, these women assume their athleticism and strength and therefore demonstrate less concern about issues of gender' (2008:63). Christa Komer's research reveals another positive in the gender politics around surfing. She argues that, regardless of whether or not surfing women self-identify as political, the experience of competing with men for decent waves, advocating a healthy lifestyle and expressing preferences for clean beaches, makes their surfing activity political. They are, she claims, 'surfer girl localists' (2010:25).

Studies of the role of gender in surfing and surf culture have begun to explore the complex dynamics that exist between individual participants, groups and the cultures in which they exist and are represented. Intersectional approaches have been employed, highlighting the roles of sexuality and race in the

formation of surfing identities and relationships; it has been acknowledged that a range of surfing activities including stand-up surfing and bodyboarding are aspects of surf culture when viewed from a wider perspective than one focusing on competitive stand-up surfing alone. However, no study to date has discussed bellyboarding in this context, and none have explored how surfing identities are embodied in the clothing culture of a region.

Conclusion

Studies of fashionable dress are relevant to my research in the sense that they acknowledge that in consumer culture, individuals in the provinces and in rural locations mostly select their garments from mass produced items widely available in shops. They gain knowledge of what is 'fashionable' from the same magazines and websites as those who inhabit the more established fashionable locales of the large cities, in which many of these studies have been carried out. Widespread shifts in clothing preferences such as rising and falling hemlines may be therefore be echoed in provincial clothing communities. As the literature review has established, however, there is little material that actually investigates the distinctive variants of fashionable dress in communities outside of the relatively well-researched metropolitan contexts.

With surfing at its heart, the clothing culture researched here embodies aspects of identity that connect strongly to an activity practiced by a tiny minority of British people. It might then be studied from the perspective of subculture. Subcultural identity as expressed through dress has also been widely researched, but as I established above, today the term subculture is much

contested and only somewhat applicable to the community in question, in which the clothing culture does not exclude an age group or social stratum, nor express resistant to any authority or parent culture. The term 'taste community' is a more accurate nomenclature for this diverse group joined by their love of the sea.

The literature review has shown that aspects of the history of stand-up surfing are well documented, and increasingly academics have taken a critical approach to aspects of its development. However, the majority of studies have focused on the best-known surfing locations of Australia and the West Coast of the USA; few published histories focus on the UK and none acknowledge the ongoing presence of bellyboarding as a surfing activity. Hence this project represents, in the context of surfing literature, an original contribution.

Furthermore, a tendency to view surfing as a sport, and hence its history as a catalogue of 'pioneers' and competition winners, has resulted in a failure to consider the cultural contribution of the legions who followed these 'pioneers' and those who never entered a competition; those who surf but would not describe themselves as surfers; those who enjoy, occasionally or often, belly boarding or body boarding, and those who simply sit on a towel on the beach and watch. Many of the surfing activities enjoyed in Cornwall make little impact on the critical literature around it. Recent interdisciplinary studies have taken some of these practices seriously, notably bodyboarding, but are mostly focused on Australia and America. Surf culture, the emergent practices that coalesce around the various forms of surfing, is increasingly considered by

cultural theorists seeking to understand representations of surfers in popular culture or the visual argot of specific surfing subcultures, but there is a lack of critical literature which incorporates any discussion whatsoever of bellyboarding, an activity that predates stand-up surfing by some forty years in the UK and continues to be practiced daily in Cornwall and attracts new participants every year.

Finally, the clothing culture around surfing, materialised in garments and embodied by practitioners and spectators, clustering around surfing activity of all kinds, remains largely unexplored in the literature. Making use of approaches best exemplified by Daniel Miller (1998, 2010, 2011) and theoretical paradigms such as Judy Attfield's (2000) this study is the first to fully address the question, how are surfing identities constructed through clothing cultures in Cornwall?

In Chapter two, Methodology, I set out the theoretical approach I adopt in the study. I further discuss Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) notions of field, habitus and capital and their philosophical underpinnings in interpretivism as well as critiques of his work. I justify the use of these notions in the examination of a community bound together by shared taste in what is a minority activity elsewhere. The connections between Bourdieu's approach and Symbolic Interactionism are considered here, and used to justify the ethnography of the sample area. Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (2005) is proposed as an analytical tool that is most useful in chapters four and five, since Latour is interested in the agency of non-human actors rather than the embodied

consumers considered in later chapters. Following this, the work of Arjun Appadurai (1986, 1996, 2013) is introduced and discussed with particular attention paid to the 'cultural flows' that occur in the post-digital world, with a discussion of how these flows will be mapped onto the sample area in the following study. Finally, material culture studies such as those carried out by Daniel Miller (1998, 2008, 2011 et al) and Sophie Woodward (2008, 2012) are discussed and proposed as a means to understand how complex, often cosmological ideas are materialised in consumer goods such as the clothing in the study.

The next chapter, Research Methods, outlines the means by which the sample area was selected and the ethnography conducted, evaluating the ethnographic techniques that were used. I go on to consider and justify the purposeful data sampling exercises that were carried out to ensure methodological rigour in the material culture study. Finally, I outline the means by which the data was analysed in order to produce the chapters that follow, concluding that thematic analysis allowed three strands of themes to emerge: space and place, consumption and embodiment.

Chapter four, Surf Culture in Cornwall: origins, adoption and growth, is concerned with the development of varieties of the pastime in the South West of England, far from its Pacific origins. The South West as a holiday destination and the uptake of bellyboarding and stand-up surfing by celebrities in the pre-war period is discussed in this chapter, followed by an examination the parallel development of surf culture in Hawaii, where a distinctive style of clothing

associated with the activity was beginning to emerge. I continue by analysing surfing's entry into British popular culture via the media, first from the USA and later from Australia and the ways in which a clothing culture around surfing developed in the UK, particularly in Cornwall.

In chapter five, *Space and Place*, I begin by examining and describing the spaces and places of surfing, beginning with Cornwall as a place both real and imagined. I move on to provide a detailed description of St. Agnes, the Cornish village in which the ethnography was conducted. Historical connections and current involvement with surfing in St Agnes and its two beaches, Chapel Porth and Trevaunance Cove are discussed in some detail in order to provide a clear context for its clothing culture. The theme of space and place which emerged from the data is examined in respect of real, imagined and virtual spaces, making use of Appadurai's 'flows' and 'imagined life possibilities', as key theoretical tools. The beach and the car park are theorised as contested spaces, and the notion of a 'vintagescape' is mobilised in order to examine the located consumption practices around nostalgia at an event held in St Agnes each year, the annual World Bellyboarding Championships. Finally, I examine the virtual spaces and marketplaces that intersect with the village's clothing culture.

Chapter six, *Consumption*, examines how status is conferred and negotiated through the clothing culture in the village, focusing mainly on the clothing selected by its residents. Primarily using a Bourdieusian approach, I provide a case study on flip-flops to demonstrate that locally status is not necessarily

indicative of social class. I make use of Grant McCracken's (2005) notion of patina to develop a theory of 'materialised experience' to explain the local preference for old clothing and goods and self-identified 'scruffiness'. I go on to propose a further cultural flow to add to the five developed by Appadurai, namely the 'stuffscape' of goods that circulate the globe in the digital era, and use this to unpick the brand preferences expressed in the ethnography.

This notion is further developed in chapter seven, Embodiment. Here I discuss the transition of the archetypal surfing body from a black body to a white one in order to draw out themes of ethnicity and belonging that emerge from the ethnography. I then examine the body from a gender perspective, and Wacquant's notion of 'body capital' is adapted to analyse the masculine surfing body, which is proposed here to possess 'embodied experience'. I analyse this embodiment in the wider context of mainstream fashion and the widespread adoption of surf style by non-surfers. I go on to consider the ways in which experience is mapped onto the ageing body that differ according to gender. Finally, I examine the perceived impracticality in the sample area of feminine attire and the local preference for a 'casual' appearance, returning to spaces and places and the idea that 'fashion happens elsewhere'.

In the final chapter, I summarise my findings and draw conclusions, assessing the applicability of the theories I have developed to wider contexts, and indicate avenues for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

Building on the literature review in the previous chapter, this chapter draws out the theoretical tools identified in it which will be applied to this study. As was established, Pierre Bourdieu's (1976, 1984) work is of particular interest, and in this chapter the key concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' are evaluated and proposed as theoretical tools with which to work on the ethnography. Bourdieu's student and biographer, Loic Wacquant, (2003) has developed Bourdieu's work on sport; both this and Wacquant's subsequent writings will be considered, ending with an acknowledgement and assessment of the limitations of Bourdieu's approach.

I then go on to examine the more recent work of Arjun Appadurai (1986, 1996, 2013), whose appropriation of Georg Simmel's exchange and value system is used here to explain the interdisciplinary nature of the study of the development of the specific clothing culture which follows. I consider his writings on globalisation and the five proposed dimensions of cultural flow which characterise it and propose these as effective methodological devices.

This leads to an analysis of the epistemological underpinnings which link Bourdieu to Appadurai and a discussion of Symbolic Interactionism as a unifying epistemological framework for both these authors and my own study. I introduce Actor Network Theory (ANT), developed by Bruno Latour (1988, 1991) and the notion of the agency of objects themselves is discussed and

evaluated with reference to consumer goods and in particular apparel. ANT is then compared to the material culture approach of Daniel Miller (2005, 2010), introduced in the previous chapter. In this section, I tease out analytical framework based on this approach and justify its use as a further basis of this study.

In concluding the section, I establish that an interpretivist position, drawing on the approaches above, can lead to the fruitful analysis of the area under scrutiny in order to answer the research questions.

Taste and Status

Pierre Bourdieu's philosophical approach, underpinning both his methodology and analysis, is outlined first in this section, followed by a discussion of my own application of these same guiding principles in this thesis. His notions of habitus and field, introduced in the literature review, are then more fully explored. The aim of the discussion is to examine the application of the concepts in diverse studies in order to evaluate their effectiveness when social class is not the overriding concern of the enquiry. Therefore I consider the work of Loic Wacquant (2003) and his application of Bourdieu's concepts to his own ethnographic research. In addition Bourdieu's work on sport is of particular relevance here, since Bourdieu, like me, is interested less in the ludic or competitive qualities of such endeavours in themselves, than what might be communicated by participation in them.

Bourdieu's approach, philosophically speaking, is somewhere between a structuralist or subjectivist one, which denies human agency in favour of an understanding of man's actions as determined by the structures which enclose him, and an objectivist approach which places free will at the centre of all human decisions. Hence cultural practice, or what people do, is somewhat determined by pre-existing structures but is also a matter of choice. This is why cultural practice may be at odds with the dominant discourse, which represents, describes and constitutes these structures. Any discussion of cultural practice, then, must be located in space and time, in the spatial and historical context which to some extent determines what practice is permitted or even available.

Therefore this study takes as its point of departure the official discourse surrounding surf culture, including the texts discussed in the previous chapter. The historical narrative developed by the official discourse is interrogated and problematised in chapter three by means of sometimes contradictory evidence found in local archives and collections. The resulting picture of the local and historical contexts in which contemporary surf culture in the South West appears is therefore a nuanced and highly specific basis from which to investigate the negotiations between structures of class, gender and race and cultural practice in the remaining chapters.

Habitus both constitutes and is constituted by such structures. Scholars investigating a wide range of social groups have examined their habitus: that is, 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which

generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them' (Bourdieu 1977:79).

Perhaps most notable and certainly most germane is the work of Bourdieu's student, Loic Wacquant. Wacquant's first project outside France was an ethnographic study of young amateur boxers in a Chicago gymnasium in which the author himself trained, published as *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer* (2004). In the impoverished environment of Chicago's South Side ghetto, young black men acquire what he terms 'body capital', derived, like Thornton's (1996) subcultural capital, discussed in the previous chapter, from Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital. 'Body capital', for Wacquant, is the physical embodiment of habitus, moulded and managed by the cultural milieu of the boxing club, a structure which resists, but is contained within the wider social structures in which the young, poor black man is marginalised and lacking in the more widely traded cultural capital.

Wacquant's ethnographic approach facilitated access to the ways in which 'body capital' is assessed and valued within the group according to systems and principles alien to or unknown by those outside it, and by those outside the gym environment where it can be 'translated' into other capitals in the wider cultural economy. It has since been applied to practitioners of other combat sports (Garcia 2013) and whilst surfing is no sense pugilistic, Wacquant's concept is pertinent to this study in the sense that the habitus of surfing communities can

be argued to produce something akin to 'body capital,' just as recent studies of other sporting communities such as snowboarders have demonstrated (Thorpe, 2010). This is a theme I explore in chapter seven, Embodiment.

The value associated with cultural capital, whether in the strictly Bourdieusian sense, or in the re-readings supplied by Wacquant, Thornton et al can be observed when an individual competes for status in what Bourdieu calls 'the field'. This arena of competition or field may be employment, politics, law fashion or any discrete area in which social stratification occurs not directly through structure but by human agency, the philosophically 'objective' side of Bourdieu's model. Bourdieu develops this sporting metaphor, explaining that habitus is what provides one with a 'feel for the game' and the potential to win it, and that it is the job of the sociologist to discern 'what is being played at'. Having established the context in which 'the game' is played in chapters three and four, it is the aim of the following three chapters to ascertain what game is being played in Cornwall's clothing culture, what are the rules specific to the surfing community of St Agnes, and how a player might play to win.

As one might expect, given his fondness for sporting metaphors, Pierre Bourdieu perceives sporting pursuits as an area of interest in *Distinction* (Ibid). Whilst the work of Thorstein Veblen, first published in 1899 (2007) is not explicitly acknowledged in Bourdieu's text, it seems to me to be an influence, particularly in respect of Veblen's concept of conspicuous leisure. Veblen asserts that, 'in order to gain and to hold the esteem of men it is not sufficient merely to possess wealth or power. The wealth or power must be put in

evidence, for esteem is only awarded on evidence.’ (Veblen 2007:29). The necessity for display of ‘pecuniary strength’ gives rise to ‘conspicuous consumption’ and subsequent conspicuous waste of goods, a notion widely discussed and applied to late twentieth century culture by Hebdige (1988) et al.

The sister concept of conspicuous leisure is less well known but more relevant here. For Veblen, conspicuous leisure is another form of consumption: ‘a non-productive consumption of time’, arising from ‘a sense of the unworthiness of productive work, and...as evidence of the pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness’ (2007:33). Thus fox hunting, the costly and ostentatious pursuit of inedible quarry, was in Veblen’s time considered to be a higher status activity than fishing, a sporting activity too close to productive labour to signify status. Both activities are forms of hunting, one somewhat more costly to enjoy and less likely to provide dinner. Similar stratifications around sport continued to exist into Bourdieu’s time. For him, ‘economic barriers... are not sufficient to explain the class distribution of these activities [ie sports]...there are more hidden entry requirements, such as family tradition and early training, or the obligatory manner (of dress and behaviour), and socialising techniques, which keep the sport closed to the working class and to upwardly mobile individuals from the middle and upper classes.’ (Bourdieu 1986:217). Here Bourdieu alludes to the very subject of this study: the cultural activities that coalesce around a particular sporting activity. He does not, however, dwell on the clothing of the participants.

Although Bourdieu is closely focused on social class, in his discussion of sport he alludes to the richness of potential analytical areas arising from it: 'thus, the system of the sporting activities and entertainment that offer themselves at a given moment for the potential "consumers" to choose from is predisposed to express all the differences sociologically pertinent at that moment: oppositions between the sexes, between the classes and between class fractions. The agents only have to follow the leanings of their habitus in order to take over, unwittingly, the intention immanent in the corresponding practices, to find an activity which is entirely "them" and, with it, kindred spirits.' (1986:223). Thus in the following chapters, applying Bourdieu's model, I investigate the 'differences sociologically pertinent' in my study of a surfing community and its dress preferences.

It must be noted at this point that Bourdieu is not without his critics. Here I offer my critique of his analytical model and then consider some criticisms of his philosophical position, which are taken into account in the analytical chapters to follow. Reading *Distinction* (Ibid), one is immediately struck by the picture of a cohesive, orderly society that it paints. There is no mention of subculture or of counterculture. This is surprising, given that the study was carried out in France in 1963 to 1968, arguably the most turbulent period of the republic's modern social history, in which civil unrest could not be contained by President General de Gaulle's conservative leadership and culminated in the famed student protests, general strikes and riots in Paris and elsewhere. The same period saw a remarkable growth in radical left-wing politics in the arts, notably the cinematic oeuvre of the Nouvelle Vague. Bourdieu simply could not have been

unaware of these widely publicised events, and it is unlikely that the respondents in his many surveys, questionnaires and interviews just happened to have no interest in them either.

Nevertheless, Bourdieu does not consider countercultural tastes in clothing, music, art and cinema. One wonders whether such data was discarded in order to present a more convincing and straightforward case of class stratification in taste and judgements of taste. Similarly, in a period when ground-breaking work in the social sciences on subculture was emerging from the Chicago School and elsewhere (Cohen AK 1955 et al), one might expect a sociologist as prominent as Bourdieu to engage with some of the concepts raised.

However in Bourdieu's defence I would argue that his work is avowedly focused on the mainstream of society, rather than what was at the time of his writing considered deviancy- another branch of sociology altogether. My study focuses on a group that does not necessarily share the tastes of the majority, but as I will establish, it does share many of the underlying values of wider society. It is true that Bourdieu fails to engage with marginal groups such as subcultures. But for the purposes of this study, his model as a whole remains valid.

Richard Jenkins' brief, elegant and sharply critical guide, *Pierre Bourdieu* (1992) considers the author's lifetime work and central concepts, and identifies inconsistencies emerging from Bourdieu's desire to unite structuralist and

subjectivist approaches in one perspective. He points out that 'the "habitus" is the source of objective practices but is itself a set of "subjective" generative principles produced by the "objective" patterns of social life' (Jenkins 1992:51), suggesting that such a schema could lay Bourdieu open to charges of determinism. For Jenkins, 'it remains difficult to see how, in Bourdieu's model of practice, actors or collectivities can intervene in their own history in any substantial fashion' (1992:51). In the analysis of the clothing culture of the sample area in chapters five, six and seven, I treat consumer choices as a paradigm within which negotiations are made, using the material culture studies approach discussed below and introduced in the literature review. This approach acknowledges and indeed takes as its point of departure the deterministic nature of the capitalist economy and concerns itself with the meanings individuals and groups make of the items consumed in the local context.

Cultural Flows

Arjun Appadurai explains that 'economic exchange creates value. Value is embodied in commodities that are exchanged...what creates the link between exchange and value is politics, construed broadly. This argument....justifies the conceit that commodities, like persons, have social lives' (1986:5). He goes on to take Simmel's central concept that 'exchange is not a by-product of the mutual valuation of objects, but its source' and develop it in a different direction to Simmel's analysis of the system of exchange, focusing instead on the meanings generated by exchange. He explores 'the conditions under which economic objects circulate in different regimes of value in space and time'

(1986:4), in other words, with the available paradigms in which consumer choices are made. Focused on what this reveals about the process of globalisation, Appadurai's *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996) 'argues for a general rupture in the tenor of inter-social relations in the past few decades', since understanding 'the world in which we now live, in which modernity is decisively at large, irregularly self-conscious and unevenly experienced- surely does involve a general break with all sorts of pasts' (1996:3). Today's version of modernity, he argues, is caused by the rupturing force of what he terms 'interconnected diacritics' (1996:3), media and migration. Written some two decades after Bourdieu, Appadurai's work bears witness to the digital revolution, in which 'electronic media...transform the field of mass mediation because they offer new resources and new disciplines for the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds' (1996:3).

Migration, according to Appadurai, occurs across five 'dimensions of cultural flow', irregular, fluid 'landscapes' that are 'deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic and political situatedness of different sorts of actors' (1996:33). Revealing themselves after the digital revolution, these 'landscapes' or frameworks offer an excellent theoretical perspective from which to view a community which has been, in a British context, somewhat geographically isolated, but today makes ever deeper connections to the World Wide Web, a nomenclature which now sounds quaintly old fashioned but continues to bring to mind the global connections it makes possible. Appadurai conceptualises his frameworks as 'the building blocks of...imagined worlds...the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of

persons and groups spread around the globe' (1996:33). The existence of this plurality in imagined worlds means that their inhabitants are 'able to contest and sometimes even to subvert the imagined worlds of the official mind', a notion which heavily informs my analysis of the meanings exchanged in the clothing culture in the St Agnes community.

Appadurai classifies his dimensions as follows: ethnoscapas, technoscapas, financescapas, mediascapas, and ideoscapas (Appadurai, 1996). Ethnoscapas are the shifting landscapes of people around locations, across borders and cultures, in a world where 'moving groups can never afford to let their imagination rest for too long' (1996:34). In chapter four I begin to explore the journeys of the material and epistemological baggage travelling with merchants, tourists, second home owners and stationed military personnel among others to and from Cornwall and St Agnes in particular; this theme will be expanded in the remaining chapters, in which the clothing culture of a surfing community can be seen to articulate shifting notions of identity and belonging.

Technoscape, for Appadurai, is the 'configuration of technology... [that now] moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries' (1996:34). Closely linked to ethnoscapas and the movement of skilled and unskilled labour, technoscapas are again relevant in drawing out the context of the study; I consider them closely in chapter six, Consumption, in which technical clothing's relationship to leisure wear is considered in detail. In addition I make some use of Appadurai's third framework, the financescape. Although this study is not concerned with finance per se, the devastating effects

of the global financial collapse of 2008 are still felt in the region, suggesting that the notion of the financescape, so closely bound up with the other 'scapes' must contribute to the meanings around the exchange and use of objects in the aftermath of the crash.

Mediascapes and ideoscapes are 'closely related landscapes of images' (1996:35). Mediascapes are the dissemination, production and distribution of digital images, and the images themselves. These images 'involve many complicated inflections' depending on their mode, their hardware, and the interests of those in control of their production. They provide 'large and complex repertoires of images, narratives and ethnoscapescapes to viewers throughout the world' (1996:35). Using this framework to examine the written and visual culture around surfing allows me to reflect on intersections with other 'scapes' and forms a central pillar of the analysis in all of the remaining chapters. Of particular interest is the way in which mediascapes 'offer ...elements...out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives...metaphors by which people live..[and] ..constitute narratives of the Other' (1996:36). As was established in the preceding chapter, narratives around surfing as a sport largely centre around and are constructed from the perspective of the white western male. An aim of this study is to identify and to reveal the presence of Others in the surf culture as experienced in the South West of England, through an examination of the clothing culture produced and consumed by it. The notion of the mediascape, then, provides the analytical model for much of the discussion to follow around the shifting meanings around the images and words germane to surf culture in the chosen place and time.

Many of these words and these images and the communicative genres in which they appear might or might not contribute an ideoscape, or a global flow of ideologies. A further aim of this study is to use the visual and material culture of the region to assess the extent to which prevailing ideologies are immanent in the region under scrutiny; the ideoscape, then, is a concept that underpins the analysis to follow.

But how is it possible to reveal the ideoscape through clothing culture? Daniel Miller insists that material culture can be read as the objectification of social relations: how social relations are objectified – made into objects, and also embodied – made into bodies. These social relations are part of what constitute, and is constituted by, ideology. Before I move on to the relations themselves, I want to look at philosophically at these processes.

Both objectification and embodiment have at their heart the notion of epistemology. 'Crotty (1998) suggests an interrelationship exists between the theoretical stance adopted by the researcher, the methodology and methods used, and the researcher's view of epistemology' (Gray 2014:19). Hence it is useful at this point to set out my view of epistemology, derived from the theorists on whom I base my analysis.

All of the theorists examined in this chapter might be termed interpretivists. In the next few paragraphs I will briefly draw out the links between Bourdieu and Appadurai by returning to some of the philosophical texts and ideas they have

in common, leading to my conclusion that, to some extent we could further classify them as Symbolic Interactionists. Then I will discuss how this approach is applied in the work of Daniel Miller et al in the field of material culture studies, focusing on dress and apparel. This will lead to a clarification of the relationship between ideology and 'things' or as Miller would have it, 'stuff'.

Epistemology

Whilst it appears self-evident that a world exists outside of the self, and properties within it can be empirically tested, positivism, the philosophical paradigm of which these observations form a core principle, has been challenged and all but rejected by philosophers (Williams and May 1996).

Around the turn of the twentieth century, as the new discipline of social science was entering the academy, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Georg Simmel called into question the positivist insistence on pure logic and empiricism in the realm of the social, which, they believed, could not follow the same laws as natural science. Later, the positivist approach to even the natural sciences was critiqued by philosopher Karl Popper, who insisted that repetition in experiment and measurement could not actively prove anything, since only one anomaly in an infinite number of tests would in fact disprove the theory it set out to prove.

French sociologist and philosopher Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) and his followers advocated an anti-positivist or interpretivist philosophy. They believed that the human subject must interpret the external (objective) world, rather than there being a direct and uncomplicated relationship between the two. Weber in particular believed that the meanings produced by human behaviour could not

be 'objectively "correct" or "true" by some metaphysical criterion' (Weber 1922). Hermeneutics, phenomenology and Symbolic Interactionism all derive from this approach.

Symbolic Interactionism is more of a framework than a theory, in that it does not contain testable hypotheses, based as it is on unique human relationships and the extrinsic meanings derived and interpreted during all kinds of exchanges between them. Informed by the pragmatist approach of American philosopher and sociologist George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), his student, Henry Blumer (1986), coined the term Symbolic Interactionism to indicate that in this perspective, the relationship between people and what he termed physical, social and abstract objects depends on the meaning of the specific things for those particular people in their particular circumstances. This meaning, according to Blumer, derives from social interactions, making practice and social relations central to the application of Symbolic Interactionism: people interpret the meanings of objects and actions in the world and then act upon those interpretations. Therefore meanings are sensitive to context, unstable and fluid, including definitions of self and identity; as these definitions shift and transform, so do relationships, practices and interactions, setting in motion new interpretations. In this web of negotiated meaning, the acceptance of symbols and the taking and playing of roles are of crucial importance in understanding both unique perspectives and the socially constructed paradigms in which they are developed.

Here, clear parallels can be drawn to the work Erving Goffman, the Canadian sociologist and author of *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (1990 [1969]). Here, and in subsequent works, Goffman employs a dramaturgical approach to human interactions, positing that human beings respond to situations as if acting out a role. This role is socially constructed and circumscribed or as Goffman would have it, 'framed' by the circumstances in which it is played out, and our familiarity with the 'frames' surrounding everyday human exchanges suggests to us something of a script from which to improvise and the appropriate costume and props for the role.

An example derived from my research might be the tourist arriving in the South West from the Midlands for a surfing holiday. The flip-flops, branded T-shirt and festive growth of facial hair would suggest themselves as entirely appropriate 'costume' 'framed' by the beach location and the leisure activities on offer. Props such as the backpack and rented surfboard complete the picture. The tourist might also find himself adopting some of the local surfing argot, describing himself as 'stoked' to be there, and playing out the role of the 'chilled out surfer', enjoying a drink on the beach after dark by a bonfire with other 'actors', both local and itinerant. On return to Leicester, the weather may well be no better but the costume would necessarily change to fit the 'frame', in which the props would no longer be required, the jargon would appear affected and the demands of the nine to five would preclude the drinks on the beach. The local surfers left behind might well also be in full time employment but the 'frame' allows them to remain, 'stoked', by the fire. Although they share the frame, they play different roles in it, in which meanings around localism,

experience and ownership, indeed ideology, are contested. These meanings are articulated through the language they use and also by the 'props' and 'costumes' adopted: in other words, the clothing culture.

Extending Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor, could it be argued that certain props and costumes create or at least influence the roles we play? In the example above, the holidaymaker more accustomed to city shoes or trainers might adopt the pace and gait associated with surfers not through conscious or subconscious imitation but because flip flops demand a slower, shuffling walk. The agency of inanimate objects such as these is explored in the work of French philosopher Bruno Latour (b 1947).

Actor Network Theory

Initially appearing in the field of sociology of science, Actor Network Theory (or ANT) was developed in the nineteen eighties and nineties by French philosopher Bruno Latour and Michel Callon (1998) as a critique of conventional sociological theory. In *We Have Never Been Modern*, published in France in 1991, Latour rejects modernity's dualistic distinction between nature and society. He demonstrates that complex contemporary issues such as climate change cannot be easily classified as matters pertaining to either nature or culture. Indeed, Latour believes, this Modernist distinction has never been possible; thus we have never been Modern. He goes on to propose that the intricate webs of discourse around science, politics and popular culture which surround such issues must be studied with natural and 'social' phenomena, not as separate threads but as 'hybrids' (edition 1993:15). For Latour, surf culture

would be just such a hybrid: it is a social phenomenon but one which is dependent on the vicissitudes of natural phenomena. The development of surf clothing, boards and visual ephemera is explored and developed in discourses of science, fashion, politics, economics and even spirituality (Westwick & Neuschul 2013).

In his 1988 essay, "Expanding The Prince to Redefine Democracy", Latour uses Machiavelli's text to illuminate how, for him, 'It is impossible to grasp the modern forms of power if we do not first understand that what is called 'society' and what is (wrongly) called 'technology' are two artefacts created simultaneously and symmetrically by analysts who have too narrow a definition of power to track down the powerful' (1988:22). He goes on to ask, 'why not delegate some powers to a few non-human actors that would thus be in charge of their fellow non-human actors? Why not invent a sociology and a politics of the things themselves?' (1988:40) and suggests that the traffic light is designed to replace the policeman's arms at a busy junction. However, for Latour, no one 'thing' – be it an object, a force of nature or a social phenomenon – can be simply replaced by another, particularly a 'social function' in order to explain what it expresses. Society, for Latour, is, after all, just another 'thing' as he later argues in *Reassembling the Social* (2005). The irreplaceability of things he terms 'unique adequacy' (2000:112). It is this unique advocacy that provides the agency of all human and non-human actors.

Latour's best-known example of this agency is the door, developed over a number of journal articles in the 1980s and 1990s. Humans need to move

between enclosed spaces through 'holes' but, he explains, 'the problem is that if you make holes in the walls, anything and anyone can get in and out (bears, visitors, dust, rats, noise). So architects invented this hybrid: a hole-wall, often called a door' (Latour cited in Bijker & Law, eds 1992). The door, particularly the revolving door, encourages and allows people (and other 'things') to behave in particular ways; a different mechanism for controlling traffic in and out of the space would have different effects altogether. Therefore this non-human actor must have agency.

Such an actor might for example be a wetsuit. Without a wetsuit, cold water surfing, winter surfing or even surfing for prolonged periods in the summertime are impossible. It could be argued that the wetsuit has agency because it creates behaviours and relationships because of the opportunities it opens up. This might go some way to explain aspects of the St Agnes community and its clothing culture, for example the popularity of surfing today as compared to fifty years ago, before the development of the wetsuit. But it does not go far enough because 'the wetsuit' is worn all over the world by all sorts of people with social relationships that bear no resemblance to those in the ethnography. In this study, I am not as concerned with the relationship between 'person' and 'wetsuit' as I am between a specific person under scrutiny and her particular wetsuit, her options and reasons for selecting and using it and what it means to her and to others. These relationships are better explained by the more nuanced examination of the meanings derived from consumption practices derived from Appadurai, above, and from the Material Culture Studies approaches below.

Latour explains in *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory* (2005) that ANT is a means of thoroughly exploring the connections between human and non-human actors in any given 'heterogenous network'. These actors come together to create material and semiotic meaning. The relationships between actors must be constantly 'performed' if the network is to avoid collapse, and alterations between performances and relationships between actors in the network result in constant change in material and symbolic meanings.

The development of a clothing culture around surfing can be analysed as a network of symbolic and material meanings generated by the performances of related actors. Chapter four examines instances in the development of surf culture where changes in meanings occur, for example the period in the late 1960s when several local manufacturers of surfboards set up shop in the South West. Such alterations, Latour would have us believe, are the result of the introduction of new actors or the failure of existing relationships in the network. Therefore it was necessary to look into the seagoing crafts on which people took to the surf prior to this development and the status of their availability, as well as the individuals who set up shop and who bought these new products, and to take into account developments in the local economy (Callon 1988). In addition the discourses of science, craft and technology around board design, and of popular culture, travel and tourism, leisure and sport which contributed to the meaning of surfing in the area come under scrutiny throughout the study.

However, from my perspective, Latour's approach is best confined to the discussion of historical context and of limited use in the analysis of the relationships between people, things and meanings that follow. As Daniel Miller explains, 'by placing the emphasis on objects... rather than on artefacts, we do lose something of that quality of the artefact redolent with prior historical creativity. It is the artefact which is the focus of habitus and indeed much of recent material culture studies' (Miller ND). In other words, Latour's approach is somewhat incompatible with Bourdieu's.

Bourdieu's approach was established earlier as an effective means of theorising the relationship between taste (in activities, often, but also in artefacts or things), and relationships based on social class. Class is the focus of some of chapter six, Consumption, but chapters five and seven look at other relationships between people and things, based on gender, age, ethnicity and regional identity. Whilst these are by no means distinct from class - all intersect with one another - Bourdieu's work does not really explore them. Whereas Daniel Miller brings all of these concepts into material culture studies, providing a useful model for my analysis. According to Buchli, material culture studies derives from anthropology and deals with 'the socially constituted and materialised physical artefact' (Buchli 2002:11), in other words, with all aspects of what we can term 'social', which include, but are not limited to social class.

Material Culture

According to Miller, 'the key theories of material culture developed in the 1980s demonstrated that social worlds were as much constituted by materiality as the

other way around (e.g. Bourdieu 1977; Appadurai 1986; Miller 1987)' (Miller 1998:1) and in fact, 'human values do not exist other than through their objectification in cultural forms' (1998:19). Here Miller summarises his main philosophical concern, which is to demonstrate how objectification transcends the assumed dualism between subject and object. He asserts that 'objects make us, as part of the very same process by which we make them....ultimately there is no separation of subjects and objects' (2010:60).

In order to justify this position, Miller examines Georg Willheim Friedrich Hegel's (1770-1831) dialectic view of history. This view was the basis of the work of Karl Marx, (1818-1883) who, according to Miller, 'applied [Hegel's] ideas to our development of the material world,' finding that 'our social evolution consists not of advances in consciousness per se but in our increasing capacity to create an artificial world from nature' (2010:58). For Hegel, when an idea is externalised, it becomes material: thoughts become things. But such things can oppress us if they gain autonomy and we lose the consciousness that they began as nothing more than human thought. Marx, according to Miller, draws strongly on this notion, developing it into the idea of the alienation of labour, in which the workers falsely believe the material world is not of their making but a product of capitalism. Objects, then, are fetishised or 'reduced to the commodities provided by capitalism' (2010:60). But for Hegel, Miller explains, objectification is the process by which we extend ourselves and increase our capability as humans; objects which have been turned against us are merely a contradiction in the process. Therefore Georg Simmel's (1858-1918) work is more useful when attempting to formulate a theory of material culture.

Like Appadurai, discussed earlier, Miller draws on Simmel's work on exchange and value. Simmel's position, often described as functionalist or relativist, is better described as relationalist. He observed that society is constituted by the shifting interactions between human beings, rather than being subject to any immutable laws; further, that all things have meaning only in relation to other things. 'Simmel points out that modern science has moved away from the old viewpoint where...phenomena were stable, God-given entities, to a processual, dynamic conception of the world' (Kaern, Phillips and Cohen 1990:80). This dynamic relationship between people, and between people and things, forms the basis of his theoretical stance on fashion.

As industrialisation developed, mass production made new clothing increasingly available to individuals of all social classes, encouraged consumption and drove fashion change. Against the backdrop of the city's 'fickle and rapid shifts of impressions and alliances' (Simmel 1997:56), the masses would endeavour to mimic the preferences of the elite whilst those of high status would reject styles of clothing worn by the masses. Hence the rapid and continuous change of style and the discarding of serviceable garments that characterise fashion, or as Simmel called it, *sozialmode*. Dressing according to one's place and one's aspirations in this 'trickle down' system is distinct from *personalmode*, one's personal style, which for Simmel is found somewhere between the desire to conform to *sozialmode* and other norms, and the desire to assert one's individuality. Paradoxically, we all feel this same desire, and so there can be no

true individuality. What there can be, from the perspective of this study, is agency in the selection of material goods which express this push and pull.

Returning to Miller, he comments that Simmel was 'one of the very few social theorists who thought about the sheer quantitative increase in stuff that arose in the nineteenth century in which he lived' (2010:61), concluding that in the metropolis, 'we try and relate to too many things, but have no substantial relationship to any one of them...[and are thus]...reduced, rather than expanded by the sheer quantity of things.' (2010:62). Simmel is in line with Hegel in seeing the growth in the quantity of 'stuff', in the rate of objectification, as inherently contradictory.

Miller goes on to demonstrate, with reference to anthropological studies, that this contradiction (ie of objectification) 'is not just a feature of modern capitalist culture...but is intrinsic to the very process we describe as culture'. (Miller 2013:64) Thus in the chapters to follow, these contradictions are explored. For example the ways in which the material culture around surfing both extends the capacities of human beings – such as the adoption of sunglasses, which allow for comfort and safety in the sun and near the water – and oppresses them. These same sunglasses, made for a pittance in developing countries, are very much at odds with the rejection of the Western work ethic so beloved of surfing that was discussed in respect of Canniford's (2006) work in the last chapter, and which will be developed in the following.

If we are to accept that, in spite or even because of the contradictions inherent in objectification, it is that which we create, what Miller terms 'stuff', that 'is' us, then today's consumer culture is more interesting than ever. The contemporary consumer landscape in the UK is not a wilderness punctuated by metropolitan centres of excessive material availability, as perhaps nineteenth century Germany was for Simmel. Rather, the market forces of the digital economy have driven the expansion of consumer choice to the very edges of the provinces via internet shopping. Previously obscure and exotic items can today be acquired at the click of a mouse. Many texts on surf culture, for example Ormrod's (2008) study, limit the discussion to before the 1980s when they consider surfing to have become too mainstream an activity to be considered subcultural. The literature on subculture was reviewed in the previous chapter and informs the following three, but my point here is that in respect of consumption, not just surfing but almost anything can be considered mainstream because we can acquire almost anything we like. Therefore the specific goods that are selected from these near limitless opportunities can present an incredibly rich picture of the communities in which they are enjoyed.

Miller's output has spanned over twenty years and his material culture studies have covered a range of topics, none of them surfing or surf culture related. Indeed at first glance his chapter in Victor Buchli's edited collection, *The Material Culture Reader* (2002), appears to have no relevance whatsoever to this project. However, "Coca Cola: A Black Sweet Drink From Trinidad" provides a sophisticated model for understanding meanings of consumption in

context and its approach can be applied to the surf clothing preferences in my research site. Therefore a closer look at how Miller applies the philosophical approach described above in this particular case is worth examining in detail as a model for my own methodology.

Miller provides a long introduction to the article, providing a context for his desire to study that most ubiquitous of consumer products, Coca Cola. He begins by arguing that when approaching what appear to be novel topics, 'what is required, at least at first, are traditional forms of grounded and holistic ethnography that are devoted to examining the consequences of consumption for all aspects of people's social and cultural lives' (2002:238). The goods associated with surf culture have been overlooked in critical literature and could therefore be construed as 'novel' even if in fact consumption of such goods in the South West dates back at least eighty years, a relationship that will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

In the chapter itself, Miller describes how Coca Cola has become for some, a meta-commodity, a consumer item which 'stands for the debate about the materiality of culture....a dangerous icon that encourages rhetoric' (2001:246), just as the swastika is no longer just a symbol but a symbol which stands in for the meaning of signs. Miller has misgivings with approaches to consumption lacking in nuance, which, he claims, allow academics to treat Coca Cola as 'a general Capitalism, Imperialism, Americanisation etc.' (2002:261) which is exactly the 'kind of plateau' of universal acceptance and meaning that the Coca Cola Corporation would like to push it on to. In a small challenge to capitalism,

Miller's study would rob the drink of its universal 'meta' status and reveal that in some quarters, specifically in Trinidad, it is nothing more than one of many fizzy drinks available.

In a detailed and historically specific analysis of the preferences of two ethnic groups on the island, Miller explores the meanings that have attached themselves over time to Coke and other mass-produced drinks available in Trinidad. He explores the ways in which Coca Cola is positioned in the minds of the consumers rather differently to the brand image the company executives and marketeers hope to promote, at least in part because of the ways in which it is locally produced and distributed. This approach can be fruitfully applied to the mass-produced consumer goods consumed in my research site. Clothing, in particular, takes on and communicates meaning within culture sharing groups which could never have been planned or anticipated by the producers- an example might be the Fedora hats worn by Peruvian women that were produced for men to wear. Garments, accessories and surfing ephemera can have known or assumed provenance, and are sold locally, nationally or acquired online.

The relationships between producers, sellers and consumers is as Miller points out, complex and far from one sided in terms of its power dynamic: Coca Cola may be the biggest selling drink on Earth but in spite of its enormous marketing budget and competitive unit price to bottling franchise holders, it is unable to acquire more than a 35% market share in Trinidad. Similarly, the global

surfwear and lifestyle companies that dominate the mainstream sometimes struggle to maintain a foothold in the site of this study.

‘Stuff’ is not just consumed. It is also produced. It is crucial to insist at this point that the material culture of surfing in the region is not merely a matter of the consumption of goods; it is also a matter of their production. As Miller points out,

to endeavour to investigate a commodity in its local context, there are actually two such contexts, one of production and distribution and the other of consumption. These are not the same and they may actually contradict each other to a surprising extent. There is an important general point here in that Fine and Leopold (1993) have argued with considerable force that consumption studies have suffered by failing to appreciate the importance of the link to production which may be specific to each of what they call 'systems of provision', i.e. domains such as clothing, food and utilities....while production and consumption should be linked, they (Leopold & Fine) may be wrong to assume that this is because each domain evolves its own local consistency as an economic process. Quite often they do not. (Miller in Buchli (ed) 2014:259)

Stopping short of suggesting that a ‘system of provision’ emerged in the material culture around surfing in South West England, chapter four explores the necessity for home grown surfing kit and clothing in a period when imported items were hard to come by. It establishes that a tradition of production around surfing activities was established and developed in the region in the twentieth century and continues today. Although almost any consumer goods are easily sourced online nowadays, there is by no means homogeneity in the culture of surfing, with a preference in St Agnes for items with a link to the area. This will

be fully explored in the following chapters, but first I want to provide a theoretical basis for these preferences.

The notion of the consumer as passive has been widely discredited in the work of Grant McCracken (1998, 2005), who reappraises Simmel's theory of 'trickle down fashion' for the twenty first century to incorporate variables other than social class, such as gender. In view of my own criticisms of Bourdieu, McCracken's approach to examining stratification is clearly a useful analytical tool. McCracken begins by stating, in agreement with Miller et al that 'the consumer goods on which the consumer lavishes time, attention and income are charged with cultural meaning,' which is used to 'express cultural categories and principles, cultivate ideals, create and sustain lifestyles, construct notions of the self and create (and survive) social change' (1988:xi). In other words, the consumer takes an active epistemological and social role. He further asserts that, 'without consumer goods, certain acts of self-definition and collective definition would be impossible.' (1988:xi). Rather, the selection, use and display of goods which reflect or undermine current definitions of good taste operate, not in a syntagmatic sense as suggested by Lurie (1988) and others, but on a symbolic level in which the meanings in goods are used, consciously and unconsciously, to construct social formations of the self, the group and Others in historically and culturally specific contexts.

Judy Atfield's *Wild Things* (2000) examines 'the interactive role of physical manufactured objects in the making of the modern world into a human place' (2000:1), focusing on 'that larger part of the designed object's biography when it

is no longer sacred, when it forms part of the disordered everyday clutter of the mundane, and joined the disarray of wild things that don't quite fit anywhere – the undisciplined' (2000:5). These everyday objects, or 'wild things', she explains, 'enter the realm of the ordinary [where] they evade notice and become absorbed into peoples' lives where they are no longer 'a taste thing', but become part of an individual's personal possessions that go towards forming a sense of individuality within a group that share the same values' (2000:6). Attfield's approach, which pays attention to the often mass-produced and unremarkable designed objects of the everyday, is adopted by my study in chapters four to seven. The focus of these chapters is clothing, and as Attfield points out, 'textiles present a particularly apposite object type to illustrate how things are used to mediate the interior mental world of the individual, the body and the exterior objective world beyond the self through which a sense of identity is constructed and transacted within social relations' (2000:123). Drawing on de Certeau (1988) and Winnicott (1991), Attfield weaves together an interdisciplinary argument which convinces me that 'textile presents the genre of artefacts ideally suited as exemplar, or better still metaphor, for the study of material culture in general, and in particular the ephemeral materiality of identity in the context of current material culture' (2000:126)

One must also consider that consumers and producers of material culture are not mutually exclusive categories, particularly in respect of those operating small businesses, independent traders and the host of craft-workers creating pieces in their spare time for sale on trading websites like eBay and Etsy.

Angela McRobbie explored the workings of a London-based 'cultural workers' such as musicians and fashion designers in her books, *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry* (1998) and *The Culture Society: Art, Fashion and Popular Music* (1999). In both texts, she applies a cultural studies perspective in order to locate pockets of creative cultural resistance by individuals and groups who are marginalised by race, gender or social class, in what she views as a postmodern or late capitalist culture. McRobbie's study is very much derived from its urban setting and the cultural plurality found in it; this study concerns a rural, coastal area not renowned for its diversity, nor indeed for the richness of its cultural production. But the smug assumption that London is the nursery of all creativity has been challenged by the field of regional studies, for example by Caroline Chapain and Roberta Comunian (2014), who argue that infrastructure has a vital role to play in the fostering of creative enterprise. With exponential advances being made in digital communication and commerce aspects of this infrastructure are constantly developing and providing a basis for the creative industries in the regions to thrive, with Cornwall enjoying rapid expansion of its creative output. It is in this context that McRobbie's concept of resistance through creativity is applied in forthcoming chapters, which explore what diversity might mean in the context of a small Cornish village.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses and justifies the use of the theoretical approaches I have selected to approach research questions, the first of which is, *how does the origin and development of surfing in the region, now known as 'the centre of UK surfing' (Mansfield 2013:11) relate to the contemporary clothing culture?*

The work of Pierre Bourdieu is identified as the heart of the inquiry. His insistence that taste in practices and objects illuminates the field of social relations sits somewhere between structuralist determinism and constructivist agency, a position that is open to charges of illogicality. But such charges, even taken together with my own misgivings, deriving from Bourdieu's lack of engagement with sub- and counter-cultures, do not substantially undermine the validity of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field, which are used extensively in his study where it examines social class; moreover Wacquant's work on boxing subcultures, drawing on these concepts and developing new approaches to the notion of 'capital', provides an excellent example of the effectiveness of their application in another context.

Arjun Appadurai's analysis of exchange of value in the context of globalism and his five 'flows' of cultural exchange emerge as highly relevant to this study, underpinning the importance of complex web of contextual considerations taken into account in the forthcoming chapters. Appadurai's insistence on the constant re-appraisal of relationships between people and things in the shifting contexts of Modernity as it evolves is acknowledged in the analytical chapters to follow, which provide a rich picture of the dynamic nature of a culture-sharing group and their changing relationships to the material goods they consume. In addition this insistence provides justification for the ethnographic methodology I employ and which is discussed in the next chapter.

Symbolic Interactionism draws together the approach to epistemology held by both Bourdieu and Appadurai, and which underpins this work. Goffman's dramaturgical approach, which appears to resolve the contradictions in Bourdieu's philosophical position, additionally provides a degree of justification for the limited use of Latour's ANT in assembling a history which takes into account both human and non-human actors. This is applied to some extent in chapter four where I examine the development of surfing in the area. However, the grand sweep of ANT is too generalist an approach to use widely in a close synchronic examination of a small community.

A more appropriate approach is found in Daniel Miller's material culture studies, where the premise that 'stuff' is an expression of who we are, made manifest by the process of objectification, leads to the anthropological search for specific meanings of specific objects in specific contexts. This is an approach which is highly applicable to my main area of interest, apparel, since it draws heavily on Georg Simmel, whose nineteenth century writings analysed fashion as a phenomenon or system which revealed much about the organisation and reorganisation of social groups in the period. Simmel's work is also of interest to Grant McCracken, who views consumption as culturally constitutive, and who takes into account not just social class but gender; this approach informs my own analysis of the clothing culture of the sample area, which seeks to draw a nuanced picture of meanings expressed and embodied around gender and sexuality, consumption and local identity as well as the Bourdieusian concern of social class.

However, as I established earlier, the theoretical approaches employed here are based on texts which in the main were written in a pre-digital age, or which do pay little attention to the significance of digital communication and commerce in contemporary consumption practices. Whilst digital ethnographies have been carried out in recent years, such as those led by Sarah Pink's research group at the RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, these studies have focused on the use of the digital by the ethnographer (Murthy 2008, Boellstorff et al 2012, Pink et al 2016) or on online communities (Boyd 2014 et al). This study is unique in its examination of the sample area's uses of the digital in the construction of its material culture. Thus the aim of my study is at least in part to acknowledge the enormously increased role that digital technologies have had since Appadurai first wrote about 'technoscapes'.

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CHAPTER THREE

Research Methods

This chapter works the philosophical underpinnings of the research into a methodological framework. It begins with a discussion of how an interpretivist position lends itself to an ethnographic approach. It then goes on to explain and justify the specific ethnographic practices I have undertaken with reference to the philosophical and theoretical texts discussed in the previous chapter, and also to the work of sociologist Karen O' Reilly (2011), who has written extensively on the application of philosophical models to ethnographic methodology (2000, 2008, 2011).

The details of the methods used to acquire ethnographic data are then set out and justified, drawing on the methodologies used by Miller (1998, 2008, 2010), Woodward (2008) et al discussed in the previous chapter. Having established a working definition of a 'culture sharing group' in the previous chapter, this chapter provides details of how I selected the group; how, when and where my observations were made, and who was perceived to be a member of the group at any given time.

The process of identifying opportunities for purposive sampling is then set out, drawing on the latest thinking on data by Gray (2014) and others. The data gathering opportunities are contextualised within the broader methodology, and I go on to explain how the study of the uses of clothing worn at these events

provide a thick description of the social structures and relationships embodied therein.

The limitations of the methodology are then evaluated, leading to a discussion of the means of analysing the data which is employed in the chapters to follow, deriving from the theoretical model developed in the previous chapter. Finally it is established that the methodology employed has provided sufficient data to produce a highly detailed description and nuanced analysis of the ways in which the clothing culture of a surfing community in North Cornwall embodies and articulates discourse.

Interpretivism in Practice

As I established above, interpretivism posits that there is no objective epistemological relationship between subjects and anything else. As Gray puts it, 'there is no, direct, one-to-one relationship between ourselves (subject) and the world (object). The world is interpreted through the classification schemas of the mind (Williams and May 1996)'. (Gray 2014:23). A subject interprets reality according to her unique subject position, informed by her life experiences and the discourses with which she comes into contact. Therefore the researcher who adopts this approach must examine the unique responses of individual subjects in specific historical and cultural contexts. 'Researchers have to study a subject's actions, objects and society from the perspective of the subjects themselves. In practice, this can mean entering the field setting and observing at first-hand what is happening'. (Gray 2014:24). Ethnography, then, is an appropriate methodology for the interpretivist, and is one that is widely adopted

in material culture studies (Miller 2008 et al) suggesting its usefulness in the study of clothing culture.

Sociologist Karen O' Reilly begins an overview of ethnographic methodologies by admitting that ethnography is 'difficult to define because it is used in different ways in different disciplines with different traditions' (O'Reilly 2011:1), but goes on to agree with social psychologist Stephanie Taylor (2002) that it should essentially involve 'empirical work, especially observation, with the aim of producing a full, nuanced, non-reductive text, however that is defined or interpreted by each author' (O'Reilly 2011:1). She concludes that

ethnography at least (in its minimal definition) is iterative-inductive research (that evolves in design through the study), drawing on a family of methods, involving on direct and sustained contact with human agents, within the context of their daily lives (and cultures), watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions and producing a richly written account that respects the irreducibility of human experience, that acknowledges the role of theory, as well as the researcher's own role, and that views humans as part object, part subject. (O'Reilly 2011:2).

O'Reilly's 'minimal' definition provides a useful introduction for the remainder of the chapter, which, having already established the role of theory, provides a more detailed, 'maximal' account of how an ethnographic approach is applied in this study.

From Methodology to Methods

As O'Reilly states, ethnography does not generally work from a pre-selected hypothesis, rather lets one emerge from fieldwork. This hypothesis can then be operationalised, tested and modified. With this in mind, having conducted the majority of the literature review that appears in chapter two, I set out to undertake primary research for this study with an open mind, hoping to look at the clothing culture of a specific area. At the outset my focus was broad, with the aim of answering the first of my research questions: *how are surfing identities constructed through clothing cultures in Cornwall?*

The preliminary stage of my research took me around the region seeking out appropriate locations for more in depth ethnographic observation and participation whilst continuing to gather information from museums, archives and collections (see appendix 4). I conducted interviews with local historians and well-known figures in surf culture that could provide information about the development of surfing in the region. This led to a more focused ethnographic study in St Agnes, a village in North Cornwall, which, along with continued archival and associated secondary research, helped to answer my second research question: how do cultural and commercial communities mediate between local, global and virtual cultures of surfing? Assisted by theory, purposeful sampling at pre-selected events in St Agnes helped me to tackle my final research concern: the interplay of influence between the clothing culture of surfing and wider cultures of fashion and style, both in and out of the water.

Contextual Research and Early Fieldwork

Whilst a wealth of information was available in my university library or through inter-library loan, visits to more specialist libraries and archives were necessary to gain detailed contextual information with which to interrogate established narratives around surfing. Throughout the research process I made use of the British Library in London. Additional material was found in the Library of Cornish Studies, the Royal Cornwall Museum, Penlee House Museum in Penzance, the National Railway Museum in York, the Fashion Museum, Bath, the archives of the Worthing Museum and innumerate online archives that are listed in the bibliography. I made several visits to the Museum of British Surfing in Braunton, Devon and the National Maritime Museum, Falmouth. Additionally I visited a number of private collections of surf memorabilia and artefacts. See also appendix 4 which details the research locations in list form.

Further material was gathered in support of the artefacts and documents gathered from museum and archive work through recorded interviews with individuals who are known to have an interest in surfing activities in the region. These included collectors, local historians, retailers and designers of surf apparel and equipment, publishers of surf related magazines and books, surf photographers and artists, those involved with Surf Life Saving Associations (SLSAs) and the Royal National Lifeboat Association (RNLI), surfers, watermen and beachgoers. A table of interviewees appears in appendix 1. Each of these early interviews was pre-arranged by telephone or email, conducted in their place of work, and lasted around thirty minutes to an hour. In each case an information leaflet and consent form (appendices 2 and

3) was given to the respondent and their permission was asked to record the exchange. The interviews were semi structured, with a range of questions prepared in advance to encourage the interviewee to expand on aspects of the development and current state of surfing in the UK, their particular connection with it, and where relevant the artefacts they had collected or the work they had published on the subject. However, these long interviews also provided ample opportunities for the respondent to introduce any subject they felt relevant. The interviews ended with a request for an introduction to a potential further source of information.

The method of selecting and recruiting interviewees initially used was snowball sampling, which 'identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information rich' (Miles & Huberman 1994:28). Also known as opportunistic sampling, this method, useful for 'reaching difficult-to-access or hidden populations' (Tracy 2012:43) begins with a single source of information, in my case the surfer and historian Roger Mansfield, as a point of entry into the field of research. Individuals are recommended as knowledgeable by the original source and are deemed to be valid sources by virtue of this recommendation. As Sarah J Tracy points out, the method 'can quickly skew to one type of group, clique or demographic (as participants tend to suggest others who are similar to themselves)' (Tracy 2012). However, since this approach was confined to the collection of contextual information and purposive sampling was used for the material culture analysis, snowball sampling was an appropriate method for this part of the research. In addition, the recommendation of one source by another often came with email or telephone

introduction, persuading sometimes reluctant interviewees to spend time with me on the project.

The picture that began to emerge from reviewing the literature and the contextual research was of a region with a clothing culture that was as diverse and fluid as the surfing activities, bodies and identities which to some extent both constitute and are constituted by this regional culture. Therefore a specific site for an ethnographic study had to be identified in order to avoid generalisations about 'the South West' and instead to provide a thick description of a far smaller sample area.

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Many of the surfing activities enjoyed in the region make little impression on the critical literature around it, as I commented in the *Literature Review*. Bodyboarding and its variants are seldom discussed in academic or popular texts on surfing. As I explained in the introduction to this thesis, it became clear during the early contextual research that bellyboarding is a variety of wave riding which precedes stand up surfing in the UK by at least forty years and is still practiced in Cornwall today; the history of the activity is explored fully in the following chapter. In order to address the gap in the literature by acknowledging the significance of this marginalised form of surfing, the location selected was one with strong ties to both bellyboarding and stand-up surfing, and is discussed below.

The Ethnography

The ethnographic tradition developed following the work of Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) in the Trobriand Island group in the Melanesia. Malinowski was unable to return to his studies at the London School of Economics (LSE) after an earlier research trip in New Guinea owing to his Austrian citizenship at the outbreak of the First World War, but these circumstances prompted the Austrian government to fund his ongoing anthropological research overseas for the duration of hostilities. Malinowski lived 'in the field' with the islanders for four years, making detailed records based on what he termed participatory observation. His insider perspective provided the insight required to understand complex social structures and rituals among the local people that had heretofore been obscure, and to extrapolate from them profound theories on the exchange of gifts. Malinowski's participant observation fieldwork has subsequently become the gold standard of ethnography and has been increasingly applied to culture-sharing groups much closer to the home of the ethnographer, such as Paul Willis' biker gangs in *Profane Culture*, first published in 1978, and Loic Wacquant's *Body and Soul: Ethnographic Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer* (2003) discussed earlier.

As David Gray explains, 'according to Hall (2000), the best the ethnographer can achieve is to negotiate a position which one is in some way "at home" and considered as "one of us" without being completely immersed' (Gray 2014:445). Just nine miles from Truro, the town in which I lived before and during the research, St Agnes is one of four surfing locales which Truro residents would term 'local', the others being Perranporth, Porthtowan, Portreath and Holywell

Bay (see map, figure 3.1), accessible in less than an hour's drive and surfed regularly by some Truronians. Therefore I was in the position of being 'one of us' as a local resident, but not a resident of the village per se. The Geordie accent I owe to my birthplace in Newcastle has softened considerably in the twenty or more years I have lived elsewhere but still identifies in me in Cornwall as hailing from 'upcountry', roughly defined as anywhere beyond Plymouth. But it is certainly not the case that all residents of St Agnes share a regional Cornish accent; indeed, many have travelled from far afield to live in the local area and have been able to immerse themselves in the community as I have in nearby Truro, a theme I explore in chapter five, Space and Place. As an occasional warm weather bodyboarder, I am as much of a surfer as several of the people I interviewed and many of the residents of the area, in that I occasionally take part in an activity that is broadly categorised as surfing, but I was not so 'completely immersed' in surf culture that I was unable to find any degree of objectivity.

John Cresswell has it that 'in ethnography...well-defined studies of single culture sharing groups [are conducted] with numerous artefacts, interviews and observations collected until the workings of the cultural group are clear' (Cresswell 2007:128). The study was already defined as a material culture study, because as Victor Buchli suggests, 'the production and waste of objects and their constitution and dissipation are the two sides of the larger processes of materialization that facilitate the terms of social life, perpetuating its inclusions and exclusions as well as reworking and challenging them' (Buchli (ed) 2002:17). The focus was to be on clothing, since dress is both visual and

material and in contemporary Western society is purchased and discarded with increasing frequency, making it a fruitful area of material culture study; in addition it has been an area of interest to the theorists whose ideas underpin this study, from Simmel's dyad of individuality and conformity (Simmel 1903), through Bourdieu's (1977) comments on French fashion in the 1970s, to Miller's work with Sophie Woodward on the uses denim (2010).

The culture sharing group was more difficult to define and demarcate. As noted in the literature review, subculture might not be a fully applicable term to surfers but clearly surfing is a minority pursuit. But does one have to surf in order to participate in surf culture? As I established above, the existing literature on surfing legitimises stand-up surfing, excluding a range of activities such as body-boarding and bellyboarding. There is significant overlap in participation in these activities in the South West as a whole, with the narrower definition of surfing puzzling many of my interviewees who disliked or failed to understand the reason for distinction between one kind of wave riding and another. This broader definition that encompasses the range of surfing activities still fails to incorporate many of the individuals participating in surf culture, or the activities around surfing.

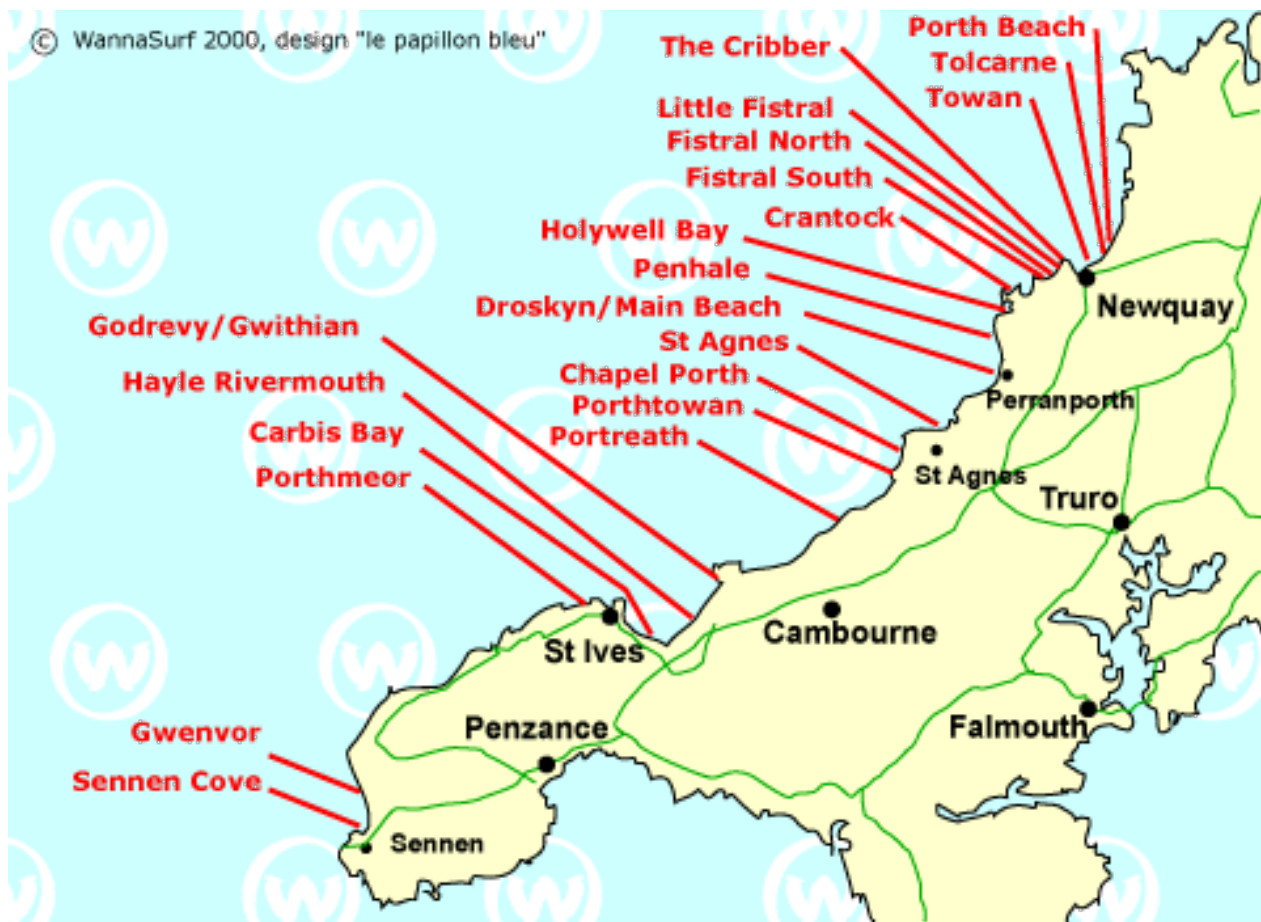


Figure 3.1
Map of surfing locations in Cornwall showing Truro (inland, to the East) and the proximity of St Agnes on the North coast

In Wacquant's study of boxing gyms in Chicago (2003), non-boxers and women are absent, because the gymnasia are male-only facilities in which all workers and clients share an interest in boxing, from the janitor to the participant observer anthropologist. This is clearly not analogous to surfing communities, much less prescribed and more amorphous interest groups with no official membership, a range of commercial and non-commercial affiliations and participants invested in the activity for just an afternoon, as a professional athlete, or as a non-participant who is nevertheless steeped in surfing in support of loved ones. It seems to me that the culture of surfing in Cornwall is shared by all who come into more or less regular contact with any of the artefacts, endeavours and activities around any of the forms of wave riding practiced in the area. Therefore the culture-sharing group had to reflect this inclusive definition of surf culture.

I will provide a rich description of my research location, St Agnes, in the chapters that follow, but it is worth discussing its relevance from a methodological perspective here. St Agnes was selected as a sample site because it is a community bound together by a shared love of surfing. Home to 3,900 year-round residents, much of the commercial activity in the village is related to surfing. St Agnes also boasts a longstanding local surfing heritage. Prior to St Agnes' Surf Life Saving Association (SLSA) being founded in 1953, there was only one in the UK: Bude, founded the year before. The club is twinned with the far better known SLSA at Bondi Beach, Sydney. Commercial surf schools and individual stand-up surfers share the water at the village's two

beaches with bellyboarders and bodyboarders as well as sea swimmers, snorkelers, paddleboarders, canoeists, and others. St Agnes is also home to an international environmental pressure group, Surfers Against Sewage (SAS), and head office of Finisterre, a specialist surfwear company with worldwide online sales and a shop in London's Soho. The village hosted the annual World Bellyboarding Championships (WBBC), sponsored by the National Trust until the event was officially discontinued in 2017. Surfer or non-surfer, contact with surf culture in the village is unavoidable and participation to some degree highly likely. Surfing is deeply embedded in almost all residents' way of life.

In the tradition of Malinowski, anthropologists have spent long periods in the field, meaning their site of study, observing what people say, what people do, and what people say they do. Miller, for example, spent periods of time participating and observing in India (1985) and in the Caribbean (1994). But more recently his ethnographic focus has been on cultures closer to home, resulting in fascinating studies on the lives of au pairs in the UK (Burikova & Miller, 2010) and the uses of social media in an English village (2016). The techniques employed are no different when observing an 'exotic' culture to one that is more familiar, and assumptions must be avoided in either case; rather, close, uncritical observation of the minutiae of daily life must be conducted.

Thus I spent time in the village observing day to day life and events in the local calendar over the course of the research, beginning in early 2013. The methodological approach discussed in the previous chapter suggested three areas to examine: consumption, embodiment and space and place. With these

strands in mind, I attended community events such as clothes swaps, beach cleans and socials, beer festivals and other events in the local pubs, and local celebrations of national festivals such as the switching on of Christmas lights, Guy Fawkes fireworks and Halloween celebrations. I also went to annual local events such as the St Agnes Carnival each August, and Bolster Day in April, a folk pageant dating back at least two hundred years celebrating the defeat on the cliffs near the village of a fierce Cornish Giant (the Bolster) in local mythology. I read local papers and magazines *The West Briton* and *Cornwall Today* and the circular *The Bolster*, and subscribed to websites and social media attached to as many St Agnes organisations and individuals as I was able to track down. My intention to create as rich as possible a picture of life in the town, the consumption practices that underpinned the clothing culture, its embodiment and the spaces and places in which it could be observed, and from these observations and interactions develop a hypothesis from which a methodology would emerge for more purposive sampling to operationalise it.

In the course of the ethnography I made a large collection of field notes. In hindsight these notes lacked a systematic approach and were instead unstructured observations gathered in a range of notebooks with varying degrees of legibility depending on how cold my hands were. Again, in hindsight, voice recording and notation apps now widely available on smartphones could have been employed to more effectively gather data. However, the notes proved valuable in providing descriptive context for the village itself, and more importantly when what was said by participants in recorded interviews was at odds with my own assessment of a given situation

or when a participant's description of their outfit did not match my own. Here I was able to examine both the participant's and my own bias, looking back on photographs that 'objectively' recorded the moment and reflecting on my own subjectivity and positioning in relation to the subjects under investigation.

Having assessed the literature around the subject and settled on theory in line with my own philosophical position and participated and observed St Agnes over the course of over two years, a hypothesis began to emerge. Surfing is widely considered to be an intrinsic part of the local identity of the South West by those inside and outside the region. It seemed to me that whilst surfing is practiced in many UK locations, in the South West, and in St Agnes in particular, it is embedded into the daily life of the community in social and economic activity and embodied by the individuals who populate the area. This embodiment is part of a material culture which is distinctive because it is largely indigenous and emergent: demand for bellyboarding and surfing goods in the region pre-dates supply from better known surfing locales, necessitating local design and manufacture and fostering a tradition of commerce and creativity around surfing which incorporates and legitimises bellyboarding and its derivatives. The clothing culture materialises and embodies notions of status, gender and local identity that emerge from the local ideoscape.

As the hypothesis developed, I continued ethnographic fieldwork and considered the means by which reliable data could be gathered by purposive sampling. According to Hazel Wright in a 2009 paper on the subject,

the label "emergent methodology" does not signify a failure to plan ahead; rather a more sophisticated recognition that data analysis is a core element in the research

design. It implies a researcher who is aware of multiple possibilities in the early stages, who selects appropriate strategies as s/he assimilates the material and begins to understand its significance and makes iterative adjustments throughout the process... it conceals an extensive period of familiarization with a broad range of research literature, involvement in a number of different small-scale research projects that [give one] a chance to use and fully understand the strengths and limitations of specific methods. (Wright 2009:62)

Like Wright's hypothetical researcher, I began with what Fetterman (1989:32) calls a 'wide net approach', speaking to everyone I could, remaining open to research possibilities until I had assimilated enough material to begin a number of small scale projects designed to gather data. As Cresswell explains, 'ethnographers rely on their judgement to select members of the subculture or unit based on their research questions. They take advantage of opportunities (ie opportunistic sampling; Miles & Huberman 1994) or establish criteria for studying select individuals (criterion sampling). The criteria for selecting who and what to study, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), are based on gaining some perspective on chronological time and in the social life of the group, people representative of the culture sharing group in terms of demographics, and the contexts that lead to different forms of behaviour' (Cresswell 2007:128). In my case, the methodology eventually selected was to some degree a combination of both opportunistic and criterion sampling.

Le Compte and Goetz' paper, "Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research" (1982), discusses how the scientific problems of reliability and validity that are applied to studies using quantitative methods can

be applied to the social sciences and qualitative ethnographic research. Reliability refers to the extent to which a study can be replicated and generate the same or similar results; validity to the degree to which its observations and analyses match what is actually observed, and to which they can be applied to other contexts. 'Ethnographers enhance the external reliability of their data by recognizing and handling five major problems: researcher status position, informant choices, social situations and conditions, analytic constructs and premises, and methods of data collection and analysis' (1982:37). Having discussed the analytic constructs and premises in the previous chapter, the following paragraphs outline the ways in which I dealt with the other four problems.

Data Collection: Social Situations and Conditions

In order to get a picture of both the outward and inward facing aspects of this tight knit community which serves the tourist industry, I chose three events at which to gather primary data through purposeful, targeted sampling. As Silverman insists, 'the choice of a purposeful sample based on logical grounds is important' (Silverman 2013:280). Although I attended many other events at which ethnographic data was collected, the bulk of the analysis in this study is based on data gathered at these three events, all held in St Agnes. The first, an event attended by members of the public, many from Cornwall but others from much further afield was the Annual World Bellyboarding Championships (WBBC) 2015. The second was a local surf competition followed by an evening awards ceremony in a nearby pub, also in 2015. The final event was a photo-shoot at the St Agnes SLSA to which selected participants were invited.

Returning to Le Compte and Goetz, it is clear that the contexts in which data were gathered must be clarified if the research is to be reliable. They write that, 'delineation of the physical, social, and interpersonal contexts within which data are gathered enhances the replicability of ethnographic studies...descriptions of contexts should include function and structure as well as specification of features' (1982:39). They comment that 'what people say and do varies according to others present at the time' (1982:39). With this in mind, the events at which data was gathered for this research were carefully selected in order to allow the participants the opportunity to talk freely without having to speak out in public, such as at a focus group. Although the earlier interviews for contextual information that I described above had been conducted with surfing professionals on a one-to-one basis, the purposive sampling undertaken here was conducted at public or semi-private events, at which the interviewees were among friends in an informal setting.

The events were also selected in order to examine the embodied material culture of the village, bearing in mind the transience of the population. When conducting the ethnography, it was clear that year round, many of the people walking around the village, browsing the shops, eating in the cafes and restaurants and surfing the waves did not live in the sample area but were regular, occasional or one off visitors. Clearly the presence of 'outsiders' contributes to the look and feel of the village and could influence the clothing culture of those who self-identify as locals. The WBBC provided an excellent opportunity to interview a wide cross-section of visitors and residents with a

shared interest in surfing pursuits. I had attended the four previous WBBCs and conducted unstructured interviews with participants and spectators, concluding that this free event attracted a broad demographic from a wide geographical area. The strong focus on a surfing pursuit which is marginalised in mainstream surf culture but enthusiastically celebrated in St Agnes was what drew attendees, whether through an avowed affinity with the activity and the local culture, or as spectators of the same. Further, it is an event explicitly concerned with clothing, and incorporates visitors temporarily into the aesthetic of the village, focusing as it does on vintage boards and swimwear.

Having attended many surf competitions in the area and conducted ad hoc interviews, I finally settled on the Buntabout 2015 as the event at which I would carry out the second tranche of purposeful data gathering. The Buntabout is a 'locals only' surfing competition, mainly for young surfers or 'grommets'. Founded in 1980 by local resident, former British Surfing Association (BSA) champion Steve Bunt, the competition is not advertised and takes place in late September, in the off-season on St Agnes' Chapel Porth beach. There are seldom tourists spectating and none are invited to enter. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 provide an indication of how sparsely attended the event is, in comparison to the WBBC. It is a very low key affair, generally watched only by those whose family members are competing, although many stars of British surfing compete without publicising the fact in advance, such local athlete Ben Skinner, ranked number five in the world when he took part in the 2014 Buntabout. It is followed in the evening by a lively prize giving ceremony in the Driftwood Spars, the local pub in nearby Trevaunance Cove. Again, having observed the event in the past

I set out to use the 2015 event as a means to acquire data on a different but possibly intersecting group to those I had approached at the WBBC.

In both of the cases above, as wide a range as possible of respondents were approached in situ in an effort to obtain a representative sample of ages, genders and ethnicities; such data on the respondents quoted appears in appendix 1. Both events presented ample opportunities to approach potential candidates in a relaxed setting where an unhurried interview could take place, outside of the competition space. At the WBBC, Chapel Porth carpark was in use as a large retail space (figure 3.2) and viewing area, which provided opportunities to talk to competitors who had completed their event as well as vendors, shoppers, spectators and casual visitors. At the Buntabout, the same physical space was used as a car park, where surfers and spectators gathered to talk and watch the event. In both cases the environment was relaxed and casual, and quiet enough to successfully take pictures and record responses. Respondents were approached in these environments and asked if they were able to spare a few minutes and interviews were carried out as detailed below. In some cases the respondents were happy to be interviewed then and there on the spot, but each was offered the opportunity to sit in the nearby open air café to talk if they preferred. All were given the information leaflet and the consent forms in appendices 2 and 3 and were told that the interview would last around five to ten minutes. They consented to have photographs taken and the audio file of the interview stored along with accompanying photographs. These interviews all followed the same basic pattern. I began by introducing the project and explaining that it was about what people wore in the local area.

There followed a series of open questions (see appendix 6). These were written in advance as prompts and after around ten interviews were no longer necessary. The questions were written on order to prompt the respondent to offer information about their occupation, where they lived, their surfing history (if any) and their thoughts about the local clothing culture. If the information was not forthcoming, the casual atmosphere allowed me to probe a little deeper where necessary.

In some cases, for example when the person I approached turned out to be a collector or historian, follow-up interviews took place at a later date in a more formal setting such as the respondent's place of work or a café and followed the pattern discussed above in respect of my contextual research.

Photographs were taken to acquire visual data and structured interviews carried out for verbal data. According to Sarah Pink, 'ethnographers should treat visual representation as an aspect of the material culture and practice of social scientists as well as a practice and material culture that is researched by social scientists. (2007:33), both as an object and as a means of study. Therefore at the WBBC and at the Buntabout, having been approached and asked to participate in the study, given an information leaflet (Appendix 3) and a consent form (Appendix 4), respondents consented to having full length photographs taken on the spot which they would then discuss, the picture having been presented to them on an iPad immediately after taking it. This meant that the photographs were a record of the clothing worn at the time. And although the photograph has just been taken, there remains an opportunity to reflect, to see

the person in the image from one step removed and to make the familiar unfamiliar. Respondents were encouraged to consider their appearance in the picture by being able to look at the photo on the iPad while they were answering the questions, many of them pointing to the image as they spoke.

Pink goes on to assert that, 'visual images are made meaningful through the subjective gaze of the viewer, and that each individual produces these photographic meanings by relating the image to his or her existing personal experience, knowledge and wider cultural discourses'. (Ibid 2007:82). The structured interviews provided questions designed to draw out this process, and to investigate the ways in which these wider cultural discourses interconnect with the respondents' subjective experiences, whilst at the same time locating the degree to which they might be described as being part of the culture sharing group.

According to Gray, Kvale (1996) suggests two metaphors for research interviews: one is a miner and the other is a traveller. 'The miner gathers up objective data that are "out there" ready to be discovered and culled. For the traveller, the interview is a journey from which stories will emerge, stemming from conversations the researcher will have along the way. The route may be planned ahead of time, but it will inevitably take unexpected twists and turns. What the traveller elicits in new knowledge depends on his/her ability to connect with people and to build relationships. (Kvale 1996 cited in Gray 2014:451). Hence my interviews took the form of open questions (see appendix 5) prompting but not pushing the respondents to divulge whatever information

they wanted to on where they lived, their employment and their level of participation in surfing. Interviewees were encouraged to go off at tangents and talk in an informal manner, with no microphone or clipboard between us with recording carried out on iPad application that ran in the background with only the photograph visible onscreen. They were encouraged to choose their favourite shot out of three or four I had taken and to discuss whatever aspect of their kit, clothing or possessions they thought worthy of mention.



Figure 3.2 View of the crowd at the WBBC 2015



Figure 3.3. View of the Buntabout 2015

Becker (1986:244 cited in Pink 2009) comments that ‘the photographs anthropologists and sociologists might take during fieldwork “are really only vacation pictures”...and Collier warns that “the photographic record can remain wholly impressionistic UNLESS it undergoes disciplined computing” (Collier 1995 [1975]: 248 cited in Pink 2009:9). Admittedly, the photographs taken during my ethnographic fieldwork provided only a snapshot of evidence of the clothing culture of the region, since ethical practices forbid the photography of anyone without consent, so no candid shots of people could be taken. But the images taken at the purposive sampling events comply with ethical guidelines and are by no means ‘vacation pictures’ of landscapes empty of people. Additionally they are similar enough in nature to warrant comparison- almost all single subject portraits- and are accompanied by the reflexive commentary by the subjects themselves. Using theory to guide me, what I hoped for was what Pink champions below:

An interlinking of cultural studies and anthropological approaches seems particularly pertinent to an ethnography that incorporates visual images and technologies. This approach recognises the interwovenness of objects, texts, images and technologies in people’s everyday lives and identities. It aims not simply to study people’s social practices or to read cultural objects or performances as if they were texts, but to explore how all types of material, intangible, spoken, performed narratives and discourses are interwoven with and made meaningful in relation to social relationships, practices and individual experiences. (Pink, 2009:7)

So the final data gathering opportunity was one I had to engineer myself. I wanted participants to comment directly on objects that they had chosen and that had meaning for them, rather than what they happened to be wearing or

carrying on the day. This was in order to find out whether there were any discrepancies between the conversations arising from this sampling opportunity and the images in the former two opportunities as well as between these and the slices of village life I had observed in the ethnography.

Informant Choices

As Le Compte and Goetz observe, 'participants who gravitate toward ethnographers and other field researchers may be atypical of the group under investigation; similarly, those sought by ethnographers as informants and confidants also may be atypical' (1982:38). People who smiled when I approached them at an event on a beach and happily had their photograph taken are not necessarily representative of the population of the sample area. Indeed one person I approached at both the WBBC and the Buntabout refused to entertain me on both occasions but arrived at the event I discuss below armed with surfing memorabilia and the desire to chat for half an hour. The final sampling opportunity had to overcome problems of reluctance to participate in order to generate more reliable data.

I began to engineer small scale projects which I hoped might generate data in the form of semi-structured interviews. There were many failed attempts to gather a sample with appropriate diversity in age and gender due to the scarcity of willing participants. 'The more one is like a participant in terms of culture, gender, race, socio-economic class and so on, the more it is assumed that access will be granted, meanings shared, and validity of the findings assured'. (Gray 2013:406). In all of the categories listed by Gray I would appear very

much in line with the prevailing demographic in St Agnes. But my outsider status as someone 'from upcountry' has been, and continues to be confirmed by residents of the village and of Cornwall generally, with varying degrees of good humour, regardless of my thirteen-year residence in the county. Although St Agnes is home to many whose place of birth is further afield than my own, it has a reputation as a 'closed' community which does not welcome outsiders, nicknamed 'The Badlands', a reputation that will be contextualised and expanded on in chapter four, Space and Place. It took a year to gain the trust of the community to the extent that I could arrange a suitable event.

Silverman comments that 'It is not uncommon for qualitative researchers to use their existing relationships and contacts for their research' (Silverman 2013:215). Fortunately, living nearby I was acquainted with a handful of St Agnes residents before the study began, including a couple who functioned as gatekeepers into the local network. A pillar of the local community, FL teaches in a local secondary school and her husband RL, a local businessman, volunteers as a lifeboatman with the Royal Naval Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). The three daughters of the family are all junior members of the Surf Life Saving Association (SLSA) and the entire family are active in a wide range of community projects. It was this family of gatekeepers that granted me access to a range of events which formed the backbone of the participant aspect of the ethnography, and through them that I was able to set up the final data gathering opportunity.

I wanted to get a much more in-depth picture of the local clothing culture and in order to do so it was necessary to carry out longer interviews with a representative sample of the village residents. Children and adolescents were not part of the ethics arrangement here, but would make a fascinating subject for further research. Adults from late teens to retirement age were required in order to represent a good cross section in a county where retirees heavily outnumber youths. Additionally, both men and women had to be approached. I hoped for ethnic diversity, but in a county where 97% of the residents identify as 'white British (ONS.org) I was prepared to accept homogeneity in that respect. Several means of acquiring a representative sample were considered and trialled, such as requesting respondents via postcard adverts in shop windows and community notice boards, contacting the local community newspaper and snowball sampling. These methods were all unsuccessful in generating sufficient response to produce a representative sample.

One possible reason for the disappointing response to these requests for participation is that my research is not the first to have been carried out in the village. A small community within easy reach of the county's only university, St Agnes had been the subject of several studies including a 2012 project entitled 'The University of the Village' examining potential uses of superfast broadband and aspects of the First Wave Project carried out by the National Maritime Museum from the same year. Around three years into this project, a colleague commented that reluctance to participate in my study might be attributed to the presence of too many research initiatives, or what he termed 'the St Agnes Effect'.

The name alludes to the widely used research term 'the Hawthorne effect'. 'The original studies that gave rise to the Hawthorne effect were undertaken at Western Electric telephone manufacturing factory at Hawthorne, near Chicago, between 1924 and 1933. Increases in productivity were observed among a selected group of workers who were supervised intensively by managers under the auspices of a research program' (McCambridge et al 2014:267). The effect concerns 'research participation, the consequent awareness of being studied, and possible impact on behaviour' (Ibid). If a number of studies had already been carried out in the village, the mere presence of yet another researcher in the village could skew the results. Thus a careful consideration of my status as 'another researcher in the village' had to be carefully considered.

Researcher Status Position

Observing and analysing 'Others', however objectively, can be an exercise of power. Atkinson et al discuss feminist approaches to ethnography and comment that 'to use and objectify others is seen to be a particularly masculine way of conducting research' and that 'the power of the researcher to objectify and 'scrutinise' the subject of research engages the researcher in a process similar to that of the male gaze'. They note that feminist researchers have been keen to find means to avoid replicating patriarchal power structures between participants and academics (2007:434). One means of so doing is reciprocity.

According to David M Fetterman, in ethnographic research the 'basic underlying ethical standards include the securing of permission (to protect individual security), honesty, trust (both implicit and explicit), reciprocity and rigorous work' (1989:14). It is important for the researcher to gain the trust of her subjects and to engage meaningfully with them. One way to do so is to demonstrate that the research is not only of benefit to the researcher, and that the interviewees will also benefit from the research in some way.

The opportunity for a reciprocal benefit arose when it transpired that the SLSA required fundraising and publicity for the provision of Lifeguarding cover in the Easter and half term holidays. Unlike the summer season, these periods were not covered by the RNLI with council funding. After a drowning in one such period in nearby Mawgan Porth (Morris 2015) and an incident in which four swimmers were rescued from huge swell off Cornwall's North coast by helicopter (Press Association 2016), the SLSA launched a voluntary initiative in which Trevaunance Cove was to be guarded by members of the SLSA during the periods when cover was not provided but swimming still occurred. FL let me know that the organisation wanted the local community, holidaymakers and local businesses to be aware of the initiative in order to raise funds for equipment in addition to the uniforms that the RNLI had provided.

I enlisted the help of LS, a photographer and colleague who had a personal interest in the club as a keen surfer and parent of a child who hoped to enlist in the Nippers programme, a scheme providing surfing and water safety lessons for under-tens. A photo shoot was set up on a Saturday morning in which

residents of the town were to be photographed as publicity for the initiative. A number of local residents of both genders and across the age range were selected by FL from the SLSA mailing list to which she had access, and invited to attend the photo shoot and at the same time be interviewed as part of this research. The decision to have FL select the interviewees was a conscious one: I asked her to try get 'a good cross section' of people from the village (Field notes 01/16) on the understanding that as a village insider she would be in a better position to judge what that was than I could. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that a different gatekeeper with a different sampling method would almost certainly have generated a different selection of interviewees. While one could never hope to fully replicate the study undertaken and thereby reproduce the results, the data gathered by these means coupled with my earlier fieldwork can provide a revealing snapshot of the sample area recognisable to those who took part.

The invited participants were informed that the photographs would be used in posters displayed around the village and flyers given out during the periods of SLSA lifeguarding cover. The respondents were not all surfers or members of the SLSA per se; their names appeared on the mailing list having entered fundraising raffles, having sent enquiries about sending their children to the club or contacted them for any other reason. They were all local residents, and in fact stakeholders in keeping the beach safe. The idea behind the posters, such as the example in figure 3.4 below, was that all residents of the village were invested in avoiding a tragedy and should therefore support the enhanced lifeguard cover initiative.

The people were asked to bring with them six objects that said something about their identity and to be prepared to have them photographed, to be photographed themselves for the posters and to be ready to participate in a recorded interview lasting no more than thirty minutes. About thirty people who FL felt would be drawn by the good cause aspect were invited and ten showed up on the day. They brought with them self-selected portable objects that belonged to them, allowing the material culture study to focus on what were deemed by the respondents to be significant material goods.

The event was informal and respondents were asked to arrive at any time between 9.30 am and 4 pm. The camera was set up on the balcony overlooking the sea for the photoshoot that would supply the poster campaign. Inside the clubhouse, objects the interviewees had brought were arranged by them and photographed by me on an iPad, (examples in figures 3.5 and 3.6) after which the respondent discussed the objects, and anything that arose from them, with me. I used a similar interview template here as I had done in the two previous sampling exercises (see Appendix 6), with similar open questions framing a discussion in the middle that was guided by the respondents. Here they talked me through the significance and history of the objects they had brought with them, and when necessary I refocused the discussion to provide information on the local clothing culture. Gray has it that 'the focused interview is based upon the respondent's subjective response to a known situation in which they have been involved. The interviewer has a priori knowledge of the situation and is, thus, able to refocus respondents if they drift



Figure 3.4. One of the posters that resulted from the purposive sampling photoshoot. There were six in total that were displayed around the village to promote the enhanced cover initiative.

away from the scene' (Gray 2014:386). The known situation here was the clothing culture of the village, towards which I steered respondents when the conversation meandered too far.

Generally, the responses were as fruitful as I had hoped, because as Pink explains, 'in PEI (Photo-Elicitation Interviewing), the researcher assumes that the images, the meaning(s) we attribute to them, the emotions they arouse in the observer, and the information they elicit generate insights that do not necessarily or exclusively correspond to those obtained in verbal inquiry.' (Bignante 2010:11 cited in Pink 2009:74). Some interviewees did bring photographs, and as Douglas Harper comments, 'when two or more people discuss the meaning of photographs, they try to figure out something together. This is, I believe, an ideal model for research' (Harper 2002:24). I worked on the principle that the same can be said of two or more people talking about an object and musing about what it means to them.

Data Analysis

The fieldwork and purposive sampling were complete by September 2015. Having collected photographs and recorded interviews at the three data gathering opportunities discussed above, I had the interviews transcribed. This resulted in over two hundred pages of text. In addition I had over a hundred pages of annotated field



Figure 3.5. BB's objects, chosen and displayed by him. A spade for family fun at the beach, a wetsuit, a folder containing RNLI lifeboat regulations, a phone and a pager were chosen to represent his identity.



Figure 3.6. EE's objects, selected and displayed by him to communicate something about his identity. They include oilskins, a compass and a ship's log book.

notes and more than thirty interviews with local contributors to surf culture. In order to draw out themes in the data I considered running the text through commercially available qualitative data analysis software such as Dedoose. The software is designed to draw out themes through algorithms that recognise recurring phrases and sort data into 'trees' in which the branches represent sub-themes. As I outlined above, I used the ethnography and the expert interviews to develop a hypothesis which I operationalised by means of purposive sampling. During the process I employed an 'open coding approach' (Strauss 1987), in which concepts were observed to emerge in interviews and field notes that were labelled or 'coded' and cross referenced with other occurrences of the same code. The data was read and re-read, tagged and colour coded fairly intuitively to reveal emerging themes. By the end of the data gathering I had begun to file coded utterances and notes under headings and subheadings and it was clear that I could continue a thematic analysis of the coding without using a software package. This was a preferable approach for me since I had read accounts of the use of software that commented on the necessity of supplementing Dedoose and other such tools with analogue methods such as using post-it notes on printed pages (Desmaris 2016), or else with tedious dragging and dropping of sections of text into trees (Tarsa 2013), which I had already done using headed and colour coded documents.

All of the comments in the purposive interviews were isolated and filed under the superordinate headings discussed above: place and space, consumption and embodiment. The comments were then re-examined re-filed into

subordinate groups of second level codes which were cross referenced under the superordinate levels by means of colour coding. These second level codes came to structure the analysis into the subheadings that have been used in the remainder of the thesis. Finally the field notes and expert interviews were consulted again and quotations taken from these were filed under the subheadings. Although a laborious process was involved, I had developed a close familiarity with the emerging themes over the course of the research. This allowed me to search for utterances in interviews and file them according to words as well as the nuance of what had been said as I heard it, rather than merely as it appeared on the page.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research methods employed in this study. I began by linking the methodological and epistemological approach from the previous chapter to ethnography as a research method well suited to an interpretivist approach. I noted that ethnography rarely begins with a hypothesis in mind, and rather that, assisted by theory, one would emerge, which indeed it did after a long period spent in the village as a participant observer.

I then set out the narrative of the research, and the reflexive process of gathering data, analysing it and noticing things, then beginning the cycle again. I discussed the broad focus of the initial research into surf culture in the South West as a whole, and how this gradually narrowed down as it emerged that surfing in the region was not confined to the stand-up surfing that dominated the literature on the subject as discussed in chapter one. I went on to discuss the

selection of a site for ethnographic research to examine the ways in which meanings around different forms of surfing are negotiated and renegotiated in context. St Agnes has an impeccable surfing pedigree and a number of events were observed to take place in the village at which interviews could be conducted. It therefore appeared to be an ideal choice for the study, but as I observed, the site is not without its problems. Research that had already been conducted in the area might have contaminated the responses given to my own research, not to mention the reputation of the village as something of a closed community. Gatekeepers allowed me to pry open this tightly knit group to some extent as I discussed. However, alternative gatekeepers might have unlocked a different aspect of the village to those that emerged from the access I was granted.

As the chapter makes clear, I took many steps to collect reliable data, including purposive sampling that examined the hypothesis that had begun to emerge. The events at which the data was gathered were discussed, and it is clear that three sampling opportunities provided a good range of responses from locals and visitors in informal public and semi-public settings. Conducting an ethnography that can produce reliable data is caught up with a number of ethical issues around data collection, the social situations and conditions in which observations are carried out and interviews are conducted, and the status position of the researcher. This chapter explored how I negotiated these issues by means of a reciprocal agreement that was designed to give real benefit to the interviewees. Again, it must be noted that the nature of the reciprocation might have influenced the self-selection of interviewees, since the posters were

to be displayed around the village and anyone camera shy would be put off appearing. However I noted that the informal semi-structured interviews centred around photographs taken by the interviewees of objects of their choosing allowed a degree of intimacy and openness in the responses which had not been available in earlier interviews. A project building on these relationships and allowing access to the homes of the subjects could be of interest for further research, but the data gathered here was sufficient to provide rich description and photographs against which to test out my hypothesis.

The data gathered in the ethnography and in the purposive sampling interviews was, as I note above, coded under headings suggested by the methodology developed in the previous chapter without the use of qualitative data sorting software. Again, it must be acknowledged that the resulting classifications might have produced a different analysis of the written text to one created digitally. But since the research was a close ethnographic examination of the village, a more human approach to sorting this data was applied that acknowledged observations made in field notes, the photographic images and the paralinguistic features of the conversations held with respondents. If ethnography is to represent a group from the perspective of an insider, then there must be a clear understanding of the historical, social, cultural and material contexts in which the study is situated. The following chapter will examine these contexts in detail.

CHAPTER FOUR

Surf Culture in Cornwall: origins, adoption and growth

The presence of surfing in Cornwall today is felt and observed everywhere in events, clubs, local news and the visible presence of surfers and the businesses that supply their interests. The county hosts a crowded calendar of local and national surfing events. Watergate Bay and Fistral Beach, perhaps the best-known Cornish surf spots, are home to both the annual English National Surfing Championships and Boardmasters surf championships and music festival, as well as a further fourteen annual events that draw spectators and contestants from around the British Isles (fistralbeach.co.uk). In lesser known surfing locations such as my sample area, the 'line-ups' of surfers waiting for suitable waves are so crowded that competitions run by local surf clubs and SLSAs must be scheduled for the off-season.

On the North coast, surf schools and surfboard hire shops that jostle for space on beach fronts and providing equipment and lessons for tourists and locals alike year-round. All varieties of surfing are catered for, with paddleboards, long and short boards, bodyboards and bellyboards for hire or sale. Surf hostels and camps service the accommodation needs of travelling enthusiasts and, like the hire shops and surf outfitters, announce their presence with images of surfing that can be seen on buses, billboards and vans county-wide (figure 4.1). Wetsuits, boardshorts and swimwear dominate the seafront shops, and clothing from surfwear brands is widely available all over the county, appearing far



Figure 4.1 A van advertising Cornish Surf Campers, a campervan hire company based in Perranporth.

inland in retail outlets and town centres. Year round, surfing dominates the local culture and commerce in Cornwall. Tourists arrive expecting to see tousle-haired locals clad in shorts, flip-flops and t-shirts and are seldom disappointed, even in the winter time.

How did surfing come to prosper and play such a crucial part in the clothing culture in Cornwall, so far from where it was first witnessed by Westerners in the South Pacific in the eighteenth century? The adoption of the pastime depended not just on suitable waves and coastal conditions but on the specific social and cultural conditions which prevailed in the region in the early twentieth century. Drawing on original interview and archival material, this chapter explores the region's close association with surfing in its many forms in the twentieth century, the material culture that developed from it, and the representations that contributed to the construction of Cornish surfing identities.

I begin by examining the development of swimming as a leisure activity in the UK, examining the clothing required to participate in it. The chapter refers to Modernist discourse around travel, tourism and leisure which accompanied the development of Hawaii and England's South West as tourist destinations where surfing activities occurred in the years leading up to the Second World War. Theories of consumption and leisure such as Thorstein Veblen's (1899) analysis of conspicuous consumption will illuminate this section.

The chapter continues with an examination of the aspects of Hawaiian surf culture that made their way into Britain in the in the twentieth century as images

proliferated and international travel became safer and more convenient. The Pacific origins of surfing are well documented (Finney 1970, Warshaw 2011 et al and Appendix 5) and are of limited relevance to the analysis of the clothing culture in St Agnes. However, the association between the visual codes associated with Hawaii and Duke Kahanamoku (1890-1968), the founder of modern surfing provides a context for the ways in which the imagery and motifs that informed the aesthetic of much of the surf style clothing subsequently developed.

The final focus of the chapter is on the surge of interest in surfing that accompanied the increasing focus on youth and on American popular culture in the post-war period in the UK, followed by an interest in Australiana that strengthened the UK's ties with its Commonwealth cousin, peaking in the 1980s. Here I discuss the emergence of an indigenous surf industry, fostered by the necessity of manufacturing surfing products for local conditions when imports were scarce and often unsuitable, contributing to the distinctive local clothing culture in Cornwall.

Swimming

It was a rare thing to enter the sea for pleasure in the UK until nineteenth century: swimming as a pastime emerged long after the trend for taking the waters in the Regency period, when 'bathing machines' were dragged into the waves to allow the bather to enter the waters unseen. Even with the added precaution of a modesty tunnel, (figure 4.2) used to avoid being glimpsed leaving the bathing machine, in order to remain decorous full body coverage

was required. The heavy and cumbersome clothing worn in the sea at the time including corsets for women and breeches for men would have made swimming impossible.

As the century wore on, more and more individuals and families arrived to enjoy the perceived health benefits of the sea air. Enabled by successive Factories Acts limiting working hours and encouraged by businessmen versed in the emerging discourses of productivity such as the works of Frederick Taylor (1856-1915), leisure time had become enshrined in the working week. Factories and social clubs' charabanc trips and developing rail branch lines allowed workers in their droves to arrive at the beach, roll up their trousers or scoop up their petticoats and paddle in the shallows. Before long, suitable clothing was developed to allow the more adventurous to immerse themselves ever deeper in the waves. By the end of the century, bathing costumes were available by mail order and in department stores, designed for safety, comfort and modesty in the shallows but still too heavy to allow swimming (see figure 4.3 below of costumes worn by Brighton Swimming club in 1891).

A useful means of examining these developments is Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT), discussed in the first chapter. Latour proposes in *We Have Never Been Modern* (1991) that it is not possible to separate physical space, material objects and meaning, rather that complex issues in culture can be best understood by examining the intricate webs of discourse around science, politics and popular culture, in which natural and 'social' phenomena must be viewed not as separate threads but as 'hybrids' (edition 1993:15).

Beach and surf culture are just such hybrids: social phenomena which are dependent on the vicissitudes of natural phenomena. Thus the development of swimwear, surf boards and the visual ephemera associated with water activities are explored and developed in discourses of science, fashion, politics, economics and even spirituality (Westwick & Neuschul, 2013). Latour's 'hybrids' are part of 'heterogenous networks' in which human and non-human 'actors' come together to create material and semiotic meaning.

The relationships between actors must be constantly 'performed' if the network is to avoid collapse, and alterations between performances and relationships between actors in the network result in constant alterations in material and symbolic meanings. For Latour, 'society is constructed, but not just socially constructed' (Latour 1994:793). Non-human actors or *actants* have 'agency' in determining and negotiating meaning just as humans do. For example, the bathing machine enabled human beings to engage with the sea in a way which had never before been possible, re-defining it as a healthy environment when previously it had been conceived of as the dangerous home of monsters.

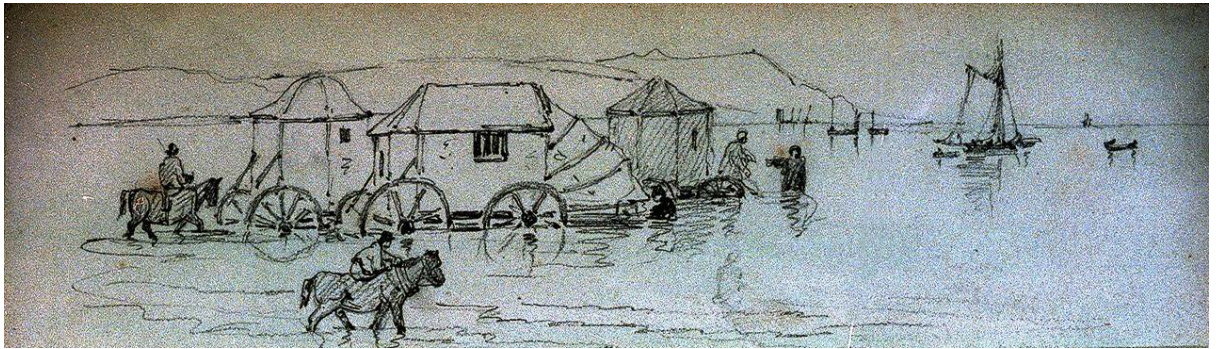


Figure 4.2. Bathing machines in the sea c1850. Artist Unknown. The centre machine features a modesty tunnel resembling a tent.



Figure 4.3. Members of the Brighton swimming club, 1891

The shark-as-monster persists in popular culture today as a symbolising the threat to human life represented by entering the unnatural domain of the sea in films such as *Jaws* (1975 Steven Spielberg) and *Cage Dive* (2017 Gerald Rascionato). In surf culture, a shark is warily known as ‘the guy in the grey suit’, as if speaking his true name will call him into being. Although there are sightings of sharks, mainly non-lethal basking sharks, in the waters around Cornwall, as well as other dangerous animals such as seals and sea-jellies, encounters with such creatures is rare and is not the greatest risk of entering the sea in the region. Cold, currents and powerful waves all represent a serious risk to the swimmer, bather, bellyboarder or surfer, and police figures confirm that drownings occur in the region every year (devon-cornwall.police.uk). The dangers inherent in the sea inform a wide range of clothing choices in the region, as I discuss in the following chapters, not only those worn to venture into it but also in the practical nature of garments worn on land which I argue is a key feature of the region’s clothing culture.

Returning to the early twentieth century, bathing costumes such as those pictured in figure 4.3 and 4.4 were developed to eliminate, as far as possible, the threat of drowning posed by the heavy, cumbersome and restrictive garments customarily worn on land at the time. On land, the desired silhouette in women’s dress in the Edwardian period was achieved with the aid of a corset and floor length skirts, and men were expected to cover the entire body from the neck down even when participating in sports. However, the material reality of the dangers of drowning in the sea necessitated a relaxing of these standards,



Figure 4.4. Women's bathing costumes in 1906.

and a minimum of weighty fabric employed to provide as much decency as possible under the circumstances. Having enabled women to take part in a vigorous physical activity, female bathing attire (figure 4.4) additionally opened up the beach and the sea as social space for women as part of the heterogenous network of material and semiotic meaning that was beginning to develop there.

Edwardian bathing outfits were similar to undergarments popular at the time but distinguished from them by means of their colour, usually navy, black or red, as opposed to the traditional white of linens, and also by the use of stripes, still common in swimwear today. This distinction made acceptable the public wearing of garments that would otherwise be deemed indecent. States of undress and other behaviours such as sleeping and eating outdoors and in public were tolerated at the beach, arguably because, following Latour, the newness of the network of meaning around human activity there made space for new practices.

John Fiske argues in his chapter, "Reading the Beach" in *Reading the Popular* (1991 [1989]), that the beach is 'an anomalous category between land and sea' (1991:119), a liminal space which is neither the civilised world of the town nor the wild natural domain of the sea. The social rules that govern morality are not quite abandoned but relaxed in this environment, with decreasing adherence to social norms the further one ventures into the waves and away from the street. I will go on to further this discussion in the following chapter, Space and Place, as well as in a case study in chapter six around flip-flops, worn all year

round in Cornwall, garments which also occupy the liminal terrain between the shod and unshod, civilised and natural.

Mass Travel

In the early years of the twentieth century, the West Country was wild and untamed. Having developed a reputation for piracy and wrecking along its coasts in the 18th century, the South West continued to be represented in popular culture as somewhat lawless, for example in novels like Walter Scott's *The Pirate* (1822), the popular Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879), and in children's fiction such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883). As late as 1936 with the release of Daphne du Maurier's *Jamaica Inn* (1936) the area continued to be romanticised as unpredictable and inaccessible. It was indeed the latter: huge areas of the peninsula were inaccessible by motor vehicle even after the completion of the A30 road to Penzance in 1925. Many homes were without electric power and even running water until the post-war period. Ann Berryman (1766–1858) is said to be the last native speaker of Cornish but aspects of the Cornish dialect continued to be used in remote areas well into the twentieth century. The development of Great Western Railways' 'Holiday Line' reaching Penzance in 1867 allowed visitors from the populous Midlands and South East to access these remote and exotic locations. Thanks to the *Holiday Pay Act* of 1938, a fortnight's holiday pay was granted to all full-time workers, making the long journey west even more possible, to many, but not all Britons, as will be discussed in chapter seven, Embodiment.

Mass travel and tourism began in the early twentieth century as developments such as these, along with increasing prosperity for the working class. The period saw a curiosity about the world and its Others, fostered by newsreel film footage viewed in cinemas and the increasingly popular travelogue genre in journalism and cinema, for example the Jack London texts discussed earlier and the feature film *Nanook of the North* (USA, Flaherty, 1922). A now lost film by the Pathé brothers titled *Surfing, le Sport National des Isles Hawaii* (1911) might have been the first to introduce European cinemagoers to surfing (Engle, 2015).

The tourist industry in the UK developed in response to this demand, with seaside locations developed as 'resorts' around the British coastline. With around 400 miles of coast including many sandy beaches and boasting a slightly warmer climate than much of the UK, the South West peninsula was well positioned to take advantage of the desires of hardworking people for rest, relaxation, and, paradoxically, exercise.

Modernist discourses of health and science found in the plethora of magazines and newspapers published in the early twentieth century, as well as in early film and radio favoured exercise as a means to achieve the healthy, functioning body required in the machine age. Coupled with the invigorating properties of the seaside, swimming and other aquatic pursuits grew in popularity as holiday activities after the First World War. At the same time, Hawaii's status was changing from an exotic and inaccessible outpost of the USA to a glamorous holiday destination for wealthy American tourists, with its rolling breakers

promoted not as a threat to safety but as an attraction. Public swimming pools and lidos were being built all over the UK, in part to prevent deaths resulting from swimming unsupervised in rivers and industrial ponds, the first pool in London as early as 1837 and pools in Bude, North Cornwall in 1930, in Tinside near Plymouth in 1935, the Jubilee Pool in Penzance being completed in 1937. In Waikiki Bay and in Watergate Bay, the more adventurous holiday maker might eschew the calm waters of the sea pool and instead hire or buy a flotation device to enjoy the health benefits of the open sea. The development of surfing as a means to attract tourists to Hawaii in the early twentieth century is well documented (Westwick & Neuschul 2013, Laderman 2014 et al) and is further explored in appendix 5. However, the story of bellyboarding, the earliest form of UK surfing, is near absent from any published literature (with the exception of Mansfield 2011) and has never been addressed in any critical text, as I established in the introductory chapter.

Bellyboarding Begins

The bellyboard, a small wooden board usually made from marine ply, was the first purpose-built surf craft to be ridden in the UK. Bellyboards are thought to originate from the Cornish practice of riding waves on coffin lids, (Mansfield 2011 et al) or at the very least of riding rough boards made by local joiners and coffin makers, such as the ones seen in figure 4.5 made by local joiner Tom Tremewan in an image from the Royal Cornwall Museum. These 'coffin lids', ridden from around 1920, were possibly inspired by contact with South African miners and soldiers in the opening years of the century. Playwright Alan M Kent



Figure 4.5 Bellyboarders at Perranporth Cornwall in the 1920s



Figure 4.6. Agatha Christie surfing c1920

claims that ‘the story of the return of Cornishmen from the First World War to begin surfing is well known. According to many observers they were taught by South African soldiers who fought with them in the conflict’ (2009: *a note on the text*). Sally Parkin, founder of the Original Surfboard Company in Exeter, has carried out research into this early period of surfing in the UK and concurs. ‘It seems to have been miners, Cornish miners, travelling to and from places like South Africa that brought it here’ (SP 06/15). Her account is supported by the family histories of several of the St Agnes residents I interviewed, many of whom trace their origins through the Cornish diaspora which will be further discussed in later chapters. There is a wealth of evidence that seamen from south west travelled to South Africa during the Boer war (1899-1902) and the First World War (1914-1918) (Hotten 2008) as well as many accounts of Cornish miners journeying to and from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the Americas (Hannan 1984, Pryor 1963 et al; DF 02/16, AB 02/16) who may have brought knowledge of surf riding back to the UK, or indeed, may have taken it from the UK to these locations.

The rough designs were soon improved and commercialised, made smoother, more efficient and more attractive by means of sanding, varnishing and painting, and were sold in their thousands to holidaymakers and locals alike. Sally Parkin of the Original Surfboard Company claims that in the 1930s some thirty thousand boards were selling per year in Cornwall (SP 05/15). Boards were acquired, ridden and popularised by celebrated figures such as Agatha Christie (1890-1976), pictured in figure 4.6 surfing, possibly in South Africa. She travelled with her husband to South Africa and to Hawaii, and surfed extensively

through the trip, recording her experiences of later mastering stand-up surfing in her autobiography, writing of 'a moment of complete triumph on the day that I kept my balance and came right into shore standing upright on my board!' (Christie 2010:299)

Christie was by no means the only literary star to take up surfing. Reports of George Bernard Shaw, pictured in figure 4.7 bellyboarding at Muizenburg in South Africa in 1932, present the intrepid seventyfive year old enjoying the 'three stages of surfing' in which 'he becomes as adept at the exhilarating sport as many of its younger devotees' (South African Travel News 1932).

By the time the Great Western Railway poster pictured in figure 4.8 was distributed in 1932, Newquay in Cornwall was established as a surfing destination. The now famous poster by Alfred Lambart advertises 'Newquay on the Cornish Coast' and depicts two fashionably dressed women riding waves on bellyboards with apparent ease while a hapless male flounders in a rubber ring between them. At around the same time, guides to 'surf riding', aimed at tourists began to appear in local shops. One such guide, author unknown, has been reprinted by Sally Parkin of the Original Surfboard Company. Dating from the 1950s, the guide depicts the techniques required to avoid sinking and instead use the bellyboard to 'crest in on the breakers' towards the shore, remembering as a beginner you should 'forget about the big waves until you have learnt on the smaller ones' (SP 05/15). It contains a handy map of surfing areas (figure 4.9) on the North Devon and Cornwall coast.



Figure 4.7 George Bernard Shaw with bellyboard in 1932



Figure 4.8. GWR Poster advertising Newquay 1932

Following Latour's insistence on the role of non-human *actants* in establishing and maintaining social structures, the bellyboard made possible certain human behaviours in that it allowed freedom of movement in the sea for both genders regardless of their swimming ability. Although today it would not be considered advisable for a non-swimmer to enter the sea with nothing but a narrow plank to aid flotation, Lizzie, a woman in her eighties, explained that as a young woman growing up in Cornwall in the 1940s she had enjoyed bellyboarding but had 'never learned to swim, really. There was no pools, you see, and you couldn't learn in the sea here. It's too rough for a little one to learn, there's strong currents. But the bellyboard kept you afloat and you never go in out of your depth with a bellyboard. You have to stand on the bottom! So I never really had to learn, you know, to do that' (interview, LT 08/14).

Conventional or stand-up surfboards offer different potentials. They allow the user to paddle beyond the surf line whilst using the board as a kind of boat, shifting the physical boundaries of social space, but in their earliest incarnation were too long, often well over eight feet, and too heavy for most women to carry, often weighing upwards of 100lb. The introduction of lighter balsa wood boards in the 1940s was unlikely to benefit any but the most determined woman since a longboard would still weigh 60lb (Mansfield, 2011). The earliest foam boards remained large and cumbersome. Female Cornish surfer Gwyn Haslock remembers, 'my brother was a surfer and I was dying to learn, but he said you can't start learning until you can carry the board to the sea on your own. You

had to be strong to surf, you see, so if you couldn't carry the board, you weren't ready. So I had to wait a couple of years before I could try it.' (GH 07/13)

Established narratives of surfing tend to overlook the significance of bellyboarding, a form of wave riding that was and is practiced by both genders, focusing instead on 'stand up' or traditional surfing, which was and is dominated by men. They focus on the athletic side of surfing over the 'ludic' or playful, and privilege traditional masculine values of bravery, mastery over nature through physical prowess and the development of man-made equipment. Dispatched in a preface or short chapter, or presented as the springboard from which 'true' surfing derived, bellyboarding is viewed in most accounts as a stage in the development of a more advanced activity: one that is athletic, competitive, and increasingly dangerous. However, bellyboarding continues to be practiced extensively in the South West, particularly Cornwall, where the Annual World Bellyboarding Championships (WBBC) were held from 2003 to 2015.

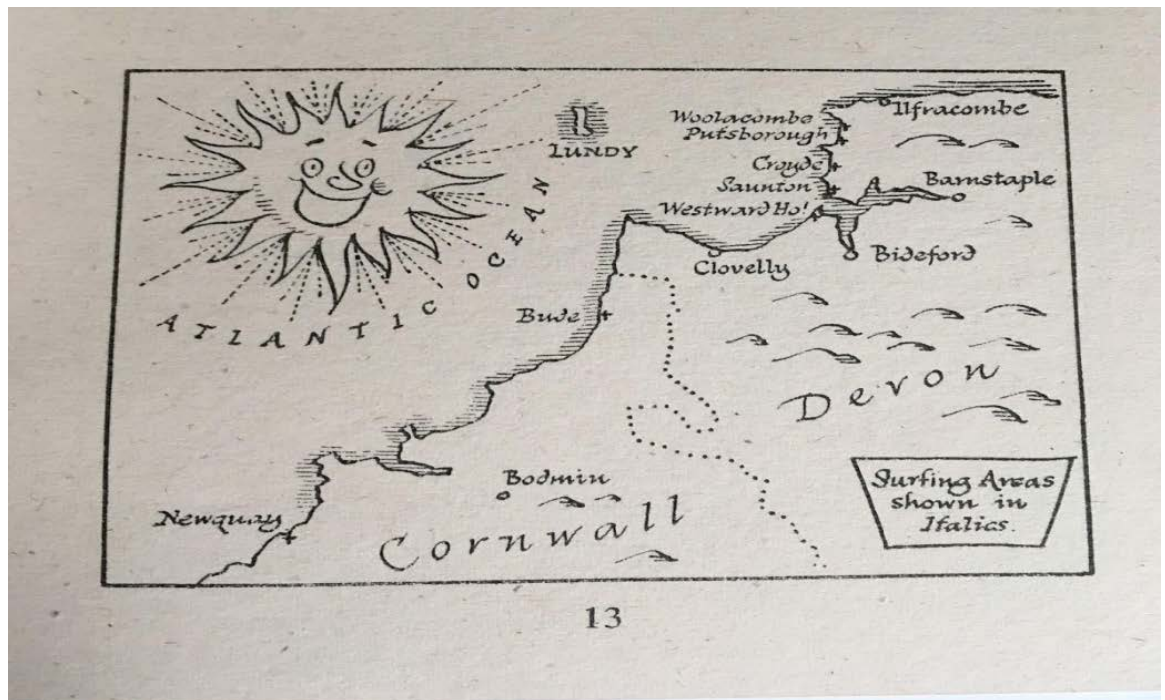


Figure 4.9 Map of surf spots in Cornwall from The Guide to Surf Bathing (ND)

Duke Kahanamoku, the First Surfing Celebrity.

It is possible that the South African, Australian and British Edwardians who first rode waves on wooden boards had seen or heard of the activity in media reports of the one of the world's first swimming superstars, Duke Kahanamoku, who is today widely regarded as the father of modern surfing (Kampion 1997, Warshaw 2011 et al). Kahanamoku's status as Hawaii's best-known resident irrevocably linked surfing with his home prior to the advent of the Second World War, and as I will demonstrate, with aspects of its clothing culture that continued to influence surf style well into the post-war period.

Surfing was in serious decline in the early twentieth century with only a handful of young men practicing it (Laderman 2014) but businessman Alexander Hume Ford (1868-1945) saw the pastime as a marketable tourist activity (see appendix 5). In order to publicise it, he invited the popular and intrepid American writer Jack London (1876-1916) to learn surfing with the help of two local men who were among the few left with the skills. Duke Kahanamoku was from a prominent, although not royal, Hawaiian family: Duke was his given name, rather than a title. His birthplace is disputed but he is known to have grown up around Waikiki beach and learned to surf around the same time as George Freeth, a young man of Irish and native Hawaiian heritage, seven years his senior. By the time of Jack London's arrival in 1907, the nineteen-year-old Duke was well known locally for his swimming and surfing prowess. London's account of his attempts at surfing would be Kahanamoku's first appearance in written discourse. First published as an article in *Ladies Home Journal* in 1908,

'Riding the South Sea Surf' was later re-printed and reached a larger audience in London's anthology, *The Cruise of the Snark* (1911). Here he describes his first sight of Kahanamoku:

And suddenly, out there, where a big smoker lifts skyward, rising like a sea-god from out of the welter of spume and churning white, on the giddy, toppling, overhanging and downfalling, precarious crest appears the dark head of a man. Swiftly he rises through the rushing white. His black shoulders, his chest, his loins, his limbs -- all is abruptly projected on one's vision. Where but the moment before was only the wide desolation and invincible roar, is now a man, erect, full-statured, not struggling frantically in that wild movement, not buried and crushed and buffeted by those mighty monsters, but standing above them all, calm and superb, poised on the giddy summit.... He is a Mercury -- a brown Mercury. (London 2011:76 [1907]).

Notwithstanding the apparently miraculous abilities of the 'surfboard rider' he describes, London soon finds himself mastering the waves: 'I steered sharply, abruptly with all my legs and all my might. The board sheered around broadside on the crest...' (2011:83). His participatory approach prefigures much of the writing about surfing that was to dominate the mid twentieth century, which concerns itself with surfing not as a local activity to be observed, but as a healthy pursuit in which to partake, encouraging travel to the appropriate locations such as Hawaii and Cornwall.

Sports writing, like travel writing, had emerged with mass media and mass leisure in the late nineteenth century. At the same time, international interest in athletics was growing, alongside the founding of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894 and the first Modern Olympic Games of the same year in Athens. The introduction of swimming into the 1908 Olympics in London

cemented the acceptance of aquatic sports pursuits by the general public in the West.

In spite of the upsurge in interest in watersports, few records remain of George Freeth. Both he and Kahanamoku were credited during their lifetimes as having revived and popularised the ancient sport of surfing: Freeth in an article he himself wrote in 1917 for the *Evening Herald* (cited in Moser 2008) and Kahanamoku in Alexander Hume Ford's *Mid Pacific Magazine*. But Freeth died in ignominy in a boarding house in San Diego, a victim of the flu pandemic of 1919, and few photographic or written records of life survive. Reports of his having saved a crew of Japanese sailors on his surfboard and received a medal for it are disputed even by the library of Congress, which was reputed to have awarded it to him (Elwell et al 2007). Whereas Kahanamoku's life-saving prowess is well documented, such as in a *New York Times* article of 1925 headlined 'Kahanamoku Helps Save 13 In Launch' (*New York Times* 16/06/1925).

An explanation for Freeth's relatively low profile may be that his professional status as lifeguard barred him from competing in the Stockholm Olympics in 1912. This was not the case for Kahanamoku, who won a gold medal in the 100 metre freestyle in the games and even set a new world record in his trials for the 200 metre relay. This was not the first world record Kahanamoku had set, but the first, accomplished in open water in Honolulu harbour in 1911, was disputed by Amateur Athletic Union officials who refused to accept the records of the Hawaiian timekeepers, claiming that such a feat could not have been

accomplished under such conditions, and even suggesting that local officials had used alarm clocks rather than stopwatches (The Guardian 25/10/2013).

No such accusations of exotic 'irrationality' could be made under the stringent conditions of the Stockholm Olympics, when Kahanamoku swam under the national banner of the USA. As Warshaw notes, 'though known as one of Waikiki's best surfers, [Duke] Kahanamoku put most of his energy into swimming: *Hui Nalu* [the world's first surfing club, of which Duke Kahanamoku was a founder member] had in fact been created in part to satisfy a swim competition rule that all entrants be affiliated with a club' (2011:55). But *Hui Nalu*'s members were almost all native Hawaiians, whereas The Outrigger Canoe Club, set up by Alexander Hume Ford and others, although by no means openly segregated, was exclusively white and made up of long-term ex-pat residents wanting to enjoy native aquatic pursuits. Duke Kahanamoku could swim abroad as a uniformed representative of his country, but not at home as an equal with his countrymen.

Internationally, Kahanamoku was a sporting superstar (see figure 4.10). At home, he and fellow Hawaiian surfers made a meagre living as 'Waikiki Beach Boys' as they came to be known by wealthy American tourists. Improved transport links to the islands and tireless promotion by Alexander Hume Ford and other local businessmen attracted ever-increasing numbers, some to relax in the sunshine on the beach, and others to brave the surf. In addition, 'by the late 1920s the United States had close to twenty thousand servicemen in

Thousands Out to Greet World's Champion Swimmer Duke Kahanamoku Gets a Rousing Welcome Home

Honoluluans Gather to
Honor the Lad Who
Honored City.

Glad to Return Home
---Thanks His Many
Friends.

(From Wednesday Advertiser)

Duke Paoa Kahanamoku is home again!

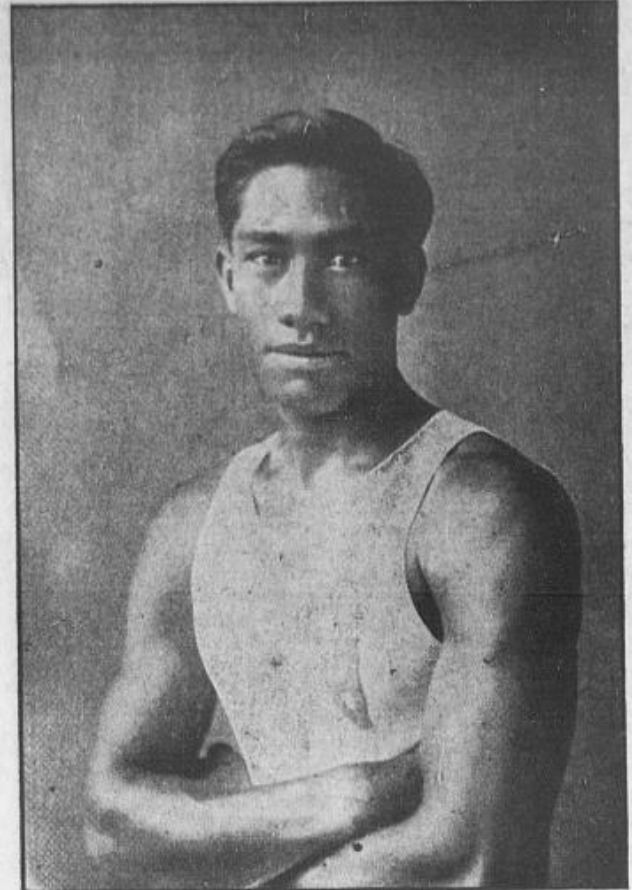
Thousands of Honoluluans thronged the Matson Navigation Company's wharf early yesterday morning to see Duke Kahanamoku and welcome him home. It was a democratic crowd of the world's short-distance swimming champion's admirers that waited breathlessly for a sight of the game island boy, who, alone and in a strange land thousands of miles away from his native home, captured one of the most coveted honors competed for at the recent Olympiad.

The moment Duke landed he was taken up on the shoulders of a bunch of husky and stalwart fellow-members of the Hui Nalu and carried through the wharf to a waiting automobile where his mother was given her first chance to greet him, though the lady had been right at the foot of the gangway when Hawaii's favored son again touched his native soil.

In the automobile Duke shook the hands of those nearest him and as soon as the machine could get away he was driven to his home at Waikiki.

Duke Off Waikiki Early.

The good steamer Wilhelmina was off west night and early yesterday morning.



"OUR DUKE" AT HOME AGAIN.

Figure 4.10 Duke kahanamoku featured in The Hawaiian Gazette, October 04, 1912.

Hawaii' (Westwick & Neschul 2013:94), supplied with regular periods of R&R or 'rest and recreation' and occasionally joined by wives and families. Westerners' demand for surf lessons, outrigger canoe rides, life-saving, massage and general gophering was met by poorly paid local men such as Kahanamoku, presented in written and visual popular discourse by means of images like figure 4.11, a popular postcard which depicts silent film star Betty Compson with Duke Kahanamoku and his brother David and two the members of the *Hui Nala* club in 1925. Compson takes centre stage, displaying her body for the camera in a fashionable swimsuit and high-heeled sandals, just visible. Behind her, the four local men: the brothers dressed in the uniform of the US Olympic swimming team, all with hands submissively behind their backs, muscular bodies at her service.

Western visitors to the islands pictured with Kahanamoku included movie stars like Charlie Chaplin and his wife, the actress Paulette Goddard (figure 4.12), national heroes such as Amelia Earhart (figure 4.13) and even Edward, Prince of Wales (4.14). Chaplin and Goddard are pictured wearing *leis*, traditional Hawaiian flower garlands. Earheart holds a pineapple. These are grown in abundance all over the tropics but were at the time most closely associated with the islands in popular American discourse, along with hibiscus flowers, ukuleles and Hawaii's best-known resident surfer, Kahanamoku. These Hawaiian motifs cemented their association with surfing with Kahanamoku's adoption of the now ubiquitous 'Aloha' shirt.



Figure 4.11 Popular Hawaiian postcard featuring film star Betty Compson and beach boys c1925



Figure 4.12 Kahanamoku with Charlie Chaplin and Paulette Goddard, 1938



Figure 4.13. Duke Kahanomoku and aviator Amelia Earhart in 1934



Figure 4.14 Duke Kahanamoku and Edward, Prince of Wales 1920

The Aloha Shirt

Now often referred to as simply a Hawaiian shirt, the *Aloha* shirt became the Hawaiian souvenir *de rigueur* as tourism boomed in the Pacific. It was worn by entertainers and presidents (see figure 4.15 and 4.16) to signal their having visited the Islands. It was also adopted *en masse* as part of Tiki Culture, a craze for ersatz Polynesian style that derived from restaurants such as Don the Beachcomber in Hollywood which opened in 1934 and was much copied throughout the USA and abroad (Hope & Tozian 2000). The following section explores how the imagery, pattern and colour prevalent in the design of the Aloha shirt established a visual language that was to endure through the development of surf style, before going on to look at these visual signifiers were re-used by global surf brands and refused by the taste community in St Agnes.

‘Shirts came into Hawaii with the whaling and sandalwood trades, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Sailors landing in the Islands wore loose-fitting, long-sleeved upper garments called frocks. The Hawaiians transliterated the word “frock” into “palaka.” (Arthur 2015:14). Palaka later became the term used to denote the plaid fabric from which they were made, which became the staple fabric of plantation workers in the 19th Century.

Indonesian agricultural workers brought with them the cotton *barong tagalog*, a loose long-sleeved shirt. By the early twentieth century, imported cotton and *kabe* silk crepe from Japan was readily available in Hawaii, and was deemed more appealing to tourists looking for cool and comfortable clothing styled along the lines of these simple agricultural garments, to wear in the heat and humidity.



Figure 4.15. 1930s cup and saucer featuring a map of Hawaii, and images of Hawaiian culture.



Figure 4.16 Chalk 'Aloha' lamp base featuring a hula dancer, c1950

‘In the mid-1930s the word “aloha” was attached to many types of merchandise—there were “aloha” tea sets and “aloha” coasters’ (Arthur 2015:19), such as the cup and saucer pictured in figure 4.15. which I sourced from a website selling vintage Hawaiian and Tiki artefacts, suggesting they retain a degree of popularity today. Hawaiian motifs relating to the people, culture, flora, fauna, landscapes and geography of the state were applied decoratively to a wide range of household goods and sold as souvenirs on the islands, and as novelty items for export such as the chalk lamp base in the shape of a hula dancer in figure 4.16. In the post war period, these same designs began appearing on the aforementioned silk shirts, which up to then had featured the traditional Japanese motifs already printed on the imported *kabe* silk.

The colour palette of the shirts was varied but drew strongly on the naturally bright tones of the local Hawaiian environment: the turquoise and green of the sea and the white of the foaming breakers, the vivid pinks and orange hues of the beautiful Hawaiian sunset, the turquoise, yellow and reds of petals and feathers. Motifs applied to Aloha shirts ranged from the semi-abstract, such as the repeat pattern of shells on the shirt (centre) and the geometric pineapple design on the shirt on the right in figure 4.17 to the representational, such as the Hawaiian rock carvings on the shirt left of the same image. They regularly featured recognisable Hawaiian wildlife, such as the birds of paradise that soar across the fabric of the shirt in figure 4.19, sharks and other fish, hummingbirds and butterflies. In addition, iconic features of the Hawaiian landscape appear



Figure 4.17. Film star Richard Boone, Duke Kahanamoku and actor Peter Lawford in Waikiki 1947, all wearing Cisco 'Duke Kahanamoku' branded shirts.

on the shirts, including volcanoes, swaying palm trees and rolling waves such as those in figure 4.20, as well as the tropical fruit and flowers that are so prolific on the islands, in particular the pineapple and the hibiscus and plumeria flowers. A major export and enduring icon of Hawaii, the pineapple is not native to the islands, the Hawaiian word for pineapple being *halakahiki* meaning 'foreign fruit', and is thought to have been imported in the sixteenth century by traders from the Far East. The indigenous hibiscus, or *ma 'o hau hele* is the state flower of the islands, often presented to visitors in a *lei* or garland, like the one worn by Elvis Presley in a still from the film *Blue Hawaii* (Norman Taurog 1961) over an Aloha shirt, on the cover of his record album of the same name (figure 4.18). Traditionally worn behind a woman's ear to signify marital status: left for married, right for actively seeking a partner (Hope and Tozian 2000), Hawaiian flowers and imported blooms such as the frangipani or plumeria, symbolising birth and beauty, have featured heavily on Aloha shirts. Their beauty, sweetness and delicacy as well as their association with local customs provide strong thematic links with Hawaii and with surfing, another local custom that was depicted on aloha shirts.

Cementing his celebrity status after his phenomenal surfing and Olympic success with appearances in Hollywood films such as *Wake of the Red Witch* (Edward Ludwig 1948) and *Mr Roberts* (John Ford 1955), Duke Kahanamoku was the ideal brand ambassador for Aloha shirts. 'He was associated with *Kahala* Sportswear (Branfleet) as a fashion consultant in the mid 1930s and the

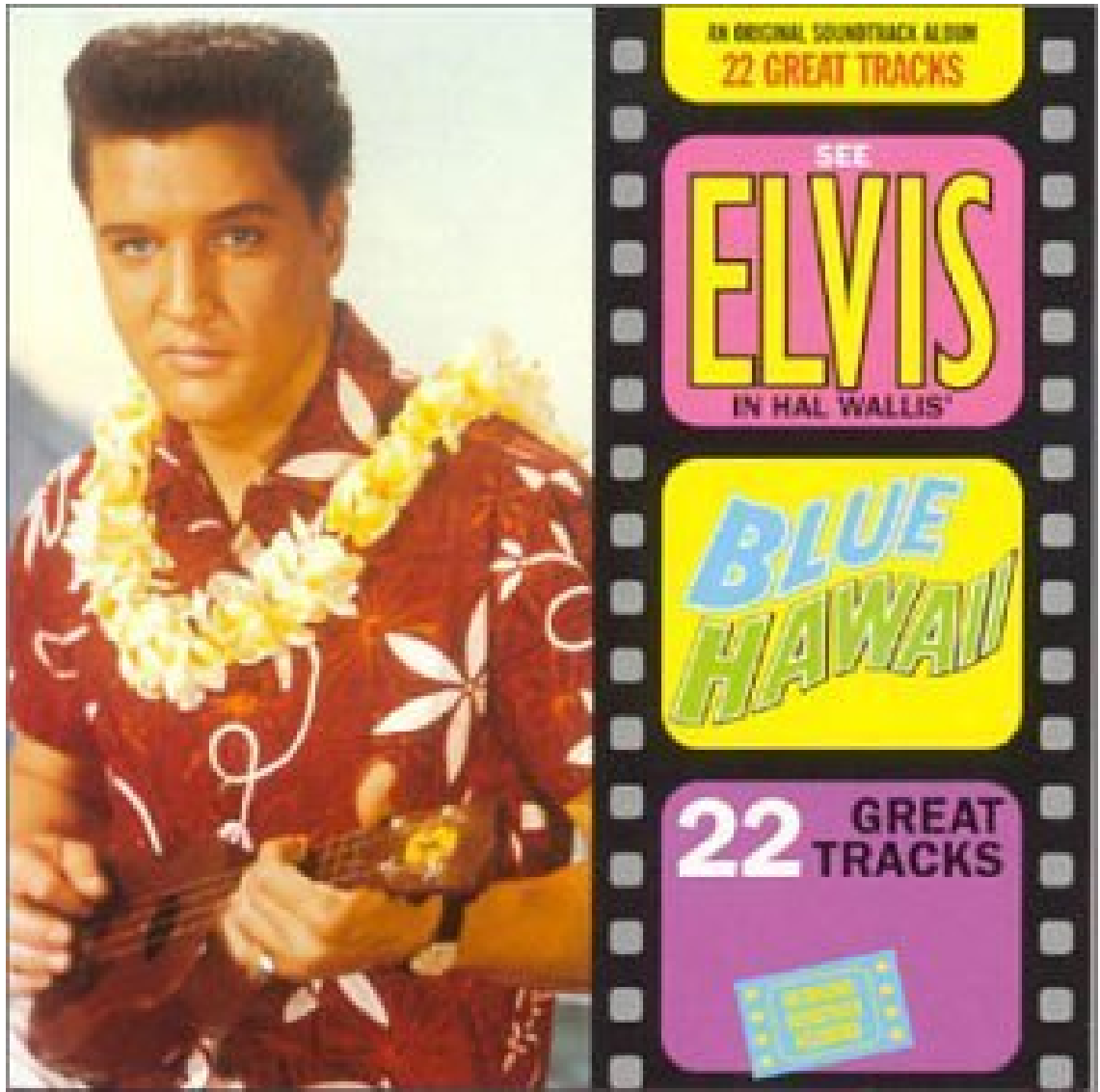


Figure 4.18. Elvis Presley wearing a lei of hibiscus flowers and an Aloha shirt

New York-based Cisco Company in 1949' (Steele 1984:40) initially receiving fifty cents per dozen royalties (Steele 1984) on shirts manufactured by *Kahala*, and later giving his name to a range of shirts manufactured by Cisco (see figures 4.17, 4.19). He was rarely seen in the sober double-breasted suits he commonly wore in the mid 1930s (figures 4.12 and 4.13) and became closely associated with the shirts that bore his name, forging close links with the imaginary of surfing with Hawaii and with Hollywood as the boom in stand-up surfing got underway.

Histories of the Aloha shirt demonstrate that these links continued into the late twentieth century (Steele 1984, Hope and Tozian 2000, Schiffer 2005 et al). The iconic shirt continues to feature hibiscus and plumeria flowers, pineapples and palm trees, and vintage shirts with a verifiable provenance linking to Duke Kahanamoku sell for a premium. The iconography associated with the shirts was applied to a wide range of surf-related clothing and merchandise from the 1930s onwards and continued to appear as motifs in surfwear until late in the twentieth century. I will return to this theme in the remainder of this chapter and the next as I look at how American and Australian surf brands have come to dominate the surf industry, and how small clothing communities such as in St Agnes prefer to reject the Hawaiian imagery that they see as a clichéd shorthand for surf style.

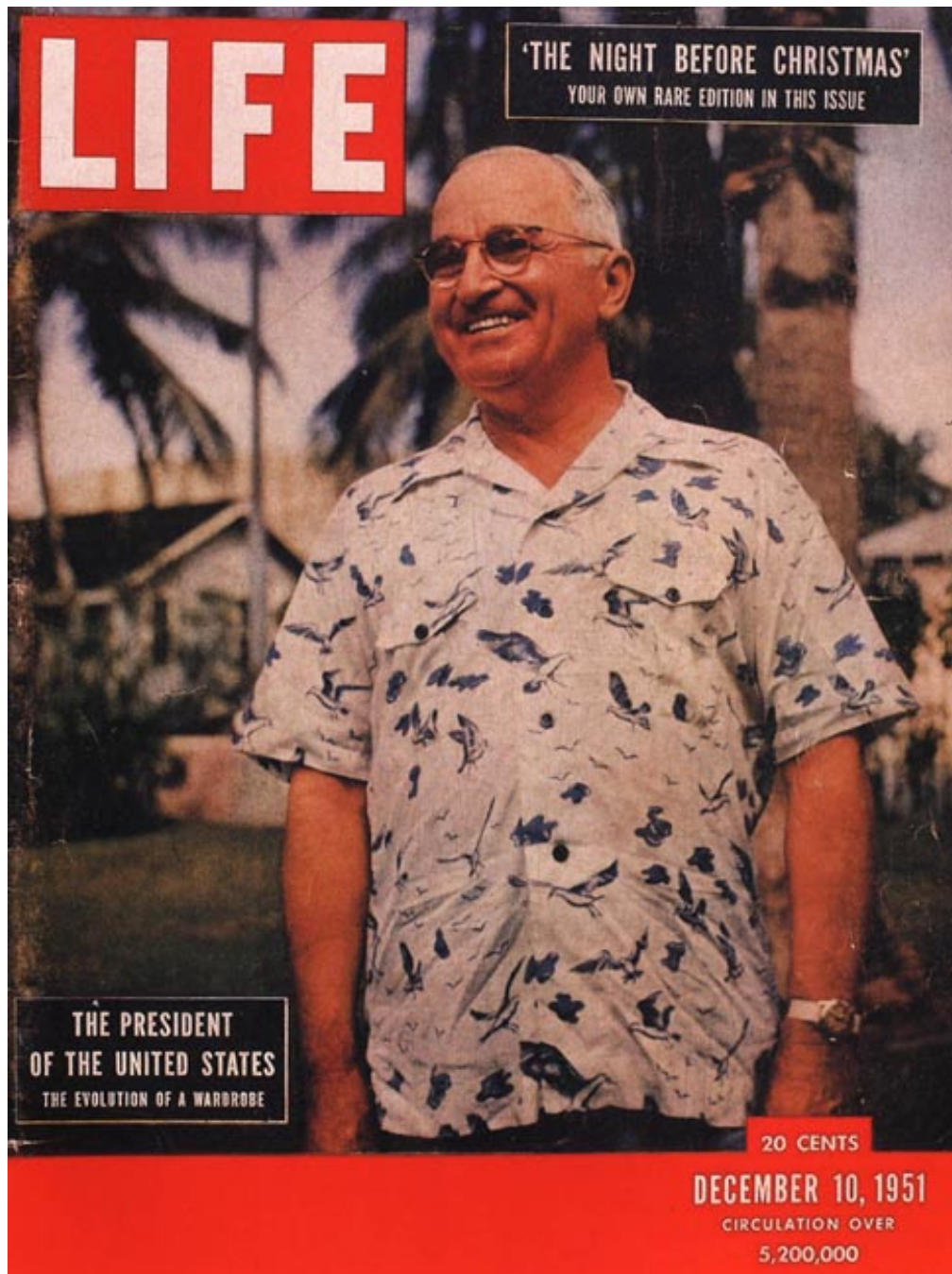


Figure 4.19. President Harry S Truman on the cover of Life Magazine in 1951 wearing an aloha shirt



*Figure 4.20 Rayon shirt, produced in the early 1950s by Cisco, branded 'Duke Kahanamoku'. Worn by lead actor Montgomery Clift in *From Here to Eternity*.*

The Spread of Stand-Up Surfing

Kahanamoku took surfing out of its Hawaiian locale, travelling to Australia in 1914 to give swimming demonstrations. Although surfing was not completely new to Australia, several boards having already been imported from Hawaii, Duke planned to demonstrate surfing 'Hawaiian style'. According to Warshaw (2012) in spite of 'White Australia' policies, Kahanamoku's prowess in swimming meant that the nation that had given the world the Australian Crawl two years previously gave Duke a hero's welcome, his ethnicity conveniently ignored or disbelieved. At Boomerang Camp in Freshwater Beach, Sydney, Kahanamoku shaped a board from locally sourced materials and gave demonstrations, leaving the board behind when he left so that copies could be made. Kahanamoku's board was copied and modified, allowing white Australians to apply their own technology to the historic design, and thus to modernise and claim ownership of the equipment, and by extension, the activity (Laderman 2014).

These events began the re-contextualisation of surfing in Western discourse. Whilst the activity continued to be practiced by Westerners for fun in Hawaii, its original geographical and cultural milieu, it was also taken up for the 'serious' purposes of lifesaving and sport in the USA and Australia. Whilst the early history of surfing in Hawaii, the USA and Australia is extensively explored in the literature and the post-war development of surfing in the UK is well documented, little has been written to date about surfing in the UK in the interwar period. This may be because evidence suggests its story sits

uncomfortably against the prevailing narrative which privileges surfing's establishment on 'opposite sides of the Pacific' Pearson 1979:46).

Stand-up surfing began to appear on British shores in the post-war period. Having seen newsreel footage of Hawaiian surfing, Newquay-born Pip Staffieri fashioned his own longboard over a period of two years, launching in 1940, and is credited by Roger Mansfield (2011) as Britain's first stand-up surfer. He was followed by a growing number of young men who, unable to import the boards they had seen on screen, in magazines like *National Geographic* and *Picture Post* or in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (edition 1939) created their own versions at home. Boards began to trickle into the UK from Hawaii, Australia and America through the 1950s and 1960s, and were enthusiastically copied and adapted for British conditions in what was to become a domestic surf industry.

The growth of surf-related businesses in the south west followed the demand for surfing equipment and apparel associated with the versions of surfing that were practiced in Australia, South Africa and the USA. Information on these activities was at first limited to mainstream media but the arrival of surf lifeguards to the UK brought stand-up surfing to the attention of the British public in much the same way as George Freeth and Duke Kahanamoku's demonstrations had presented it in the USA and Australia. The first Australian lifeguards arrived in 1962 (The Guardian, 24/08/2012) by which time surfing demonstrations had already taken place in St Ives, Cornwall, when an American surf champion Dave Rochlen arrived *en route* to Australia at the address supplied in a letter to American Surfer magazine enquiring about board making

techniques. From this it can also be surmised that at least one issue of the American specialist surfing magazine had made its way to UK shores (Mansfield 2011).

The UK's strong links to the Commonwealth of Nations enabled cultural links as well as lively trading and visa-less travel between member states including Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (a member until 1961, re-joining in 1994) as well as a number of Pacific island groups where surfing was practiced. In 1951, Australian surf lifesaver Alan Kennedy found himself in Bude, North Cornwall, where he discovered that the local lifeguards were not trained in sea water. He wrote to the Australian SLSA which sent equipment leading to the establishment of the first UK SLSA in Bude in 1953. The second was established in St Agnes, North Cornwall, when 'the High Commissioner of Australia invited a deputation from St Agnes to Australia House in London in May 1955 to be presented with a belt, line and reel, a gift from North Bondi Surf Lifesaving Club' (slsgb.org.uk accessed 27/07/16). This strengthened existing links between antipodean and British surf lifesaving that were to be further reinforced the following year when Australian lifeguards were supplied by the Australian Embassy to the south west in 1962 (SurfLine.com, accessed 04/04/2012). Bob Head, John Campbell, Ian Tiley and Warren Mitchell from the Avalon SLSC near Sydney began lifeguarding on Newquay beaches, sponsored by local businesses keen to keep beaches safe. The rip-tides, swell and powerful currents that threatened holidaymakers provided ideal conditions for the lifeguards to demonstrate their surfing prowess on the latest fibreglass 'malibu' boards they had brought with them. Bill Bailey, a fellow lifeguard, was

convinced these boards were the future of lifesaving and learned how to make them, eventually setting up in business with the aforementioned Bob Head in what was to become Bilbo, the leading UK manufacturer of surfboards in the 1970s.

Returning for a moment to Bruno Latour's ANT, the Malibu boards that enabled stand-up surfing to be practiced by a wider range of individuals who would have struggled to drag the old longboards to the sea brought further disruptions to the network of material and semiotic meanings in the waves. Materially, the boards allowed a larger number of surfers to wait catch breaking waves, necessitating the appropriate kit for waiting for them in an increasingly crowded 'line-up'.

Boardshorts, wetsuits and board wax were all required and had to be either imported or locally produced. In the early days, the imported goods from better known surfing locales shifted the meanings around the activity, in the symbolic realm, to an imaginary more closely connected to the USA and Australia, as will be explored in later chapters.

The boards left behind by the lifeguards were enthusiastically copied by UK surfers who were able to purchase the chemicals and tools required from industrial suppliers. In 1954, Bill Bailey and Bob Head joined up with Freddie Blight and surf photographer Doug Wilson to set up the European Surf Company (ESC). Its first outlet, 'The Surf Centre' in Newquay, the first dedicated surf shop in Britain, sold boards shaped nearby at the Bilbo factory as well as whatever imports could be had. Surf-related kit and clothing including board shorts was increasingly imported to cater for growing demand, inspiring

locally made versions and sometimes outright copies (RM 07/13) that were sold in the ESC premises, but since these copies were necessarily made from locally available textiles, Hawaii-influenced signifiers of surf culture such as hibiscus prints did not feature. Around the same time, depictions of SCUBA diving in wetsuits began to appear, as worn by the character James Bond in *Thunderball* (UK Young 1965) and in the popular TV series *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau* (1968). As *actants*, wetsuits fostered an improved relationship between human beings and the sea, allowing for longer periods in the water and making surfing possible for more (less hardy) human beings for more of the year. In one of several interviews, Gwyn Haslock remembers buying her first wetsuit in the late 1960s. She said, 'my first one wasn't a surfing wetsuit, it was a diving suit. There was a sports shop in Truro called Mike Palmer and he sold what we call zip at the front which you don't have now, you have zips at the back because of the pressure on your front, and they only had diving suits so that's what I first bought. But I think the first thing I wore was a woolly jumper' (GH 09/15).

Wetsuits too were copied by amateur manufacturers keen to enjoy their benefits in the UK's cold waters for diving and later surfing, such as Andy Schollick, founder of Devon based wetsuit pioneers Second Skin, whom I interviewed in August 2013. Discussing his early wetsuits, he tells me he 'made them out of sheets of neoprene and sealed the edges with tape. There was a pattern in a diving magazine for how to make them. Then I adapted them to make them more comfortable for surfing, and people used to ask me to make them one. That was the beginning, really.' (AS 08/13). It was the beginning of a

home-grown surf industry, born of necessity when imports of surf related goods were hard to find and rarely suitable for the climate and waves of the British South West.

This was also the beginning of a distinctive surf-related material culture in the region, as surfing grew in popularity not just as a holiday novelty but as a sport. As noted above, stand-up surfing required specialised equipment and physical strength but also demanded more of a commitment than bellyboarding to master it. Confident swimmers living near the sea year-round with access to the right kind of kinds of waves for practice were likely to be more adept at this developing sport than those less fortunate, fostering local competition and aspiring competitors. A similar situation was developing in what are now better-known surfing locations such as America's West Coast and Australia's Gold Coast, narratives which have been exhaustively explored in established histories of surfing (Kampion 1997, Pearson 1979, Warshaw 2011 et al). The near-daily practice of stand-up surfing at times dictated by the tide was possible only for those without commitments such as regular work and suggests a further application of Latour's ANT. Here, the vicissitudes of the waves and weather come together with technology in the shape of boards and wetsuits to form the hybrid network of meanings around surfing, interdependent performers in the establishment of new meanings found in discourses of health, gender and increasingly, of age, on which I elaborate in forthcoming chapters.

Surfing USA

The development of surf culture is coincident with the 'birth' of the teenager and the clothing cultures which appeared alongside this new cultural and commercial phenomenon. Both arose from increased leisure and affluence in the West in the post-war period, from the 'generation gap' resulting from the radically different experiences and expectations between those who grew up knowing nothing but the ever-growing opportunities of peacetime, and those who, having lived through war, were unable to relax and enjoy them. Surfing, with its inherent risks, lack of tangible reward and drain on purposeful time held little appeal to the older generation but was enthusiastically taken up by young people in the right locations with the time and the resources to enjoy it, and was represented in popular culture as part of an aspirational American lifestyle into which even landlocked working class youths could buy for the price of a music record or a cinema ticket. For example in *Blue Hawaii* (1961), American pop icon Elvis Presley enjoys all that a holiday to the Hawaiian islands could offer. In this increasingly popular destination for which a passport was not required for American citizens, Presley wears Aloha shirts (see figure 4.18) and hibiscus flower garlands, plays hit songs on a ukulele, and enjoys the attentions of hula girls who happen to be white Americans rather than native Hawaiians; I will return to the theme of ethnicity in the final chapter. Elvis is also seen, dry and on suspiciously flat and solid waves, on a surfboard. (see figure 4.21 and 4.22). Although laughably unrealistic, the image of the Memphis-born King Of Rock 'n' Roll adopting a stand-up surfing stance suggests the widespread entry of surfing into popular youth culture in the period.



Figure 4.21. Publicity still for Blue Hawaii (1961) featuring Elvis Presley

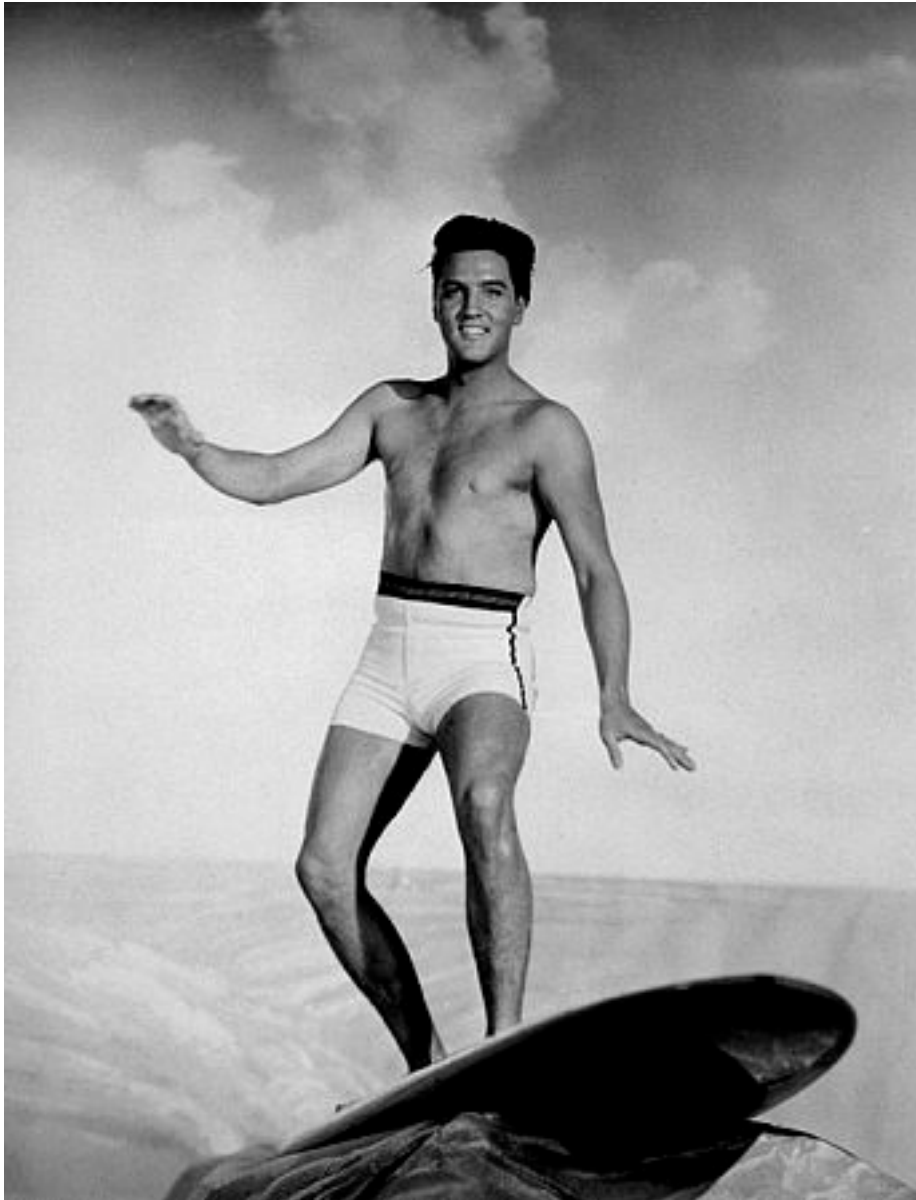


Figure 4.22 Elvis 'surfing' in Blue Hawaii (1961)

The 1959 film *Gidget* (1959, Paul Wendkos) is often cited as a landmark in the mainstream popularisation of surfing, but Matt Warshaw (2011:158) comments that the 1957 novel on which it was based, originally titled *Gidget: The Little Girl With Big Ideas* (Kohner 1957) ousted Jack Kerouac's *On The Road* (1957) at the top of the bestseller lists on its release. Based on the real surfing adventures of the author's daughter, the diminutive sixteen-year-old Kathy Kohner, the novel and the film follow the 'wave and romance filled summer at Malibu' (2011:158) of the eponymous 'girl midget'. The 'teenage' characters in the film (many of whom are played by actors well into their twenties) sport capri pants and ballet pumps or sports shirts and *huarache* sandals that would be deemed entirely inappropriate by their adult contemporaries. With the adults positioned and dressed in formal attire as authority figures, and rebellious surfing acquaintances of Kathy Kohner's, such as Mikey Dora fictionalised as 'nice kids', the book and the film positioned surfing as a 'clean teen' activity, essentially healthy and fun but far removed from the adult world.

A darker version of the generation gap in surfing was explored by Tom Wolfe in his collection of essays on the counterculture, *The Pump House Gang* published in his 1969 collection of essays, *The Electric Cool-Aid Acid Test*. In *The Pump House Gang*, a group of young people with no discernible direction in life or 'drop outs' as they were being labelled in the press, hang around at Windansea, a California surf spot, dispassionately view downtown race riots, take drugs, party, surf and express disparaging opinions on their elders, known as 'panthers' in the distinctive youth argot of their time. The gang are particularly dismissive of the black leather shoes worn by the panthers, symbols

of their submission to the oppressive world of the nine-to-five-job. The remnants of this attitude will be explored in chapter six's case study of the flip-flop.

In the 1960s there were in addition many other representations of surfing and the culture emerging around it that suggested a lifestyle somewhere between *Gidget's* good clean middle-class fun and *The Pump House Gang's* nihilistic deviancy. So many in fact that in the 1960s surfing became a shorthand for youth cultural cool, a craze whose signifiers were adopted by non-surfers to align themselves with the affluent freedom and athletic sexuality that appeared to come with it. Although few in the UK would have seen Bruce Brown's iconic independent surf film *The Endless Summer* (1965) on its release, a healthy circuit of second run cinemas and screenings in youth centres, universities and colleges maintained interest in the film long afterwards. This would have been bolstered by the music of the Beach Boys, who released a series of surf-themed singles between 1961 and 1964 and were regularly depicted wearing the Pendleton shirts much beloved of California surfers, and after whom the band's first incarnation – The Pendletons – were named, (see figure 4.23) in spite of the fact that only one of the band could surf. The influence of the lifestyle was felt as far afield as north London, where British drummer Keith Moon (1946-1978) of The Who was discovered by the band playing in what would now be termed a Beach Boys tribute band called The Beachcombers. By the mid-1960s surf culture was no longer exclusive to those who surfed.



Figure 4.23 The Beach Boys wearing 'pendelton' shirts and carrying a board only one of them could master.

As stand-up surfing became a regular sight off beaches in the South West, bellyboarding continued to be practiced in shallower water. The emerging culture and commerce that accompanied these activities built Cornwall's reputation as the centre of British surfing, cemented with the first British Surfing Association (BSA) championships being held in Newquay in 1972. As well as board builders and shapers, clothing manufacturers and merchants, surf clubs, surf shacks and camps, surf related publications began to appear in the 1980s to appeal to a uniquely British brand of surfing, contributing to the clothing culture in the region.

Wavelength, first distributed in 1982, was the first specialist surfing magazine in the UK, founded and edited by surfing enthusiast John Conway in Newquay, Cornwall. *Carve*, founded ten years later by surfer and photographer Mike Searle was also based in the Newquay area. These publications provided representations of British surf culture from an insider perspective, including images of local surfers in action but also on land, dressed in the t-shirts and boardshorts they preferred. SB recalls 'seeing these kids that went to my school *in a magazine!* And it was like...I just wanted to be like them.' (SBW 04/15). *Wavelength* began running dedicated surf fashion features in 1988 (figure 4.24), featuring locally available brands.

In the image, a range of brightly coloured surf clothing, a purple body board, flip-flops, frisbees and a Sony Walkman are pictured laid flat on a white surface suggesting a studio floor, framed by a representation of photographic film winding notches that reinforces the notion that this is a 'shoot' rather than a

documentary photo. The words 'surf fashion' appear vertically on the page in black and splashes of abstract patterns in neon yellow, pink and blue provide an upbeat, eighties feel. No information is supplied on prices, manufacturers or retailers, although according to the editor on the previous page, all of the clothes are available in shops in Newquay.

In keeping with the prevailing trends of the late eighties, the clothes and accessories are neon-bright, a far cry from the tropical palette associated with the Aloha shirt, and although all of the clothes feature identifiable signifiers of surfing, they bear no resemblance to the Japanese and Malaysian aesthetic that influenced the *Palaka* designs of the Aloha. Fish appear on the bright pink boardshorts in the *Wavelength* shoot but they are cartoonish and comic. Surfboard motifs are semi-abstract and grafitti-inspired. Among the badges, frisbees and clothing there is a distinct lack of pineapples and flowers, suggesting the influence of a clothing culture that derives not from the American state of Hawaii but from a brash, bold and bright surfing locale in which surfing was part of wider beach-based leisure: Australia.

British surf magazines *Wavelength* and *Carve* achieved a combined national circulation of up to twenty-six thousand in the early nineties according to their editors' estimates (SBW 04/15 and MS 03/16), suggesting that surfing was attracting a large number of genuine participants in Britain. The increasing visibility of Australia in British popular culture, evidenced in the palette, iconography and style in the *Wavelength* fashion shoot and discussed in following section, must surely have contributed to the uptake.



‘Little Australia’

In 1975 the Australian government began to issue working holiday visas to encourage extended vacations and with them, increased income from tourism. The visas permitted the holders to take up to four months’ continuous employment in seasonal or casual posts for a maximum of twelve months in total and proved enormously popular. They were granted to people under the age of twenty-six from Commonwealth member states who met certain other conditions, namely proof of financial support, usually in the form of a bank statement indicating the applicant had sufficient funds to avoid destitution during the visa period, and a pre-paid return ticket home. These measures were in place to avoid the state having to fund living or repatriation costs for those who were not Australian nationals, and required a sizeable capital investment by the young applicant and effectively ensured a largely middle-class uptake. Casual weekend work was a means for many students to slowly acquire the necessary funds, since they were able until the mid-1990s to rely on maintenance grants to cover living expenses while they studied; others took a year out of studies to save, and those even more fortunate might depend on the generosity of parents who were enjoying the on-and- off prosperity of the Thatcher years.

The duration of the permit and the distance travelled encouraged most applicants to take up the full year, giving rise to the phenomenon of the ‘gap year’, in which young people took a year off to travel before starting university or before embarking on a full-time career. The relative ease of access to from Australia to the Pacific Rim provided opportunities to travel to far flung locations, far removed from the well-known tourist hotspots of Europe. Tracy Scaffer,

discussing her own backpacking experience, describes it as 'an almost obligatory rite of passage among middle class and upper middle class...adults' (2004:140), a 'liminal performance between childhood and adulthood' (2004:148). Those sufficiently privileged to tarry between these two states would eventually be impelled to return to the UK, enter the adult world and close the gap. But not without a tale to tell; they came home with stories, souvenirs and style acquired on their journey which marked them out as having spent a year in the Antipodes, before pursuing financial stability. Many found their way to the South West in order to continue to pursue the surfing lifestyle and make a living by the sea.

In the UK interest in Australiana was piqued by a flood of imported Australian popular culture. In 1988 there was extensive coverage of the Tall Ships voyage from the UK and the Queen's visit to commemorate the bicentenary of the first European settlers' arrival in Australia. Australian soaps appeared on British screens with increasing frequency throughout the 1980s, and soon the stars of *Neighbours*, first broadcast on BBC1 in 1986, and *Home and Away*, first broadcast on ITV in 1989, were household names. Spin-off media products such as appearances on UK chat and game shows supported the emerging comedy, film and pop music careers launched by former soap stars like Russell Crowe, Guy Pearce and Kylie Minogue. Australian bands including Crowded



Figure 4.25 Surfer Barton Lynch pictured in a feature on the US Open Surfing Championships (image cropped by the author) in Wavelength Magazine, Vol 2, issue 11. Oct/Nov 1987

House and INXS also enjoyed success in the UK in the 1980s and 1990s, and films from the Antipodes began to make an impact at UK box offices at the same time, with *Crocodile Dundee* (1986, Peter Faiman) propelling its star, Paul Hogan, to international fame, and *Strictly Ballroom* (Baz Luhrmann 1992) launching the film career of Australian playwright and theatre director, Baz Luhrmann. A new generation of Australians were shaking off the 'cultural cringe' and presenting their homeland as a confident, prosperous and exotic location in which young people could enjoy a laid-back, fun and healthy lifestyle, dressed for leisure in bright casual clothing (see figure 4.25).

The benefits of this vast, sun-drenched playground were in evidence, it appeared, in the successes of Australian athletes winning a record 107 gold medals on their home turf in the Brisbane Commonwealth games of 1982, as well as regular Australian wins in tennis, rugby and cricket, and of course, surfing.

According to Australian professional surfer and writer Nat Young (b 1947), in the late 1970s Australian surfing had 'come of age' (1984:127); the 1980s 'were to give us the fully integrated professional surfer, earning enough cash on a world tour to rival the golf or tennis circuits' (1984:201). Young and fellow Australian surf champions were propelled into the international spotlight in the 1980s with increased television coverage of the sport and corporate sponsorship elevating their public profile and earning potential. In common with many sports in the 1980s, coverage of surfing focused almost exclusively on men's events such as Australian Open in Manly, Sydney, ignoring the small

number of female surfers competing at the time. Representations of the surfer appearing in the newly established UK surfing magazines (see figure 4.25) and elsewhere developed an archetype that was avowedly masculine: a tanned, athletic figure in sports or casual dress, surrounded by bikini clad girls as he emerged victorious from the waves to collect big prize money.

Sydney-born Barton Lynch (b1963) is pictured in figure 4.25 in *Wavelength Magazine* winning a round in the US Open Surf Championships in 1987. The event was unofficially known at the time as the OP Pro, after Ocean Pacific, sponsors of the competition; Lynch is pictured dressed head-to-toe in his sponsor's clothing. An American brand, in 1987 Ocean Pacific were clearly still making use of the floral motifs traditionally associated with surfing's Hawaiian past, as in the swimsuit worn by the beauty queen pictured in the left of the image, whose tan and sun-bleached blonde hair cement the link with surfing established by her sharing the podium with Lynch. The hot-pink sleeveless t-shirt sported by Lynch bears no such traditional signifiers, just 'OP' and 'Ocean Pacific' logos against parallel blue lines, suggesting a break from the dominance of the American model of surf style ushered in by a new generation of Australian surf champs.

In Cornwall, local surfers were keen to emulate the success and the style of the new generation of Australian surfers. As Steve Bount of *Wavelength* magazine comments, 'this [Newquay] is like being in Australian town, I think you had lifeguards here from about '64, Australian lifeguards...and I think some of that has rubbed off. You know when we were kids, a lot of my friends spoke [affects

Australian accent] “Australian”... [in the eighties] Neighbours was huge, surfing was huge...that probably has something to do with the way the town is now. There was some Antipodean thing seeping into our culture and it probably seemed more appealing than California’ (SBW 04/15). A further way in which the Antipodes ‘seeped’ into the local culture was through the flood of surfwear that was imported from Australia in the period, some of which, discussed earlier (figure 4.24). was featured in *Wavelength* magazine.

RipCurl wetsuits, based on Australia’s Gold Coast, home of the annual Bells Beach Classic, began sponsoring the event in 1973 and ‘mounted a vigorous advertising campaign based on giving free suits to all the top surfers’ (Young 1983:135). Figure 4.26 shows Australians Bernard ‘Midget’ Farrelly (1944-2016) and Michael Peterson (1952-2012), competitors in the 1973 event clad in branded wetsuits. By the early 1980s, the company, founded by two local surfers, was exporting wetsuits worldwide and diversifying into clothing. A similar trajectory, from specialist surf kit to mainstream fashion items, was taken by Billabong, founded in 1973 by surfer Gordon Merchant, also on the Gold Coast. The ‘boardshorts’ with which Merchant found his initial success distinguished themselves by their durable triple stitching, but like all ‘boardies’ they were designed with the specific needs of surfers in mind, being long enough to prevent the wax on the board from tearing out hairs from the sensitive inner thighs. These longer length shorts, along with surf branded t-shirts and accessories were quickly adopted as casual wear by surfers and non-surfers alike, providing meteoric success for the brand which listed its value as



Figure 4.26. 'Midget' Farrelly and Michael Peterson at the 1973 Bells Beach Classic wearing Rip Curl wetsuits.



Figure 4.27 Billabong boardshorts c1988



Figure 4.28. Quiksilver boardshorts c1987

225 million Australian dollars when listed on the Australian stock exchange in 2000.

Another Torquay wetsuit specialist was founded in 1969 by surfer John Law, renamed Quiksilver in 1973 when partner and fellow surfer Alan Green entered the picture, proved to be the strongest exporter of Australian surf style with corporate success falling hard on the heels of lucrative licensing and sponsorship deals. According to company website, Quiksilver and its subsidiaries, including Roxy and DC Shoes, were worth over a billion US dollars in 2004 (www.quiksilver.com).

The UK and particularly Cornwall was recognised as a lucrative market as early as the 1970s, Alan Green of Quiksilver, 'had actually been here in Newquay and his girlfriend worked in a cafe. He was working in a hotel here,' according to Roger Mansfield. 'He had some shorts and t-shirts in a suitcase. He showed them to me and asked if I wanted to go into business. I said no. It wasn't my thing. [sighs]' (RM 07/13). Mansfield's missed opportunity was soon apparent as surf shops sprung up in the region to support a growing interest in the kit and clothing associated with this booming activity. Steve England, editor of Carve magazine, remembers, 'round the late '70s there was a few brands started to be imported. It was really expensive but it was that whole image of Australian surfing, pro surfing, so the surfers started buying into that as well. It was more expensive and you'd wear it if you could. So, from quite early on we were wearing a certain fashion down here in Cornwall which was removed from what

was happening anywhere else at the time. You know, Bay City Rollers and all that' (SE 09/15). As surfing itself grew in popularity, in the 1980s, sales of surf branded clothing soared. Figures 4.27 and 4.28 exemplify the bold, abstract design in functional sportswear that Australian made brands so desirable by the surfing community in Cornwall. Far removed from the American tradition, highly technical and inspired by graffiti and skateboarding, globally distributed and widely available surfing garments like these suggested rebellion and freedom whilst commanding a high price tag (Heywood 2008). Prior to the birth of the internet, less well-known surf brands were still difficult to acquire and therefore indicated subcultural capital in their wearer (Thornton 1995). It was the cachet deriving from these two factors that was to be exploited and commodified in the surf boom of the 1990s.

The enormous profits made by surf brands in the 1990s derived not from sportswear sales but from mainstream fashion apparel and accessories, from the widespread adoption of surf style in the late nineties in the UK, often far from any beach. Sharp marketing strategies of what were once kitchen table surf wear enterprises, riding on the wave of popularity of surfing as a sport and Australian pop cultural exports, can account to some extent for the widespread adoption in the UK of surf style in the 1990s and its subsequent collapse. The wave peaked when surf style became ubiquitous in mainstream fashion, with a branch of surf store Animal in the Bullring opening in Birmingham, 150 miles from the sea. Student tuition fees introduced in 1998 made tourist and leisure focused gap years less appealing to many than saving up, and the Bali bombing in 2002 made the surfari lifestyle less appealing. Surf brands had overstretched

themselves and began to go into decline in the early 2000s. The surfer as archetype fell out of fashion, and by the time of the financial collapse in 2008 even genuine surfers had stopped wearing many surf brands (SE 09/15).

But in Cornwall, surfing itself has continued to grow, with Google listing almost thirty surf schools and twenty-five surf shops in the county today. The Museum of British Surfing is located in nearby Braunton, Devon. Boardmasters, Britain's most popular surfing competition has been held annually in Newquay since 1981 and an accompanying music festival has developed alongside it since 2000. Cornwall hosts a number of surf related charities and pressure groups, as well as twenty of the seventy-five Surf Life Saving Clubs in the UK. Varieties of surfing including bellyboarding, bodyboarding, kneeboarding, paddleboarding and stand-up surfing can be witnessed every day of the year on Cornish surf breaks. The remaining chapters of this thesis build on the history of the adoption of these pastimes in the South West and particularly Cornwall, examining a small community's clothing culture that draws from its distinctive surfing heritage.

Conclusion

Established narratives of surfing history such as those discussed in the literature review (Warshaw 2011, Young 1984, Kampion 1997, et al) contribute much the narrative of the development of surfing as an activity and its worldwide dissemination. This chapter draws on this narrative but focuses not so much on the activity as on the development of a clothing culture in Cornwall contextualised in the use of clothing and artefacts associated with surfing, and

their place in discourses of tourism and travel, health and lifestyle. With reference to interviews with those who took up surfing in the region as long ago as the 1960s, local experts and collectors as well as to archives and local museums, an alternative account of how surfing was adopted in Cornwall has emerged. The chapter traced the development of distinctive clothing cultures around surfing, dominated at first with Americanised Aloha iconography developed in Hawaii, the birthplace of surfing and an American state since 1959. Still available today as vintage and retro garments, the Aloha style was largely supplanted in the UK by Australian imagery and brands whenever these were available. Surfing, including bellyboarding, on British shores made use of imported goods where possible, copied them freely and, crucially, also produced its own kit, clothing and ephemera when imports were unavailable or unsuitable.

There is abundant archival evidence to support the claim that local manufacturers, keen to capitalise on the trend for 'surf bathing' produced boards, guidebooks, posters and postcards that constituted an emerging indigenous surf culture based around local conditions and resources. Bellyboards, as these early British surfboards are known, continue to be used in Cornwall today and have come to be strongly associated with the region. In the post-war period, cultural artefacts associated with surfing began arriving in the UK in diverse and sometimes material forms. Surf films and magazines from the USA made their way over the Atlantic and later, surf lifeguards and their Malibu boards came from Australia to Cornwall. The boards, the kit and the clothing were enthusiastically copied and adapted by innovative

individuals at the heart of an emerging surf industry in the region, evidenced by interviews and artefacts in specialist collections.

The influence of better known surfing locales continued to be felt in Cornwall and elsewhere as Australiana helped propel surf style into mainstream fashion, which had already moved on from the look as the millennium turned. Today, global trade and the digital economy have made it possible to obtain goods and images from almost anywhere in the world at the click of a mouse, allowing, potentially, for the homogenisation of material and visual culture. Yet the clothing culture of Cornwall is distinctive and remains linked to the sea and to various forms of surfing. Nowhere is this more true than in my sample area, St Agnes on the northern coast of Cornwall.

CHAPTER FIVE

SPACE AND PLACE: Cornwall, Aggie and The Badlands

A theme that surfaced strongly in the research can best illuminate material culture with reference to notions of space, and place. My ethnographic field notes and interview transcriptions contain words and images that return again and again to locations real, imagined and virtual. This chapter begins with the unpacking of the terms 'space' and 'place' with reference to scholars of cultural geography such as Doreen Massey (Edmunds, 2013) and Tim Cresswell (2015). From there it goes on to apply the theoretical framework developed in earlier chapters to the clothing culture of the village today, drawing on the sociological work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1986), Loic Wacquant (2003) and Sarah Thornton (1995) and focusing strongly on concepts developed by Arjun Appadurai (1986, 1996, 2013).

The imagination, according to Appadurai, takes on a more pivotal role in the formation of identity in the modern world. The movement of people, goods and ideas across the globe for a variety of reasons has led to imagined communities, which may or may not coincide with geographical locations or 'neighbourhoods'. These imaginaries and neighbourhoods are, I argue, revealed through the clothing culture of my sample area and are mapped out here in sections concerned with Cornwall as real and imaginary place, the sea and beach as spaces, the virtual communities and marketplaces of surfing and how they overlap and intersect with the real and imaginary, and finally with the clothing culture that is produced in these overlapping networks of meaning.

Under the heading 'Cornwall: A Place Real and Imagined,' my subject of enquiry is the imaginary of surfing. Taking Appadurai's notion of deterritorialized communities, I discuss the notion of Cornwall and specifically St Agnes as a 'spiritual home', taking into account the phenomenon of the Cornish diaspora, and the return of individuals and families, sometimes after generations elsewhere, to the region. Continuing to examine the clothing culture of the region and how its uses are described in the interviews I conducted with surfers, local residents and individuals connected to the surf industry, the social space constructed in carparks, meeting points for surfers who have travelled to the region to surf, is analysed.

The chapter goes on to provide a description of the study site, the Cornish village of St Agnes, its rich surfing heritage and its local monicker 'The Badlands'. An alter-ego for the sleepy village, 'The Badlands' is a place where violence can erupt from misuse of jealously guarded waves, the 'ownership' of which is discussed in the context of what surfers term 'localism'.

There follows a case study of the World Belly Boarding Championships (WBBC) held annually from 2003 to 2015 on Chapel Porth, one of St Agnes' beaches. In this section I explore 'vintage' as a national and international trend, drawing on the work of Elizabeth Guffey (2006) and Raphael Samuel (2012) before focusing on the clothing culture of Cornwall and of St Agnes itself and making use of Bruno Latour's (2005) ANT to explore a network of meanings around surfing, authenticity, heritage and belonging.

Finally I move on to digital spaces, using the website MagicSeaweed.com and to illustrate how virtual communities allow individuals from disparate geographical locations to share a sense of belonging in a virtual world. Additionally, I examine the digital marketplaces that service the sample area and that are part of its local economy.

Some Definitions

First it is necessary to establish what I mean by 'place' and 'space'. Human geographer Tim Cresswell comments in *Place: An Introduction* (2015 [2004]) that, 'place is not a specialized piece of academic terminology. It is a word we use daily in the English speaking world...This makes it easier to grasp...however, it makes it more slippery...it is hard to get beyond that common sense level in order to understand it in a more developed way' (Cresswell 2015:6). He goes on to appropriate fellow human geographer John Agnew's (1987) three fundamental aspects of place. The first is location. Places, both authors agree, '...are located. They have fixed objective coordinates' but are not always stationary- a ship can be a place. The second is locale, which Cresswell defines as 'the material setting for social relations- the actual shape of the place within which people conduct their lives as individuals'. The third is a sense of place, defined as 'the subjective and emotional attachment people have to a place' (Cresswell 2015:12-13). Places, then, are 'spaces which people have made meaningful' (2015:12). However fluid their boundaries, however obscure to certain parties and whatever their shape and size, they are to at least one person, specific, named or name-able

and unique. For example, Cornwall, St Agnes and the Driftwood Spars pub in the village are all places discussed here. And although it does not appear on any map, GM's seat at the bar there is also, for him at least, a place.

Space, Cresswell continues, 'is a more abstract concept than place' (2013:15). Indeed, as geographer and social scientist Doreen Massey (1944-2016) observes, space, like time, is a dimension. 'If time is the dimension in which things happen one after the other, it's the dimension of succession, then space is the dimension of things being, existing at the same time: of simultaneity. It's the dimension of multiplicity' (www.socialsciencespace.com). Space-as-dimension for Massey, is packed with the possibility of infinite narrative but at the same time abstract.

Massey contests that unlike time, space has a materiality. Spaces themselves are more concrete, like places. According to philosopher and social scientist Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) space is a social construction in which meaning and value is produced and contested. What he terms 'social space' then, is closer to Cresswell or Agnew's 'place' than Massey's space-as-dimension. Spaces, for Lefebvre, are 'concrete abstractions', the manifestations in 'real' or 'absolute space' of relationships between everyday practices, representations and the imaginary (edition 1991). For example car parks, which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter, have a material existence in the real world, such as the National Trust car park in Chapel Porth, St Agnes, in which many of my interviews were conducted. The ways in which they are organised and set out, how we recognise what they are,

the rules we obey when we enter them and our expectations having done so are constituted by and constitute the social space of 'the car park'. These values apply to any and all car parks or 'spaces', whereas they may differ according to specific car parks or 'places'. In Chapel Porth, the car park is the only man-made area in use on the National Trust property. There is a café and toilets, and the space is therefore a locus of activity and conversation, where surfers change into and out of wetsuits, and where tourists and locals gather on the benches outside the café or sit in the open backs of estate cars to drink tea and eat ice creams. Whereas the village car park nearest Trevaunance Cove is a space that people pass through, owing to the popularity of the slipway nearer the cove as a place to put on wetsuits and the location of the café nearby.

Cornwall, A Place Real and Imagined

The last chapter drew a detailed picture of the development of the South West as the home, if not necessarily the birthplace, of British surfing. A plethora of discourses around travel and tourism, sport and leisure among others have contributed since the 1930s to the construction of surfing as an aspect of the regional identity. As Cornwall's traditional industries declined in the post-war period and tourism began to provide alternative income streams, images and accounts of clean waves rolling into picturesque bays emanated from the area in increasing volume produced by stakeholders in the local cultural economy. Colour images in print, film and television improved in quality in the period and editing and retouching processes developed, resulting in the dissemination of brochures, calendars, postcard and travel shows depicting fashionably swim-suited young bodies frolicking in white-crested breakers

beneath cerulean skies. But these were sights rarely seen with the naked eye on Cornwall's beaches, where the Atlantic swell and the prevailing westerly winds can contribute to a sea too cold or rough to swim in and wet, windswept beaches as well the excellent surfing conditions.

An example of the idealised imagery of seaside Cornwall produced by the tourist industry can be found in the promotional images for Newquay from the mid-sixties pictured in figure 5.1 Here, careful cropping and either the judicious use of a blue filter or an unbelievably fortuitous weather event contribute to a picture of wide blue skies and sparsely populated golden beaches. The enhanced natural beauty of the landscape is combined with the allure of surfing, an exotic and exhilarating activity, to form the perfect ingredients for a holiday.

It is worth noting that there is a clear difference in respect of the ways in which the surfers and bellyboarders are represented in the brochure, specifically pertaining to clothing and bodies. The male surfers in the foreground are muscular, young and sport abundant fashionable hair and tight colourful swimming trunks. The woman and the little girl in the foreground and the family group around a man with a surfboard behind them are also fashionably attired and all are mahogany tanned, possibly with the help of a red filter. The same cannot be said of the bellyboarders in figure 5.2, all of whom aside from an almost completely submerged man on the left are female. Although the standing woman clutching a bellyboard to her side appears to have loose hair and be wearing a rather skimpy bikini, three of the ladies confidently



Figure 5.1. Tourist brochure promoting Newquay as a sun-drenched destination circa mid 1960s



Figure 5.2. 'Ordinary bellyboard people' (GH 09/16) in the same brochure. caps and the chunky straps of less sexy one-piece swimsuits.

bellyboarding in the centre of the shot sport old-fashioned rubber swimming caps and the chunky straps of less alluring and more practical one-piece suits. Taken together, these representations suggest links between stand-up surfing bodies and modernity, the exotic and healthy sex appeal, and bellyboarding bodies with the past, the chilly 'home front' and perhaps even spinsterdom.

As was established in the previous chapter, the availability of cheap mass travel to further flung locations coupled with their appearance in surf media such as Bruce Brown's *The Endless Summer* (1965) may have tempted some travellers to surf spots outside the UK. But, as renowned septuagenarian Cornish surfer Gwyn Haslock remembers, when she learned to surf in the early 1960s, 'the beaches actually were quite crowded with ordinary what I call bellyboard or swimming people. I don't think people realise that Newquay had the railway going direct into it and then of course I suppose what took people away a little bit was the holidays abroad. It was cheaper to go abroad. But Newquay beaches, particularly in the bay, were always quite busy' (GH 09/16). Gwyn's comment suggests an early disparity between the real Cornwall, crowded with holidaymakers or lashed by rain, and the paradise presented in the discourse of tourism.

It is not only the discourse of tourism that provides representations of surfing. Ormrod (2008) charts the development of popular discourses around surfing in literature, film and media through the twentieth century in the UK. It produces what she terms the 'visual rhetoric' of surfing in Britain (Ormrod 2008). Examining the development of South West surfing identities up to the

1980s, Ormrod draws out similarities and differences between signifiers of the surfing lifestyle shared by British, Australian and American visual culture. Writing about a period before postmodern culture when images were less ubiquitous than they are today, Ormrod's study develops the idea of an imaginary of surfing that transcended national boundaries. In other words, the surfer as an archetype is transposable across surfing spaces. The archetype is masculine and white, subjects explored here later. He is young, tanned and wears shorts and flips-flops. He inhabits warm, sunlit spaces characterised by the absence of work and the presence of large waves. Again, there is a tension between the carefree archetype and the brave soul venturing into chilly Cornish waters after a day at the office. More germane here is the imaginary space inhabited by the archetype, constructed by discourse dominated by commercial interests like tourism and the manufacturing and service industries that developed around surfing.

The imaginary of Cornwall, then, at least as pertains to surfing, overlaps with imaginaries of other surfing locales, particularly Australia. In the previous chapter, the role of Australiana was discussed in the development of UK surf culture in the 1980s. A close affinity between Cornwall and Australia was based on a shared love of the activity and on the 'cross pollination' (RM 07/13), as RM describes it, of surfers between Newquay and other surfing hotspots around the world, who would travel to wherever there was surf and a summer lifeguarding season to make a living around surfing year-round. The Cornish diaspora, to which the discussion will shortly return, of mainly miners and their families who dispersed across the globe in the 18th and 19th centuries to make a living,

settled in large numbers in the Antipodes, providing continuing links between the region and Australia.

Additionally, as I established in the last chapter, the working holiday visas for young people provided by the Australian government in the 1980s attracted large numbers of surfers and would-be surfers from Cornwall and elsewhere to the Gold Coast. Many hoped to continue the activity and the lifestyle after their visas expired; those without the means to travel to the other side of the world hoped to 'live the dream' in the UK; where else would these young surfers travel to than the South West, the home of British surfing? Mike Searle, founder of British surfing magazine *Carve*, who travelled to Cornwall from London in the eighties, says he 'wasn't aware of anywhere in the country - well, there were places, but as far as we were concerned Cornwall was the centre of the British surfing universe' (MS 03/06). His ideas were not lacking in a factual foundation.

As Peter Robinson, at the time of interview the director of the Museum of British Surfing, explains, 'in the UK the South West is still seen as the home of surfing because it has some of the most consistent waves around the whole of the UK coastline and it has the highest concentration of surfing businesses as well....so if you're out looking for your kit, most of the businesses that are either manufacturing or just retailing are based in Cornwall and Devon' (interview PR September 2013). Nick Holden, the surfer who ran the WBBC for the National Trust agrees, commenting that in North Cornwall, 'there are some pretty good waves around there. It's got a strong culture that's got a lot of documented history of having successful surfers and champions and people that have

contributed massively to the culture of British surfing, and even European surfing. A stronghold of surfing I'd describe it as' (NH 04/16). My interviewees, experts on surfing, here discuss the conditions that helped to established the South West as the centre of British surfing by the 1980s. But these conditions are less the subject of popular discourse than the surfer and the life he leads. In Cornwall as a real place, this lifestyle may not necessarily bear resemblance to that offered by Cornwall as an imagined place, so similar to Australia, constructed by discourse and the visual rhetoric of surfing (Ormrod 2008) in the 1980s.

The imagined Cornwall is more accessible than ever before, thanks to the internet and the millions of digital images that it distributes instantaneously to anywhere on Earth every second of each day. Mike Searle recollected in an interview that when he set up *Carve* magazine in Newquay in 1991, he delivered it himself 'to surf shops and a few little local newsagents and stuff. It was all pretty much in Cornwall and Devon and we used to go to the south coast, Bournemouth... People loved it. We'd turn up at these surf shops and there would be kids standing there waiting for it' (MS 03/16). The enthusiasm for print images that appealed to this niche market is confirmed by Roger Mansfield, who recollects passing around 'tatty old copies' (RM 07/13) of California based *Surfer* magazine that had arrived in the UK by mail order prior to the distribution of home grown publications. Such eagerness is in part fostered by scarcity; today's mediascape is composed of images that have increased in numbers by orders of magnitude since then.

Appadurai insists that dissemination models of culture based on practices such as the physical distribution of magazines I describe above are not applicable today. In the modern world the shifting landscapes of images that he refers to as 'mediascapes' and 'ideoscapes', constructed in the interests of those who produce and disseminate them as well as their audiences, help us to construct narratives about people and places and about ourselves and who we could be. He writes, 'the new power of imagination in the fabrication of social lives is inescapably tied up with images, ideas and opportunities that come from elsewhere, often moved around by the vehicles of mass media.' (1996:54). An international repertoire of representations, narratives and accounts of places both real and imagined are increasingly available via digital commerce and communication. They expand our imaginative horizons to allow us to consider futures that our current situation does not offer, what Appadurai calls 'imagined life possibilities.' For example, individuals in landlocked cities can enjoy video clips filmed from the surfer's perspective with a Go-Pro on the internationally subscribed webpage SurfLine.com, and download classic surf films such as *The Endless Summer* (1965 Bruce Brown) from a file sharing site like Piratebay. They can learn to surf at home by YouTube tutorial, dress in the latest surf gear purchased on Amazon by PayPal and keep abreast of wind conditions via the website and smartphone app launched in 2012 which describes itself as 'the oldest, most popular and most detailed free long range surf forecast on the web', Magic Seaweed (Magicseaweed.com), about which more later. They can vividly imagine the more suitable lifestyle that awaits them when they reach the South West of England on holiday, having painstakingly researched suitable surf hostels on travel forum TripAdvisor. Some might

picture finally making the move to a place near a surf spot whose waves they have watched live through webcam footage supplied by the local surf school, and imagine taking residence in a property they know inside out from taking virtual tours inside it through online estate agent RightMove.com.

St Agnes resident for almost a decade, JL describes what drew him to Cornwall.

I didn't grow up anywhere near any surf, I grew up in Morecambe in Lancashire. I saw some videos when I was growing up, it just looked quite exotic and then as a year out I went to Australia with the purpose of learning to surf... I went to university in Swansea, deliberately because it was near the sea. Then I moved down here for six months but didn't quite manage to get jobs or anything so then I left for a while and I came back down in 2008 and I've been here ever since. (JL 09/15)

An ideal 'imagined life possibility' was pursued by JL and others in order to 'live the dream' or in other words to enact the possibility. It was a lifelong ambition for many respondents, who described the coast, or more specifically Cornwall as having been their 'spiritual home' (NH, DM et al) whilst they lived elsewhere, suggesting displacement, homesickness and pilgrimage.

DF describes how he 'finally came home':

So, my great-grandfather was a mining engineer who went out to South Africa. On my Dad's side.... That's how the family is all Cornish, and then my Mum is from Wantage and she went out to nurse in South Africa and met my Dad. So, in 2000 I came to the UK to kind of do a bit of working and travelling. Started in Manchester, was about to go to Aberdeen and a friend of mine...Although my Gran grew up here and my Mum holidayed here, I kind of didn't really listen to what they said. And a friend said you really need to come down, it's pretty. And then basically came down

and it was August, went to PorthTowan, it was 7 o'clock in the evening, the sun was still out, it was four foot surf and ... I had this kind of southern hemisphere mentality of it can't be pretty in the UK and then you get here and it's absolutely amazing. So, six months turned to three years, I met my wife who was living in Falmouth. (DF 04/16)

DF's story relates to the journey of the Cornish Diaspora, introduced in the previous chapter. It is well documented in innumerable parish records and in the Courtney Library & Cornish History Research Centre in Truro. Opportunities to make a living in newly established mining operations, chiefly in Australia and the Americas, drew a significant number of skilled miners abroad. There is a saying in Cornwall that if you look down a deep enough hole anywhere in the world, you'll find a Cornishman at the bottom of it (Pryor 1963). Moonta, South Australia, is known as Little Cornwall, with a significant proportion of current residents claiming to have descended from 'cousin Jacks' or Cornishmen, allegedly so called because mineworkers always claimed they had a cousin, Jack, who was also willing to work. Images of Moonta from the 19th century such as in figure 5.3 and relics of the area's industrial heritage bear witness to the adoption of the Cornish vernacular in the style of mineworkers' cottages and Cornish engineering techniques in the remains of the distinctive engine houses at the entrance to the mines (see figure 5.4) and remain as part of the industrial heritage of the area in St Agnes as well as a number of other locations. There is an image of a preserved engine house at Wheal Kitty in St Agnes in chapter seven (figure 7.25). According to charitable trust familysearch.org, an organisation which aims to provide free genealogical information, 'it is estimated that today there are approximately six million people worldwide with Cornish

ancestry, and fewer than 10% now live in Cornwall' (familysearch.org). In the light of the evidence at Moonta and in line with Appadurai, it seems that these deterritorialised persons took with them the imaginary of their abandoned homeland in the form of discourse.

As I established in the previous chapter, it is possible that the return of these travelling miners' descendants was accompanied by knowledge of surfing. Today, many continue to return after they or their ancestors have left the area for work, study, travel or love. Interviewed at the Buntabout surf competition, BBB reminisces about her husband's longing to return to Cornwall during the period in which they lived elsewhere. 'We were in North Devon before [we moved back here] and then before that I was in London teaching. My husband came to stay in my flat with me and he was like a caged tiger'. Putting this down to the distance from his beloved surf and the feeling 'of being enclosed', she points towards the sea and continues, 'Our boys are in there now. Can't keep out of it. Just like their dad.' (BBB 09/15). HP describes how 'the umbilical cord pulled me back to St. Agnes' (HP 04/16). Although she does not surf, HP experienced the longing that Fredric Jameson discusses in *Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic Of Late Capitalism* (1990), nostalgia for the present.

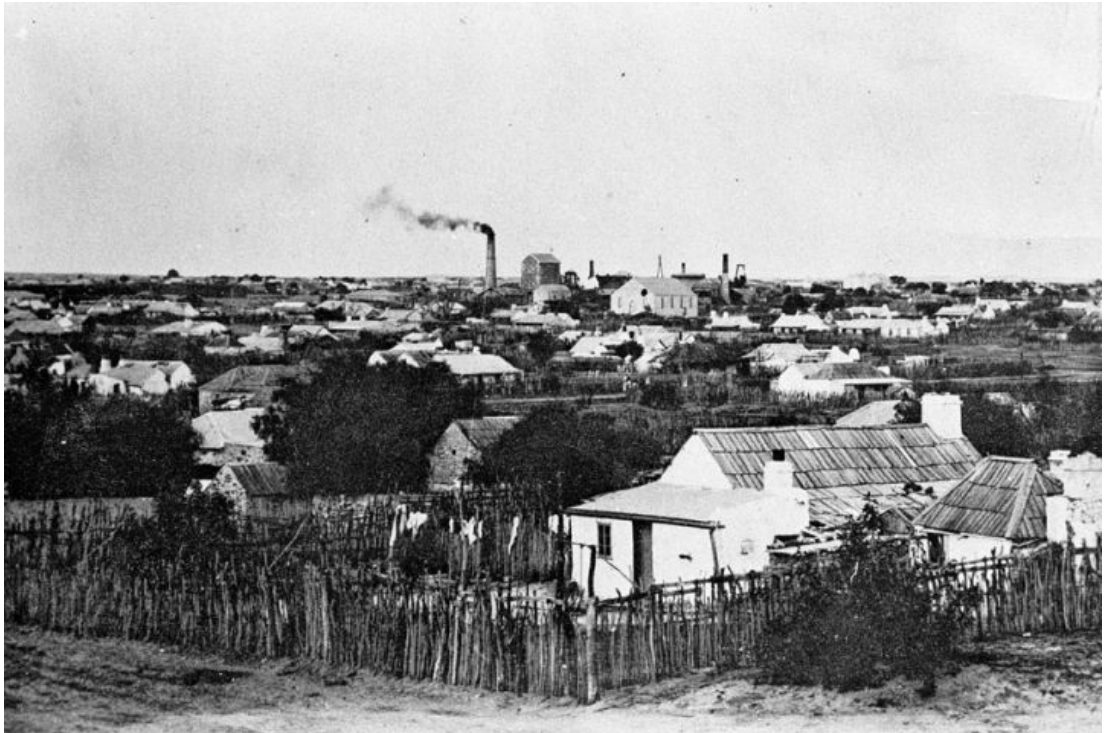


Figure 5.3. The mining town of Moonta, Australia, in the 19th century.



Figure 5.4. Hughes Enginehouse, Moonta, a 'classic Cornish enginehouse' constructed in 1863.

Nostalgia

Before expanding on Jameson's specific interest in nostalgia, it is worth expanding on the nuance of the term here, since the experience of other types of nostalgia will be described by respondents elsewhere in this chapter. Svetlana Boym's *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) offers a comprehensive genealogy of the term, which was first used to identify a malaise affecting Swiss soldiers missing their homeland, hence the use of the neologism derived from Greek words *nostos*, meaning return home, and *algos*, meaning pain. In other words, nostalgia was an early diagnosis of homesickness. The longing experienced by the Swiss soldiers for another place has since been experienced, Boym explains, as the desire to be elsewhere not just in space, but in time, resulting in the more commonplace understanding of the term nostalgia to mean a longing for a past time. For Boym, currently,

...two kinds of nostalgia are distinguished: the restorative and the reflective. Restorative nostalgia stresses *nostos* and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives in *algia*, the longing itself, and delayed the homecoming- wistfully, ironically, desperately. Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt. (Boym, 2001: xviii)

DF mentioned above that his grandmother lived in Cornwall and his mother holidayed there before he was born, but he 'didn't really listen to what they said' (DF 04/16) about it. The desire to return to the same spot each year for a holiday is very much what Boym describes as 'restorative nostalgia', in which

the past is copied in order to preserve what is perceived as its truth. It is the process of creating tradition, and is accompanied and reinforced by yet more restorative nostalgia in the form of the conversations on the subject that DF only half heard. The builders of cottages in Moonta maintained the traditional layout and look of Cornish cottages on the other side of the world and may have experienced a similar restorative nostalgia.

Reflective nostalgia is akin to an 'imagined life possibility' that derives from idealised images and 'lingers on the ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time' (Boym, 2001:41). Literary critic and political philosopher Fredric Jameson's notion of nostalgia for the present is a kind of reflective nostalgia. Jameson argues that in postmodern culture, pastiche and simulacra replace the authentic whilst at the same time media saturation promotes such glossy, hyper-real replacements as more desirable than the real thing in order to promote consumption. Faced with this unashamed appropriation of reality by the forces of capitalism, individuals dream of accessing the authentic or else long for the fantasy to be true. In either case, life lived in the present fails to come up to expectations that there is a better, either more genuine or more fantastical, present somewhere 'out there'. This, says Jameson, is nostalgia for the present (Jameson 1990). Appadurai takes this notion on board in his discussion of the cultural imaginaries of the displaced to explain how communities and places can be both imagined and real at the same time. To return to the evidence provided by the ethnographic interviews I carried out, the visceral immediacy of surfing provided many interviewees with what they felt was a connection to something

'real' (AS, BBB, DM et al), an 'authentic' experience that the majority of Jameson's postmodern subjects can only desire. The experience can of course be consumed whilst on holiday but it is so far removed from daily life's simulacra that perversely, it may feel 'unreal' (CB 09/15). Many hope to live, rather than buy into this authenticity, thereby ridding themselves of nostalgia for the present. A significant proportion of those who relocated to the local area describe having 'imagined' or 'dreamed' (DF, CB, EP et al) of Cornwall as a place 'away from the rat race' (PH & PH 09/15), suggesting a slower pace of life and perhaps an escape from capitalism itself.

Today, this nostalgia for the present manifests itself in the clothing culture of the region and can be illustrated by a conversation with CB at the Buntabout in September 2015. On a cold windswept beach, CB mans the car park, a tiny figure 'encased in a huge jacket, hands warming on a polystyrene cup full of scalding tea.' (CB 09/15). She describes her journey to St Agnes beginning where she was brought up on the Isle of Wight, an area not known for its surfing, but she says, 'there was a group of us at school and we just wanted to be surfer girls. We went out and got our boards and they were way too small and way too high performance for trying to learn on but we didn't care, we just loved it. I didn't actually master surfing until later on because I started off on the wrong kind of gear, really'. CB and her friends as children were part of what Benedict Anderson (1983) would term an 'imagined community' a group geographically diverse whose common interest is held together by a shared media. CB and her friends imagined a future, as Appadurai would have it,

based on a mediascape in which images of surfing and indeed its rhetoric, as Ormrod insists, derive in the main from much warmer climes.

The 'surfer girls' with whom CB and her young friends identified and imagined themselves to be wore bikinis rather than wetsuits, existing in an idealised present that owed much to the cover shots in *SurfGirl*, (see figure 5.5) ironically published in far-from-tropical Newquay, and other surfing magazines as well as Hollywood films and publicity shots of, for example Cameron Dias, pictured in figure 5.6 in 2002, in which wetsuits are eschewed in favour of the display of the body. In the *SurfGirl* image, despite the lack of any surfing craft and the sea that is lacking in waves to ride, the visual language of surfing is referenced in the tropical flowers that adorn the model's bikini and the tanned, lithe body and wet blonde hair are common features of representations of women surfers (Heywood 2005). These are shared by Cameron Dias, widely known as a native Californian and keen surfer, who here shows off the taut musculature of her stomach and her deep tan in a contrasting white bikini as she jogs towards the sea, eyes fixed on the far-off breakers rather than the paparazzi. No other human beings clutter these shots, with deserted beaches a common feature, allowing a close focus on the half-naked girl at the centre. She may not be overtly coded for the male gaze, but she is nevertheless wearing less than most male surfers would consider the bare minimum for the activity in any climate: board shorts and a t-shirt to protect the skin from the sun. And in both images the gorgeous surfer girl is presented as only partly active: the viewer does not encounter the physical effort required to master the board since no waves are present in either.



Figure 5.5. Cover of SurfGirl magazine, July 13 2010



Figure 5.6. Cameron Diaz prepares to surf in 2002 in Malibu, California

The image of the bikini-clad surfer girl informed CB's imaginary to the extent that when she later travelled to Australia, 'it was just everything I imagined Australia would be and more and that was it. I remember just really wanting to go surfing in a bikini, being warm. I just remember that happening, it felt unreal' (CB 09/15). The jellyfish, sharks and ozone depletion that plague Australian surfing are not recalled by CB. Her description of Australia as 'everything I imagined and more' supports Appadurai's theory of the cultural imaginary of the displaced, even if CB does not originate from a surfing locale because her identity as a 'surfer girl' drew her to where she imagined the 'real' community of surfers would gather. The 'unreal' experience of embodying the 'true' surfer girl identity is expressed through clothing culture in the bikini she wears.

On the freezing Cornish beach, CB, huddled over a hot drink is wearing a National Trust jacket, 'just casual jeans and flip flops' as we might expect from the same analysis, and 'a really warm jumper' (CB 09/15). From its neck I can see emerging the two bright green straps of a bikini top. Having been brought up on the advice on adequate support doled out by Jackie magazine in the early eighties, I would never wear a bikini top as an undergarment unless I planned to enter the water and jotted in my field notes 'swimming/surfing TODAY??'. But CB tells me she will almost certainly not be revealing any more than those thin straps in this cold, and she has no plans to surf that day since she is on duty throughout the period when the conditions are right. She nevertheless signals by means of the straps unnecessarily poking out of her sweater that she is

wearing a bikini top –the garment that she most closely associates with the idealised imaginary of surfing – instead of the more conventional bra.

A Place Called Aggie

The scope of the thesis thus far has concerned itself with surfing in the South West, particularly Cornwall, but an ethnography cannot hope to cover the diverse and heterogeneous nature of surf culture in the entire region, due to limitations of time and scope. Therefore my ethnographic study was carried out on a small village whose surf culture may be at least analogous to that of other small communities in the area, for two reasons. The first is that this small community, like many others in the region, is bound together by the surf in respect of local culture and commerce. The second reason is that, like other surfing communities in the South West, St Agnes or ‘Aggie’ as it is locally known, retains strong ties with surfing communities and individuals around the world. Many of its residents hail from overseas, drawn to the area by the surf, many making their living from surf culture.

St Agnes is situated on the north coast of Mid Cornwall (see figure 5.7).

According to the 2011 census, St Agnes and Perranporth community network is home to 17,400 residents and covers an area of 12,453 hectares, including PorthTowan, Cubert, St Allen, Newlyn East and Crantock as well as the eponymous towns (ONS.org). The village of St Agnes itself as seen on the map in figure 5.7, is home to a population of 3,900 people. The village meanders along the cliff side and follows the steep sides of the valley leading to the shingle beach at Trevaunance Cove, dotted along the way with cafes and shops

and ending at the slipway, overlooked by the SLSA clubhouse and the RNLI lifeboat station. The beach itself is flanked on both sides by rocky outcrops and almost disappears at high tide. The rip current on the west side on the bay, a deadly undertow which catches swimmers near the beach and can drag them more than a mile into open water, confirms that this is not a classic pleasure beach with shallow waves such as those found on the milder south coast. Its conditions are best suited to surfing, along with Chapel Porth, a stone and shingle beach with equally treacherous currents that nestles in a wild valley just to the west that is studded with relics of the area's mining heritage and managed by the National Trust (see figure 5.8).

St Agnes, or 'Aggie,' is a community tightly bound by a shared love of these beaches and activities associated with them, and by a longstanding local surf heritage. Since the first St Agnes SLSA club-house was dug out of the cliff by a team of local men in 1954 and twinned with the SLSA in Bondi Beach, Australia, membership of the club has steadily grown and it currently runs classes, staffed by volunteers, for six age groups a week, every week from May to October, granting free access to all members to the newly rebuilt clubhouse. Two commercial surf schools also use Trevaunance Cove and dozens of local surfers enjoy the breaks at Chapel Porth, many of whom, like UK champion Ben Skinner have enjoyed success on the British and World competitive stages.

Much of the commerce in the village is built around surfing: the small commercial centre boasts a range of independent businesses, including wetsuit, surfboard and clothing shops, accommodation and catering for surf tourists.

Local surfing conditions are best enjoyed with a board that has been customised or 'shaped' from a generic polyurethane 'blank' to suit them, and one of the first board shapers in the UK was opened in St Agnes 1976 by an Australian, the late 'Chops' Lascelles, a figure sufficiently renowned in the surf world to receive an obituary in *The Times* (19/10/13). The St Agnes workshop continues to sell BeachBeat branded boards, now shaped by Lascelles' sons.

Additionally the international market for surfing goods and services is catered for by organisations based in the area. The WBBC, held by the National Trust at Chapel Porth between 2003 and 2015, attracted visitors from as far afield as Australia and Peru; it will be discussed in more detail as the subject of the case study later in the chapter. In 1990 the world renowned environmental pressure group, Surfers Against Sewage, was founded, and remains based in St Agnes at Wheal Kitty workshops on the cliffs above the cove. They are joined there by the 'cold water surf' company Finisterre, described by *The Independent on Sunday* as 'achingly fashionable' (21/06/09) designing high-end sports and leisure wear and more recently wetsuits, sold in its shops in Cornwall, Devon and London's Soho as well as internationally online.

The home of internationally significant surfing interests and a concentration of surfing activity, St Agnes remains relatively unknown, even amongst surfers (Stranger4, ND). Some would rather it remained a closely guarded secret and have even resorted to keeping visitors at bay by developing the area's reputation as 'The Badlands'.



Figure 5.7. Map of Cornwall showing location of St Agnes



Figure 5.8. Chapel Porth Beach, St Agnes.

A Place Called the Badlands

The name 'Badlands', which according to interviewees was at one time seen spray-painted on street signs and daubed in board wax on the windscreens of outsiders' cars (SB 04/15) appears incongruous in this picturesque locale, but to South West surfers it signifies the 'locals only' breaks in Trevaunance and nearby Chapel Porth. Surf writers Chris Nelson and Demi Taylor explore the nature of the name and quote Steve Bunt, one of the original St Agnes surfers and owner of Best Ever Surfboards, who says, 'I think it was between 1981 to 85 ...We didn't like the outsiders coming in and taking over our break really. We decided to make it the 'Badlands'– put people off. It was bad Karma to come down and surf here. It really did work and it still does. There are a lot of people who won't come down and surf around Aggie because it's the Badlands.' (Stranger4, N.D).

TP, interviewed prior to my beginning the ethnography, laughed, 'you won't get much out of St Agnes. It's The Badlands, isn't it?' (TP 05/13) alluding to the area's reputation for hostility to outsiders discussed in Research Methods. But having gained access to the village as I described in the same chapter, I interviewed Steve Bunt who recollected that the intention was to scare people away from St Agnes beaches and reserve them for locals. He admitted that other tactics than the name were also used: 'it was like anybody who came outside from the village came down and surfed here, especially Chapel Porth, we'd kind of let their tyres down...That was long ago but like...there's still a few old school surfers still around. It's a bit like this is our - we were born and bred and this is our land. We have to accept people coming in but we don't like them

taking liberties' (SB 04/15). Here Steve alludes to the use of Others as a means to construct the identity of subcultural insiders as discussed by Thornton, and to territorial behaviour that surfers call 'localism.'

According to Lyndsay Erin Usher's PhD research, 'localism is a well-known issue in surf culture. It is territorial behavior [sic] whereby resident surfers exclude outsiders from a surf break through threat, intimidation or whatever other means necessary' (Usher 2013:iii). My field notes indicate that in my study area at least one surfer from out of town had felt 'intimidated' by local surfers and another claimed that a local surfer had 'squared up' to him on the beach after he had jumped the queue for a wave or 'dropped in', in the argot of surfing (field notes 08/15). Whilst waiting one's turn for an appropriate wave in the 'line-up' is as much a matter of safety in crowded waters as it is of etiquette, the unwritten rules governing turn taking are not as simple as first-come-first-served and local surfers often expect to take precedence.

Paul Scott, writing in Australian online journal *M/C: A Journal of Media and Culture*, explains that 'surfing saturation in popular culture has resulted in more than an excess of representation: it has resulted in an excess of participation. For the "original" members of surfing subcultures, surfing has simply become too crowded, resulting in a frustration that is too often being expressed in aggressive behaviour and surf rage' (Scott, 2003). David Langan agrees: arguing that the popularity of surf style clothing attracted ever greater numbers of 'wannabe' surfers into the waves, he attributes a rise in aggression to the commodification of surfing (Langan in Booth 2013:174). Former world

champion surfer Nat Young suffered a broken nose and eye sockets after an attack in his hometown of Angourie in Australia in 2000, after incidents in and out of the water relating to 'rights' to ride particular waves. He subsequently published *Surf Rage* (2000), in which he and other surfers discuss eruptions of violence over matters of surfing hierarchy accompanied by gruesome images of the resulting injuries. My ethnography revealed no such incidents, but there was a sense of the local breaks being the rightful property of the residents, who were as apt to complain about 'drop in artists' (wave queue jumpers) from the nearest town as they were about tourists in 'their' waves.

There is, in addition to the more confrontational policing of the waves, a friendly rivalry between local villages. HP, asked how many people she would estimate living in the area, laughed, 'Oh, don't include Perranporth!! That's our rival!' which she followed up with an account of how her parents met: 'Dad met my mum who was in Porthtowan SLSC so they have a beautiful rivalry and my dad was desperately proud when he poached one of their members to marry her. She's been a St Agnes girl ever since. I think that was when she was seventeen and she's seventy-three now'. (HP 04/16). Sweet as the story is, the subtext is that no-one can belong to both communities. HP's mother left her own and joined her father's.

Given the alleged antipathy towards outsiders discussed above, how do temporary St Agnes residents, also known as tourists or Emmets, fare in the village? HP has sympathy with local annoyance. 'You know, they come with a trauma because the infrastructure isn't necessarily well-built to cope with them

so it's busy. It's frustrating if you're trying to get to an appointment and they're looking at the scenery and stuff so there are frustrations but, yes. They are trying to share some of your own beauty, you've just got to be proud of that, haven't you' (HP 04/16). The proprietorial attitude suggested by 'own' is benign here, followed by the pragmatic, 'they get a fortnight and we can pick and choose our days. What would we do without them?' (HP *ibid*). Certainly tourism is a pillar of the local economy in the South West as a whole and Cornwall in particular. But tourists and locals do not share the same clothing culture, however hard the tourists might try to embody their imagined community.

Mary Lascelles, widow of Australian board-shaper Chops, discussed earlier, and proprietor of the Aggie Surf Shop, tells me about some of her best-selling products. They are t-shirts and hoodies featuring the shop's logo as part of an overall design which is updated periodically to incorporate images that 'people prefer at the time, you know' (ML 07/15). In the past, signifiers associated with surfing's Polynesian roots sold well, such as hibiscus flowers and sharks. Today, images suggesting Cornwall's heritage such the iconic silhouette of the abandoned engine houses from the tin mining industry that pepper the local coastline are popular. 'Tourists buy them, yes,' Mary tells me, 'when they've been here and they've hired a board and learned to surf and had a lovely time. Then sometimes they come back in the shop the following year and they're wearing the t-shirt and they say, remember me? I'm back!' (ML *ibid*). Worn and sometimes no longer available in that specific design, the garments materialise the experience of having visited the area at least once, if

not of surfing prowess, providing a degree of legitimacy to Others who cross the boundary into the Badlands. But Aggie Surf Shop products can be bought online by anyone with access to the Internet and a credit card. Does this mean that the clothing culture of the area will lose its distinctive qualities, transforming the place known as Aggie or The Badlands into a generic seaside town, a mere space?

Spaces: The Beach and the Car Park

When clothing fit for purpose at the beach developed, as I established in the previous chapter, it ignored many of the accepted standards of decency that governed the land. The newly appreciated sandy margin between land and sea was what John Fiske calls a 'liminal space' (Fiske, 1989), neither one place or another but in between. Thus different rules applied in dress and behaviour to those accepted on either land or sea. What Fiske discusses here is the social construction of the beach as space (Lefebvre 1991), the ongoing process of negotiation between everyday practices, the imaginary and representation. The sea and the land here are also spaces, general concepts rather than geographically specific places.

In his seminal 1989 essay on the subject, the beach, according to Fiske, occupies a physical and semiotic space between the sea or nature and the town or culture. Man, Fiske explains, 'wishes to mediate this big binary opposition for reasons to do with comfort and the avoidance of terror' (Fiske 1989:121) and he therefore divides the liminal space of the beach into zones in which the influence of the binary increases or decreases (see figure 5.9) 'Terror' results

from anomalies, in which the boundaries between nature and culture are unclear. The surfer for Fiske is identified with the deep sea, the zone of pure nature. This is articulated on many levels: he is an unsettling 'hybrid' between man and fish, and in pursuit of pure pleasure and dices with death, he signifies physicality and mortality. He is therefore unwelcome and even sometimes prohibited on the beach, where culture has a stronger grip on the space owing to its proximity to the space of the town.

Based on a study of Cottesloe beach near Perth, Australia in the late 1970s, Fiske's essay discusses the meaning of 'the surfie', a term used at the time to denote a person who surfed for pleasure rather than in the service of a Surf Life Saving Club. The two surfing factions are discussed at length in Kent Pearson's *Surfing Subcultures of Australia and New Zealand* (1979). He states that the surfie had taken on the status of a folk devil in Australia in the years leading up to the publication of Fiske's article, with reports of street fights between surfies and 'clubbies,' the SLSC members who were constructed as clean cut public servants by the media. Therefore Fiske's reading of the surfer and his relationship with the socially constructed space of the beach is less applicable in St Agnes, where surfing for pleasure is not condemned as shirking or as Fiske expresses it in Australian dialect, *bludging*, although connotations of deviance still cling to surfing in respects I will address in the following chapter. Fiske's analysis of the surfer's relationship to the space of the beach and my ethnography are aligned in one important respect, which is that the beach is not the surfer's domain. In fact, the car park appears with far more frequency in the interviews I conducted as a socially constructed space.

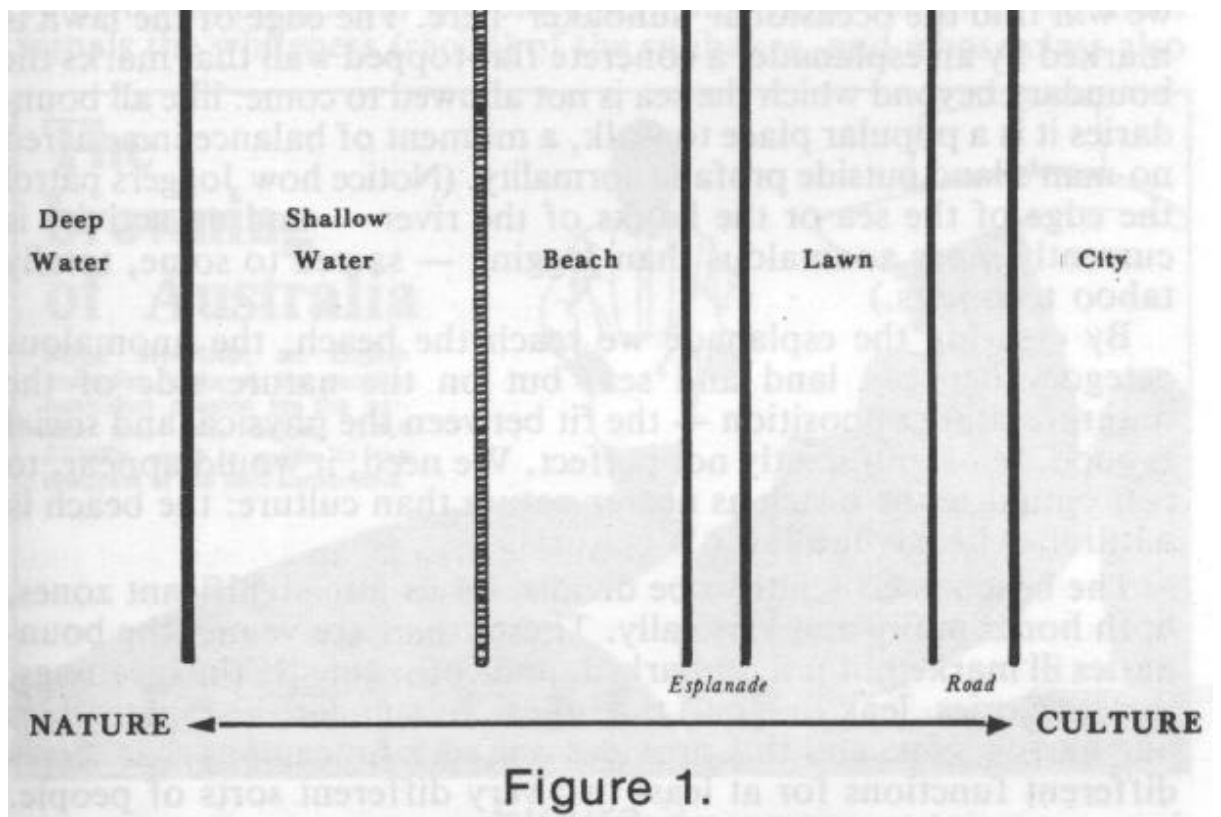


Figure 5.9. John Fiske's representation of the zones of nature and culture on the beach.

The car park is the space in which the surfer divests himself of street clothes or culture, and prepares himself for entry into nature. In Cornwall, this usually means putting on a wetsuit. Fiske, discussing the balmy waters of Cottesloe makes no mention of wetsuits, but following his analysis they could be read as anomalous, like the surfboard and the panel van to which Fiske pays meticulous attention. The wetsuit is an industrially produced technical performance garment for an activity adopted in the West, as I have established, in the industrial age; it is also a smooth outer skin, conferring seal-like properties of endurance and flexibility in the water on the wearer. In Aggie, the Atlantic waves can be withstood for longer with addition of neoprene hoods, gloves and boots. The car park is a social space with inherent tensions because it is the place where surfers move ever further away from the safety of neat categorisation in the nature/culture binary as they prepare to 'escape into nature' (Fiske 1989:140) by donning the wetsuit and other 'anomalous' garments prior to entering the water.

The car park can also be read as a physical space or what Appadurai calls a 'neighbourhood' in which the inhabitants of the imagined surf community come together. In the sixties, according to MW 'when we used to go to a competition we'd sit in the back of my dad's car. If we saw a surfboard on the back of a car [in a car park] we'd count the amount of surfboards and it would be ones and twos....now at any time of day you'll see hundreds of boards' (MW 04/16). It was then and is now a space where surfers change into wetsuits and out of their 'street clothes' and back again, where music is played, conversations are had and comparisons are made. Not so, it must be noted, for bellyboarders, who

according to NH, who ran the WBBC, 'tend not to start from the car park, that's a difference in culture, whereas us surfers are all huddled round the boots of our cars and off we go in our own little worlds, rubber-clad to the sea. Bellyboarders have more of a tendency to spend the whole day at the beach and go in and out, in and out, so a wetsuit becomes a bit of a faff' (NH 04/16). The older surfer's 'disdain for neoprene' as NH puts it, is discussed in the following chapter. But it is not the wetsuit that, as Bruno Latour might have it, has agency in separating those who wear it from those who do not; it is the board. 'When it's waxed you don't want sand sticking to it,' AS explains, 'so you're not going to leave the board all waxed up on the beach while you get changed' (AS 07/15). The bellyboard has no requirement for waxing since the surfer holds it rather than balances on it. It can stay on the beach with the bellyboarder all day.

So in the carpark, the clothing culture relates to stand up surfers more than any other type. MW observes, 'Yes, so the sport has really changed. And the people that are involved with the sport. In the old days if you had a car, your first car, it was the worst car you'd ever see on the car park, it would be a complete banger and all surfers had bangers. Whereas now you go in the car park now, they've got Mercedes, Volkswagen campers, so the sport has really come on, which is good' (MW 02/16). MW is not making comparisons between the status of surfers he observes. The cross section he discusses is placed in opposition to the status of surfers in the past, suggesting a co-operating community rather than a competitive one. DT tells me that 'people do care about how they look although everyone is coming to the beach because

everyone is still looking at each other because the car park is like a melting pot' (DT 09/15), suggesting that standards of dress are established and re-established in the space of the car park. But anecdote is rife in the surfing community in which the car park is the site of localist confrontation and even violence such as in Nat Young's (2000) collected accounts of surf rage discussed above.

The case study that follows, then, illuminates tensions in the socially constructed spaces of the beach and the carpark by examining an event held annually in Chapel Porth between 2003 and 2015, an event bound up with St Agnes as place both real and imagined, and with nostalgia in its many forms.

The World Bellyboarding Championships

Bellyboarding has remained popular in Cornwall for close to a hundred years, never really disappearing from the region's shallows. NH believes that 'a lot of people have bellyboarded at Chapel Porth since the '50s but there are beaches such as Polzeath and possibly even Woolacombe and maybe around Bude and Porthtowan, all of the north coast, that have got...a claim to being...part of bellyboarding history' (NH 04/16). The landscape of technology that Appadurai calls the technoscape saw huge shifts in the post-war period in which advances in aerospace technology were applied to peacetime industrial production. On America's West coast, polyurethane and fibreglass processes developed for aviation contributed to the development of the aptly named *malibu* surfboard (Westwick & Neushul 2013) shifting the imaginary of surfing to California, where a man could glide upright on rolling breakers far out to sea. But in the UK, the

steadfast adherence of some locals and tourists in the South West to lying prone on a marine ply bellyboard near the shore has maintained one aspect of the region's surfing heritage to this day.

This means that the South West region hosts a wide variety of surfing activities; not just the stand-up surfing that dominates media reports and previous academic studies. There is, as I pointed out in the literature review, an absence of critical literature that pays close attention to the existence of other forms of surfing. A contribution of this thesis is to address this gap in the literature by acknowledging the role of all forms of surfing practiced in the region and their role in the local clothing culture. In the last chapter, I traced the development of surfing in the South West as a narrative in which the bellyboard was not merely a developmental milestone in the journey towards stand-up surfing but a legitimate surfing practice in its own right. Here, I examine its continuing practice, focusing on the World Belly Boarding Championships (WBBC), held at St Agnes' Chapel Porth beach between 2003 and 2015. Theoretical tools provided by Arjun Appadurai and John Fiske used in the analysis above, as well as Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory, discussed in the literature review, are used to unpick the event and some of the responses I received whilst conducting interviews there in 2015.

The WBBC were held with sporadic gap years on Chapel Porth beach until, after a gap year in 2016, it was announced that the event would not carry on. Sponsored by The National Trust, the event was inaugurated in 2003 by surfers Martyn Ward and Chris Ryan as a tribute to a Londoner who until his death

visited the cove annually with a wooden board he had bought in the area in his youth. In its latter years the WBBC attracted competitors and spectators from around the world. The rules forbade 'modern' surfing equipment such as wetsuits and leashes, and all competitors used plywood boards like those providing the region's first 'surf ride'. Vintage boards and, in later years, vintage swimwear were celebrated, with prizes awarded and pop-up vintage shops appearing alongside the changing rooms and tea tent (figure 5.10).

The term 'vintage' is used here to apply to artefacts that are authentically old, rather than styled to look as if they are. In Heike Jenss' *Fashioning Memory: Vintage Style and Youth Culture* (2015) she describes vintage clothing as 'clothes that are precisely valued for their materialisation of time and 'datedness' and their capacity as memory modes through which new wearers can feel in touch with a former fashion time' (2015:11). Jenss draws a distinction between 'vintage' and 'retro' which is useful here. The terms are often used interchangeably, but in Jenss' analysis, 'vintage' describes 'a specific value related to or constructed around the age of clothes, including an idea of rarity associated with them' (2015:12) whereas 'retro...a more flexible and widely used term' (2015:14) applies to clothing which is 'backward looking'. It encompasses old clothing, old clothing restyled to fit in with contemporary trends or 'a commercial copying of previous decade's styles and new clothes made to resemble the look of second hand clothing' (2015:14). Jenss separates items that are genuinely old or 'vintage' from those which merely appear to be, which she terms 'retro.'

At the WBBC, vintage items are highly sought after and their acquisition rewarded in the vintage swimwear competition, in which the winner is selected as the individual wearing 'the best outfit' (field notes 09/15). Here, the contestants are judged on their ability to source and purchase authentic pieces of second hand swimwear and accessories, demonstrating 'the wearer's recognition of a special type or model, and [the wearer's] knowing and appreciating such specifics as year or period when produced or worn' (DeLong et al 2005:23).

The WBBC is, then, what Katherine Duffy and Paul Hewer describes as a 'vintagescape' (2013). Here, complex interactions occur between consumers, spaces and objects orchestrated around notions of time and place, best exemplified in JI's description of the outfit he had selected for the day: 'Oh, Ivy League, simple. That very preppy, mid-sixties, late-sixties style based around the major colleges in America which was personified by Kennedy I suppose, he was the ultimate Ivy League poster boy' (JI 09/15) (see figure 5.11). JI's interest in the history of fashion comes over strongly in his confident appraisal of the ensemble; the use of the word 'simple' implies that to him and to me there can be no doubt that it is authentic. The vintagescape is a space where JFK as an 'Ivy League posterboy' might bring to mind a range of pastel coloured casual garments and where terms like 'Ivy League' and 'preppy' are found on the labels attached by safety pins to second hand clothing for sale. JI's outfit on the day of the WBBCs might appear at first glance to align more closely with the milieu of knowledgeable vintage enthusiasts than with surfers, bellyboarders and other watermen.



Figure 5.10. View of the pop-up vintage styling area at the WBBC 2015



Figure 5.11. JI in 'classic Ivy league' vintage style.

His 'genuine J-Crew' (ibid) pastel patchwork effect jacket is more likely to have been designed for relaxing on a yacht or at least aspiring to. The vintage sunglasses are surely too fragile and precious to enter the sea. But teamed with a casual twenty-first century sweatshop and jeans bought in Japan a year or two earlier, the ensemble lacks the formality of the period from which the jacket is sourced and instead falls in line with the casual nature of the local clothing culture to be discussed in the following chapter.

The WBBC is a vintagescape, but it is also a retro or backward-looking event. It celebrates a form of surfing that preceded the advent of stand-up surfing in the UK by looking at how it was practiced in forty or more years ago, ignoring the fact that bellyboarders never disappeared from Cornish waters or that the event initially commemorated the death of an individual practicing just thirteen years previously. There is little to consume at the event's stalls which speaks of the present day. Rather, the aesthetic is 'mid-century', with a range of bellyboards, souvenir tea-towels and mugs that hark back, playfully yet tastefully, to a bygone age. Looking down on the event from the cliffs from the cliffs (figure 5.12) the bunting and marquees immediately suggest a jolly British village fete and closer inspection of the tents reveals them to fit comfortably into this theme. From left to right they are the tea tent, in which a cake making competition is based on the BBC TV show *The Great British Bake Off*, a tent dedicated to selling vintage bellyboards and memorabilia and a National Trust tent offering reduced price membership alongside mugs, travel rugs and mini-binoculars bearing the familiar oak leaf motif of the organisation dedicated to the preservation of Britain's historic properties.



Figure 5.12. View of the WBBC 2015



Figure 5.13. A VW camper van as the basis for a vintage stall at WBBC 2012

Each year the WBBCs attract a number of vintage VW camper van enthusiasts, such as those pictured in figure 5.13, who in this case are using the van as a stage from which to sell mid-century items such as the tweed jacket in the foreground as well as new items such as deck chairs that again hark back to the 1950s beach holiday.

The design historian Elizabeth Guffey, writing in *Retro, The Culture of Revival* (2006) examines Western culture's continuing interest in bringing back styles of clothing, interior and product design and architecture from earlier periods. In its current incarnation, she argues, 'half ironic, half longing, "retro" considers the recent past with unsentimental nostalgia (2006:11). Historian Raphael Samuel (1934-1996) concurs. What he refers to as retrochic, 'is irreverent about the past and only half serious about itself' (2012:95). The reflective nostalgia described above by Boym (2002) is too emotionally driven to apply to 'retro', as Guffey points out, commenting that 'where nostalgia is linked to a romantic sensibility that resonates with ideas of exile and longing, retro tempers these associations with a heavy dose of cynicism or detachment' (Guffey 2006:20). At the WBBC there is no need to long for the past: something of it can be consumed at a pop-up vintage clothing stall or as a retro hair and makeup makeover without worrying over details. As Samuel points out, 'retrochic involves not an obsession with the past but an indifference to it: only when history has ceased to matter can it be treated as sport' (Samuel 2012:95). At the WBBC one can enjoy the illusion of empathy with long dead surfers, plunging into the cold water in a swimsuit with a frilled skirt at Chapel Porth and if tides allow, hurtling towards the beach face first on a plywood board

held close to the chest. The wave-ride is much like that experienced by bellyboarders when the swimsuit was new, but the past is otherwise only re-enacted, in the same way as military re-enactments copy every detail of battle apart from actual experience of war, as Svetlana Boym points out (2001).

The event sketches an imaginary of surfing that partially overlaps with the backdrop for the 'imagined life possibilities' I described earlier with reference to Appadurai's notion. The blue skies, the palm fringed beaches and the bikinis worn to surf warm waves that form the visual rhetoric (Ormrod 2008) of surfing derive from the idealised, commercially driven images that populate the mediascape. In the minority taste community that enjoys bellyboarding as part of a vintage lifestyle (Guffey 2006), the same mediascape is viewed from a different angle. Anyone with a computer is able to consume railway posters, seaside postcards and films from the golden age of cinema; vintage bellyboarders choose to do so. An example of how this visual rhetoric finds its way via the mediascape into the imaginary of bellyboarding can be found in the publicity for the WBBC themselves (see figure 5.14). In the poster to commemorate the 'fallow' year of 2016 in which the competition did not run, a competitor is pictured preparing for the next year's event. In a palette of muted teal, navy, white and scarlet suggesting faded union jack bunting, a man in silhouette wearing a trilby hat paints a bellyboard whilst several more wait in the shadows. He is accompanied by a seagull perched on the rook of a small car with side-opening back doors that could be a Mini or a Morris Traveller, both automotive icons of the mid-century. On a washing line above his head a



Figure 5.14. Poster for the WBBC 2016 (Fallow Year)

National trust tea towel flaps alongside decidedly vintage looking swimwear including a gents' 'matelot' one-piece and a ladies' swimsuit with a frilled skirt.

Therefore the imaginary of surfing presented at the WBBC is no less idealised than that presented in the magazines dedicated to stand-up surfing discussed previously, but is firmly rooted in Britain's past, in 'an era when you made your fun, you made your toys and you could surf without all the ... Well, it was just you and a piece of wood having fun in the sea' (Jl 09/15), a sea which was cold, near a beach that required the use of the bellyboard as windbreaker afterwards, or if the conditions were right, might host a game of cricket making use of the bellyboard as a bat. The bellyboard in this imaginary can cross the liminal space between Fiske's binary of nature and culture. Nothing more than 'a piece of wood,' it is at home in the sea and nature, whilst on the beach it is transformed by man's ingenuity into the servant of culture to provide shelter or amusement.

The bellyboard, accompanied by the vintage swimsuit, moves further away from nature and closer to culture in the event as they reach the car park, where contestants can enjoy a cultured hot tub after their performance, or take part in the consumption of vintage goods or surf-themed cakes in the nostalgic bake off held in the tea tent, both very much the semiotic domain of culture. The car park here is no longer the space in which surfers eye one another's transformation prior to 'escape into nature' and in which surf rage occasionally erupts. Its meaning is contested and shifted by the disruption of these everyday practices during the event.

Analysed as it has been above, the WBBC can be usefully read as what Bruno Latour would term a 'hybrid' of the material and the semiotic. Its significance derives from the materiality of the sea, the meanings attached to the beach and to the activities conducted on it that were discussed above. They are all part of a network driven by the combined simultaneous performance of human and non-human actors: bellyboarders, the swimwear, boards and even weather, as well as the physically in the surfable place of Chapel Porth and the inhabited space of the competition. The roles of the human actors in constructing and reconstructing relationships with the past in respect of the many forms of nostalgia identified above are articulated through the consumption and display of artefacts within the confines of the vintagescape. The artefacts themselves are non-human actors which contribute to the identity of those who choose to consume them such as originality, uniqueness and eccentricity (De Long et al 2005). Such meanings are in turn materialised, as Miller (2010) would have it, in new objects including the 'retro' boards which proclaim themselves 'Original Surfboards', alluding to the first surfing activity in Britain.

In an ANT analysis, space and place themselves become actors, the most powerful of which here is the sea. It has agency in setting the timing for the event which can only take place when the tide is coming in, and the absence or presence of suitable waves determine the possibility of the bellyboarding actually taking place at all. The vintage swimsuits provide no protection from its cold, and the bellyboards submerge the wave-rider up to the neck in the breaking wave. Acting in the same network as the notoriously chilly Atlantic,

their agency here is to limit the time spent in each round of the competition, each of which lasts just ten minutes. The vintage boards and swimsuits are also actors that have turned the event into the spectacle and the commercial enterprise of the vintagescape that continues outside of the competition and in the digital spaces such as the event's lively Facebook page and website that allowed contestants from anywhere in the world to register interest in the competition.

Digital Spaces and Places

Spaces, places and communities in the real world intersect and interact with those in the digital world in wider networks of meaning. Prior to the advent of the internet, according to NH, surfing used to be less mainstream because 'in this country ... you had to really seek out images and written documents...if you were from a small town then they were hard to come by and obviously pre-internet and instant media then images were hard to get hold of. So, I think, I don't know, surfing was used to sell product a lot in the '90s, there was a huge great boom, and it came on the TV and was accepted in mainstream culture' (NH 04/16). As I established above, the shifting landscape of technological development over time and space, Appadurai's technoscape, allowed for the proliferation and distribution of images in the digital age across the mediascape, contributing to the formation of a far wider range of imagined life possibilities than before.

The advent of digital communities has been instrumental in forming such imagined life possibilities. Appadurai draws a distinction between

neighbourhoods, which are 'life-worlds constituted by relatively stable associations, by relatively known and shared histories, and by collectively traversed and legible spaces and places' (1996:191), and communities, which are not necessarily physically situated. Writing before the internet became a common feature in ordinary homes, Appadurai comments that, 'new forms of electronically mediated communication are beginning to create virtual neighbourhoods, no longer bounded by territory, passports, taxes, elections, and other conventional political diacritics, but by access to both the software and hardware that are required to connect to these large international computer networks. Thus far, access to these virtual (electronic) neighbourhoods tends to be confined to members of the transnational intelligentsia.' (1996:195). In the two decades following, a global network of communities which exist purely in the digital realm has come into existence.

Alexia Maddox (2015) discusses the differences between 'networked' or face-to-face and 'mediated sociability' (2015:31), the connections between disembodied individuals online. In her study of a 'herper' community (a group bound by their interest in reptiles) she examines the sociability of the group on and offline. There is a plethora of interlinked specialist discussion forums around surfing activities, for example on myaipobboards.org or surfresearch.org that provide a 'space' for enthusiasts of niche activities to gather in the virtual world and occasionally to exchange details in order to meet and enjoy it in the real world; as Maddox points out, 'the internet is now embedded across and interlaces most domains of contemporary experience' noting that 'the issues of social life are a combination of online and offline actions' (2015:4).

The lively web presence of SAS, The Boardmasters surf competition and music festival held annually in Newquay and the WBBC contribute to a mediascape in which Cornwall, and specifically St Agnes, once a sleepy mining town, has been re-constructed as a site of modern and heritage surfing. Figure 5.15 was taken at Boardmasters 2015 and used as part of the online publicity for the following year's festival. The flags, tents and proscenium arch for the outdoor stage could belong to any festival, but the wide blue sky, cliffs and turquoise sea below are distinctly Cornish. Figure 5.16 from the same website pulls the focus of the festival closer to surfing, with bodyboards in the foreground and a huge crowd on the beach, apparently watching the competition taking place on Watergate Bay's surf. Both images indicate the real-world existence of a taste community centred around surfing that makes a temporary home in Cornwall for the duration of the festival. Together with selfies and holiday snaps, images like these ones contribute to a steadily growing mediascape flow of 'stories' about users' personal experiences, that are shared on social media with a breathtaking number of users worldwide on platforms such as Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram and Snapchat.

Of the WBBC, NH says 'there's a lot of the supporters of our event who are the makers of the boards and people who are real aficionados on the history of the boards themselves and the design. There's in-depth history that has great far-reaching spread in Instagram and Facebook and every social media platform and then more people contact them' (NH 04/16), resulting in something of an international mix at the event. Although it is mainly attended by locals and the

organisers try to ensure that anyone who can walk there and wants to is guaranteed to compete, contestants have arrived from as far afield as New Zealand.

I interviewed MH (figure 5.17) from Hamburg at the WBBC in 2015. He had spotted the event online while browsing for information on bellyboarding. Dressed in a warm padded windbreaker and sandals, to some extent MH shared the local preference for the practical attire associated with British beaches, but the day of the event was warm by British standards and MH immediately stood out as different to the locals (see figures 5.10, 5.11 et al) none of whom were wearing outer garments. Another distinguishing feature was MH's shoes. In the next chapter I discuss the widespread use of Vans skate shoes and flip-flops in the clothing community. Leather shoes worn without socks are something of cliché in Europe, as opposed to British, menswear, and worn in a context where they are shunned by the locals, this sartorial choice immediately identified MH as an outsider. In interview, MH described himself as 'a wave rider' (MH 09/15) rather than a surfer, an inhabitant of Hamburg who could only surf on holiday off the coast of Denmark or there in Cornwall. Although the activity and the location of the WBBC had travelled across the mediascape to Germany and into MH's imaginary, clearly the clothing culture had not.

NH continues, 'we've got a big following of Hawaiians that ride Paipos which are the original bellyboards...And that aspect of it I guess brings the attention of



Figure 5.15. Boardmasters Festival 2016 publicity photograph



Figure 5.16. Boardmasters Festival 2016 publicity photograph

other Paipo riders around the world who have normally got a bellyboard in their quiver because it's a derivative of the Paipo. I guess people start to like it from that and then if someone's got a relative in the UK they may have heard of it or came across us online' (NH 04/16). This 'big following' may never have made it to the event itself but could enjoy it via the website and the online forum to which contestants and event attendees could post photographs of themselves. The affirmation of one's taste by an international community is surely an indication of a wealth of subcultural capital and example of how social life combines online and offline actions (Maddox 2015).

A further example of this would be the effects of the availability of information on surf conditions now available on sites such as magicseaweed.com, which additionally provides surf news and live webcam footage of surfing beaches. 'Well, you know, with the internet and everything else people can come from a lot further away. You can drive from Exeter to Croyde in a couple of hours and get a surf. And because you know that at three o'clock the surf is going to be great, you time yourself to be there at that time. That's how it's changed' (MW 02/16). MW remembers that conditions had to be calculated from weather forecasts before the internet, 'so then it was a bit of skill to get to the best beach. If you got it right you got that beach to yourself. Whereas the downside of the internet and everything else is everybody goes to the same place at the same time' (Ibid). Some respondents felt that MagicSeaweed.com is 'ruining surfing' because 'it's too crowded now- there's no escaping it' (DM, GH et al). St Agnes SLSA has resisted installing a webcam, perhaps hoping to maintain the area's reputation as The Badlands.



Figure 5.17. MH from Hamburg at the WBBC 2015 in St Agnes.

There are also concerns that online communities can be easily exploited for commercial gain. DM tells me that, 'when you do an eyeball report,' on the surf conditions near you 'you have to pay to submit one now...you know you go out and look and say, it's this big and the winds doing this, now you have to pay to submit an eyeball report, because it's basically an advert for your shop or whatever'. (DM 10/14). The MagicSeaweed site itself (Figure 5.12) features webcam images of rolling waves, info-graphics providing detailed updates on wind and weather conditions, swell size and tide times for surfers, but these are soon besieged by pop-up adverts and the redirection of traffic to the site's main function, which is as a shop window for surf brands, suggesting that the service it provides is a lure to entice customers, and the smartphone app, although free, is likewise plagued by adverts and in-app purchases.

Digital commerce has facilitated access to a range of consumer goods on an unprecedented scale. Assuming a consumer has the funds, most images and products from anywhere in the world are available thanks to the ubiquity of the internet and online shops. Philosopher Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) warned in the 1950s that the proliferation of mass produced popular culture in the forms of media, cinema, music and goods and were homogenising humanity itself by providing the illusion of difference between them, when in fact the only choice, for Adorno, was to consume. Adorno's bleak picture of the masses duped by capitalism into endless, pointless consumption and labour in order to service that consumption contained little space for resistance; following his argument to its logical conclusion, the near limitless number of consumer goods and the inescapability of the popular media today should have quashed any last vestige

of heterogeneity. But following Miller, surely the sheer volume of mass produced 'stuff' available to the consumers today puts communities of taste in a position to materialize an incredibly nuanced worldview. The compulsion to consume and as a consequence work and submit to the capitalist system may well be inescapable, but subtle differences in preferences for one item over another when such a huge range is available provide a means of demarcating Others and thereby defining the self and the community with which one identifies. How this happens in the spaces and places discussed in this chapter is the subject of the next.

http://magicseaweed.com/Chapel-Porth-Surf-Report/1331/

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36MPH GALE FORCE, ONSHORE

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- AD FREE HD WEBCAMS, IPHONE AND ANDROID ENABLED STREAMING.
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- REDUCED ADVERTISING.

13:54 23/02/2017

Figure 5.18. Screenshot Magic Seaweed accessed 23/02/17

Conclusion

The raw materiality of the Atlantic coastline and the waves that roll toward it are the conditions that make Cornwall a place where surfing can occur. Idealised representations of the area have fed via the mediascape into the nostalgic memory of the Cornish Diaspora and an imagined community of surfers to construct an imagined regional identity. Cornwall is often perceived as the spiritual home of those whose imagined life possibilities define themselves as surfers. Many reach the region from travels through the shifting ethnoscape to holiday or set up home. The clothing culture of the region bears witness to the isomorphic relationship between Cornwall as a real and imagined place. So closely identified with surfing to the imagined community, Cornwall's dissimilarity to warmer surfing locales such as those found in Australia is symbolically denied by the wearing of garments better suited for the tropics regardless of the necessity of pairing them with more practical attire.

The imaginary of Cornwall as a sun-drenched playground is contested in St Agnes, a former fishing and mining village in which the local identity is closely bound up with its surfing heritage and commerce. Here, the entry of outsiders including tourists or 'emmetts' is viewed with ambivalence. Contributions to the local economy are welcomed, but the reputation of the area as 'the Badlands' was deliberately fostered by surfers wishing to put others off surfing 'their' breaks. This 'localism' is a well-documented aspect of surf culture that is said to occasionally erupt into surf rage and violence in car parks, spaces like beaches that occupy an area of highly contested meaning between land and sea.

It seems apt that the contested space of the car park is the location of the land-based aspects of the WBBC. In spite of the increasing popularity of conventional or stand-up surfing and its dominant role in the imaginary of surfing, bellyboarding has continued to be practiced in Cornwall by a devoted minority. Considered in popular discourse and in critical literature to be little more than a stage in the development of surfing, bellyboarding is thought of as one of a range of legitimate surfing activities by the interviewees in my ethnography. The activities co-exist in Cornish waters: the deep sea is the stand-up surfer's domain, the shallows reserved for bellyboarding. However the two spaces are not clearly demarcated and as surfing gains popularity competition over rightful use can only increase. The same applies to the car park, associated with stand-up surfers, and the beach, the bellyboarders' space. On the day the WBBC is held each year, stand-up surfers find 'their' spaces occupied by actors and social interactions that run the risk of polarising the varieties of surfing and de-legitimising bellyboarding as a viable activity.

Bellyboarding has come to the attention of the wider public through the National Trust's Annual World Bellyboarding Championships, a competition that began with a group of friends celebrating one man's ongoing enjoyment of the activity, but which is now very much a retro event. Rules that preserve the traditions of bellyboarding as it was first practiced, such as the forbidding of technological advances in surfing like wetsuits and leashes have encouraged the use and display of vintage boards and swimwear. In turn these artefacts have shaped a vintagescape around the event. The retro and vintage associations that are

increasingly attached to the activity as the WBBC attracts visitors worldwide through its lively web presence appear to be reconstructing bellyboarding as a dead pastime whose quaint pleasures can be nostalgically re-enacted once a year.

Digital communication and commerce are crucial today in defining and redefining surfing, surfing identities and surfing communities. The internet connects those who enjoy niche activities such as bellyboarding, enables the construction of imagined communities and widens the horizons of the imagined life possibilities of its members. The digital spaces in which surfing communities gather online are increasingly vehicles of commerce, providing information on the goods and services from around the world that could materialise these dreams. These consumer items move across the surface of the globe with unprecedented speed and ease, contributing to material cultures that are less dependent on the geographical place than the cultural space they occupy. The next chapter examines the relationship between St Agnes, the consumption practices and the surfing identities of its inhabitants.

CHAPTER SIX

CONSUMPTION: Class, Status, Scruffiness and Patina

A cluster of themes around consumption, class and status emerged from the ethnographic fieldwork and interviews. This chapter examines these themes through the lens of the theoretical framework outlined previously and is divided into four sections titled Class, Status, Patina and Brands. Within the sections I explore and analyse links, cross references, contradictions and questions originating from the ethnographic records made throughout the research and the responses of the interviewees in the sampling opportunities described in Research Methods.

Taking a Bourdieusian approach, I draw out the consumption patterns of the individuals in the sample in an effort to ascertain the 'fields' in which people 'play' in order to acquire status, focusing on the consumption of clothing by individuals in a community that enjoys surfing. For Bourdieu, a key concern is an understanding of 'the nature of the game', its rules and what is at stake, and how the habitus of the participants may handicap or benefit their participation in it. Bearing in mind my critique of Bourdieu's insistence on social class as the key determinant of status, my analysis draws on Bourdieu's notion of 'capital', particularly 'cultural capital', but takes into account later extensions of the concept introduced in the methodology chapter, such as Sarah Thornton's 'subcultural capital' (1995).

Patterns of consumption and the actual objects consumed are further investigated in respect of their historical contexts, using Appadurai's technique of genealogy to focus closely on the specific community under scrutiny. The chapter also continues to investigate what Appadurai terms the deterritorialized nature of those individuals in it, and the ways in which the consumption of specific goods contributes to the imaginary of the region that was discussed in the previous chapter. The shifting 'scapes' discussed in the methodology chapter continue to be examined, with particular attention paid to mediascapes and ideoscapes, as one would expect in a study of clothing culture. Appadurai's insistence that habitus must be consciously taught in the light of deterritorialized imaginaries is applied here to make sense of the 'surfing identity' which is constructed and embodied by participants in the ethnography.

The ways in which the specific objects consumed and discussed by my sample group signify and constitute aspects of identities that are not shared by those outside the group is the overarching concern of the chapter. I apply Miller's material culture studies approach to the examination of the ways in which objects materialise the deepest and most abstract aspects of belief held by those who make and use them.

Additionally, the chapter investigates the role of digital commerce and communication in relation to the theoretical approaches outlined above, acknowledging the pivotal role that online activity plays and has played in this heretofore isolated community in the acquisition of goods and images.

The first section, Class, is most closely aligned with Bourdieu's theoretical model. It examines the extent to which individuals in the surfing community of St Agnes can be seen as embodying class determinants by means of their taste in consumer goods and leisure activities. There are families that have lived in St Agnes for generations but, as I discussed in the previous chapters, also a large proportion of incomers who have relocated to the village, often drawn to it by surfing. Gentrification has followed some of the new residents and is an area of discussion in the section. The previous chapter discussed individuals that have settled in the area believing it to be their 'spiritual home' and the deterritorialized imaginary of the imagined surf community to which they belong. The articulation of these identities and communities through clothing and other consumer goods is addressed here. The consumption of leisure as well as of goods is the final focus of this section, focusing on uses of the flip-flop.

The following section, Status, considers the use of status markers expressed through garments and style in the cultural economy. Here, the rejection of mainstream fashion is discussed with reference to subcultural capital. The chapter progresses to a section on Patina, employing Grant McCracken's (2005) concept to the consumption of clothing in St Agnes to pry open the meanings articulated inside and outside the community by what I term 'materialised experience' in clothing.

The final section examines brands, both those favoured by the local population and those rejected. In this section I return to the role of digital commerce. I propose the notion of a 'stuffscape' extending Appadurai's five cultural flows to

incorporate the global flow of material goods that has exponentially increased with digital commerce. Taking as its point of departure the idea proposed in the previous chapter that in the digital age, choice is not delimited by local availability, it examines and analyses the local support for some brands and the distaste for others.

Class

Parish records indicate that families such as the Bunts and the Trehwellas have lived in the village of St Agnes for many generations, working the tin mines at Wheal Kitty and Wheal Coates or employed in fishing and dairy farming. The mining industry has long since disappeared but some residents of the village continue to work the land and the sea. As rail and road transport links developed through the early twentieth century, the beauty of the local area and relics of its industrial past have drawn increasing numbers to the village as tourists and as residents, few of whom rely on the limited incomes provided by these traditional employments. The study of the clothing culture of the area provides an insight into how issues of gentrification are negotiated.

Bourdieu tells us that 'objectively and subjectively, aesthetic stances adopted in matters like cosmetics, clothing or home decoration are opportunities to experience or assert one's position in social space, as a rank to be upheld or a distance to be kept. It goes without saying that social classes are not equally inclined and prepared to enter this game of refusal and counter refusal...elective choices are in fact reserved for members of the dominant class' (2003:57). This would imply that in St Agnes, the newly arrived middle class homeowners would

be in a position to establish rules that suited them in the field of social dominance.

Certainly this appears to have some truth in it, if the look of the village is to be believed. From my field notes, September 2014: 'workmen's van outside a cottage. Garden full of smashed up orange pine kitchen cabinets. Empty cans of Farrow & Ball outside. Holiday let?' In *Theatres of Memory* (2012), Raphael Samuel describes the process whereby working class accommodation is bought up by middle class developers and 'simultaneously modernised and antiqued' with the goal of 'restoring a house to its former glories' (2012:70). In what Samuels calls 'retrofitting', appliances, central heating boilers and today, wireless routers and smart TVs are hidden behind 'period' kitchen doors and in under-stairs cupboards so that modern standards of comfort and convenience can be upheld without revealing the ugly modern mechanisms that support them. Tourism supports a good proportion of local business in the area; an affluent clientele is attracted by the quaint, old-fashioned appearance of the village exteriors and the tasteful modern convenience supplied by its accommodation interiors. The colour palette of its narrow streets of tasteful shops, traditional pubs and ancient terraced cottages is muted greens and greys, whitewash and natural stone, a far cry from the brash red and yellow plastic of fast food restaurants and blacked out windows of amusement arcades to be seen in other, less bourgeois, seaside holiday locations (see figures 6.1 and 6.2).

While the village would not look out of place in Country Living magazine, the dress of the village inhabitants does not necessarily comply with this aesthetic and nor is aspiration to it in evidence from the research. Rather, there is a studied rejection of bourgeois dress codes from inhabitants of all classes in favour of the casual, the practical, and the 'scruffy'. Have the dominant classes 'elected', as Bourdieu suggests, to set this trend? And how can it assert their position in social space?

Estate agents refer to the village as 'unspoilt' (See figure 6.3), but many St Agnes residents are less certain that 'tastefully decorated' is synonymous. At the prize-giving party after a local surf competition, ME expressed a common concern: 'Doctors and nurses, it is now. People have moved in and it's not the same as it was. Although things like this [event] show that there is still a community here' (ME 09/15). At the same event, another woman echoed the sentiment: 'We're being encroached a bit by doctors and a bit of money coming in, that sort of thing, but it still does have a heart. It's not like some places.' (SBB 09/15). The Royal Cornwall Hospital, the biggest in the county, is just six miles from St Agnes, within easy reach for doctors on call, and the Crown Court in Truro two miles further away. In medicine, law and other professions, affluent people keen to enjoy the Cornish way of life have bought up properties here, in easy reach of the A30, making St Agnes into what one resident described as 'basically a commuter town' (field notes 10/14).



Figure 6.1. The Driftwood Spars pub, St Agnes, with white exterior in keeping with the village



Figure 6.2. Brightly coloured facades in Braunton Square, Braunton, Devon

I interviewed and chatted with a handful of doctors, dentists and lawyers, and a far larger number of shop assistants, seasonal workers, cleaners and teaching assistants, suggesting that the demographic makeup of those connected with surfing in the village had not suffered too much of an influx, but the presence of the new bourgeoisie was the subject of regular comment throughout the ethnography. The middle-class professionals I interviewed were not in any sense distinguished by their dress. My field notes describe DF, a doctor, as follows. 'Wearing old faded jeans and jacket too short in the sleeve with small hole at the elbow. Knows his photo could be on posters all over village??' (field notes 02/16). The poster featuring DF (figure 6.4) met with his approval and was indeed printed and displayed all around the village. DF's attire is very much in keeping with the clothing culture's preference for informality, practicality and what DF identified as 'scruffy' clothing, a subject I return to later in the chapter.

Having been brought up in the north east in the nineteen seventies to believe that unkempt dress betrays poverty, I found such casual attire for a photoshoot sufficiently jarring to render the culture sharing group I was studying quite exotic. He explained, 'to be honest with you, my fashion sense isn't so good and I have a limited array of clothing. I think I've got two pairs of jeans, two jackets, they're all old, not particularly fussed' (DF *ibid*). Rejecting bourgeois dress codes and conspicuous displays of wealth, DF's attire, in keeping with the majority of my interviewees, suggested that social dominance in the group may not derive from social class.

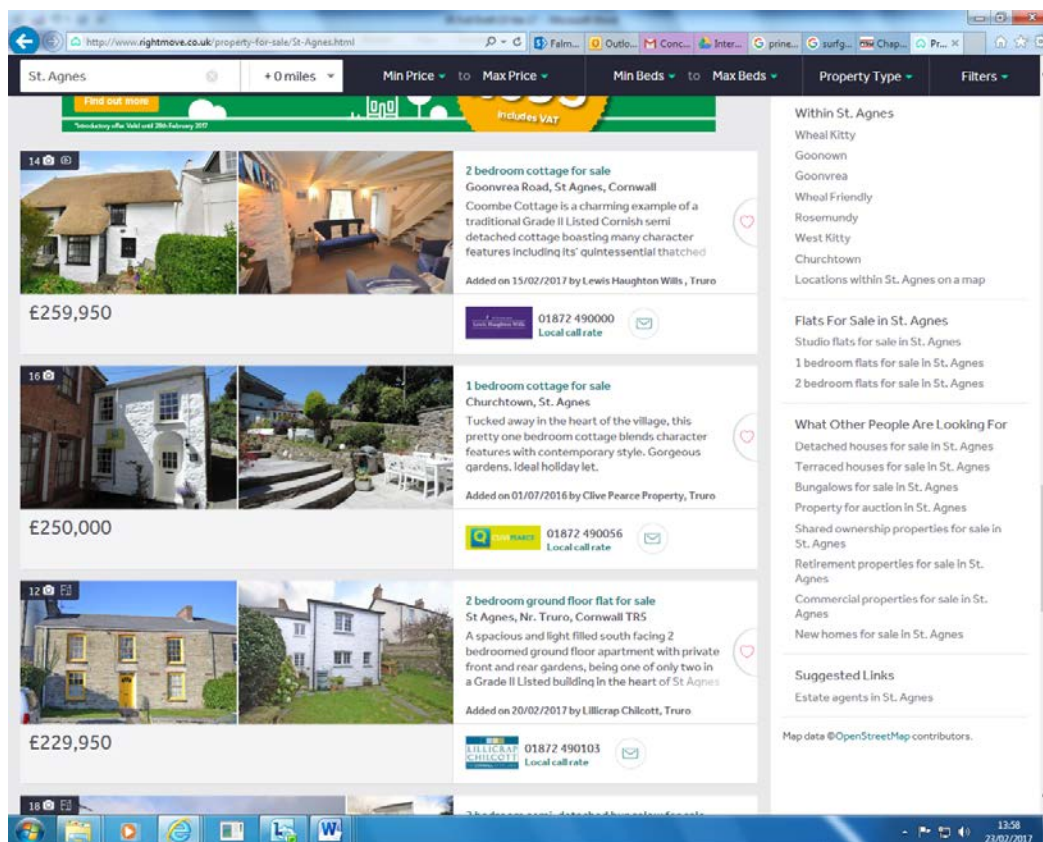


Figure 6.3. Adverts for St Agnes property on Rightmove.com [accessed 23/02/17]



Figure 6.4. DF in the poster that he approved for display in St Agnes.

This inference is supported by discourse around tourists. The visible presence of tourists sufficiently moneyed to stay in low-ceilinged cottages equipped with wine coolers is a staple of local stand-up comedians such as Ed Rowe, known as The Kernow King, and the subject of countless local pub conversations. Three bedroomed cottages in St Agnes rent for over £100 per night in peak season (Figure 6.5) providing much needed jobs for cleaners, maintenance and building workers and the like as well as bringing money into the local economy.

Asked if she could identify tourists and locals from photographs, LS replied, 'there would be a pretty good split. There would be the odd one that you get crossed over because we do have some very well to do locals now. They would come down in what I call the posh nobs sort of clothes, their Barbour jackets and stuff. I've got friends come down here and I just go, are you really wearing a Barbour to the beach, really?!' (LS 02/15). LS's assumption here is that tourists are usually the ones that are 'very well to do', and that gentrification is a recent phenomenon. Mention of the Barbour brand is telling: a Barbour jacket, designed in the north east of England for country pursuits in cold windy conditions would be ideally suited to a windswept Cornish beach and retails at a similar price to those produced by local brand Finisterre, but is perceived as 'posh nobs sort of clothes' (ibid) locally, an indicator of higher status. Discussing Barbour's range, online marketing journal Business of Fashion state 'the company's core products, waxed and quilted jackets, originally intended for country pursuits but now equally popular with city dwellers, have become the

← → ↻ https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/VacationRentalReview-g528877-d3310475-Eastcot_Cottage_St_Agnes_Cornwall-St_Agnes_Cornwall_England.html ☆

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1 of 23 Front of Cottage

Overview

Cottage - 3 Bedrooms, 3 Bathrooms, Sleeps 5

St Agnes, Cornwall, England

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Family-owned, character cottage with many original features. Beautiful, secluded garden and sheltered terrace. Set in idyllic countryside with breathtaking views across to St Agnes Beacon. The stunning beaches of Chapel Porth and Porthtowan are reachable on foot (20 minute walk). Ideal for families, couples, keen walkers and people who love Cornwall.

200 year old semi detached miners cottage, completely refurbished and furnished to a high specification with a fully equipped kitchen The sitting room is tastefully furnished with a wood burner set in an inglenook fireplace. The cottage sleeps 5 with a double room, twin room and a single. Bathroom with shower, feature bath and toilet & separate downstairs WC.

The cottage is well equipped with WIFI, HD Smart TV, washing machine, tumble dryer, washing...

Figure 6.5. Screenshot of Tripadvisor.com listing of a three-bedroom holiday rental in St Agnes, commanding over £1000 per week in peak season

basis for wider ranges of mid- priced casualwear for both men and women' (Mellory Pratt, 2013).

Barbour jackets carry a seal signifying they are supplied 'by appointment' to the royal household, and are worn in public by the Duke of Cornwall, HRH Prince Charles, whose habitus is not shared by the admin officers and postmen I studied in the village. However nor is it shared by much of the target audience of the brand, renowned for 'clothing aristocrats and their gamekeepers in equal measure' (Ibid).

The majority of my interviewees described themselves as local as opposed to visitors or 'emmetts' a Cornish word for the tourists meaning 'ants', supposedly alluding to their sudden appearance in throngs but riddled with negative connotations of pestilence and irritation. As HP put it, 'What would we do without them? We'd be lost. We're the poorest of the poor anyway and if we lost tourists we've had it, we're bugged, so we love and hate them' (HP 02/15). Born and bred in St Agnes with three generations behind her, HP has impeccable Cornish credentials; others have arrived from 'upcountry' and abroad more recently in order to 'live the dream' of the simple outdoor life that Cornwall appears to offer. As DF explains,

I've got an eight-year old and a five-year old, so they spend a lot of time in the sea as well. And, erm, when we moved out from South Africa seven years ago my oldest was one and I grew up in Johannesburg in South Africa so there was no sea, but then went to school near the sea by Durban and then lived in Cape Town and I've always wanted to be by the sea. So, this was just ideal. And the first summer we actually took my one year old down to the beach and we were standing looking out

at Green Island and I said to him, you're going to have the upbringing I always dreamed of. So, for me, being able to live by the sea and spend time at the beach and on the water is just ideal. (DF 02/15)

Others have retired to the seaside, like PH and PH, who explained that they had 'followed [their] sons here', young men who had settled in the area, like many of my respondents, in order to spend their spare time surfing. PH and PH, who moved seven years previously from the North West, are discussed in the next chapter. They describe their style as 'the typical Cornish style of going to the beach - shorts, T shirt and flip flops' (PH & PH 09/15). (see figure 7.16) a perfect example of the laid back, inter-generational style so prevalent in the area.

Flip-flops are worn by PH and PH and almost every other respondent I photographed, regardless of income, occupation, age, gender or even the time of year. Figure 6.6 is part of a photograph sent to me by SH, a local midwife I interviewed. Determined to prove that she 'always' wore flip-flops when not working, she emailed a photograph she took on a camping trip the previous June when chilly night time temperatures had required 'socks and flip-flops!' (SH email 08/15). An integral aspect of Cornish surf style, flip-flops are adopted by those wishing to 'live to dream' and worn by those already living it regardless of social class, suggesting that in the cultural economy of surfing, social class does not necessarily provide the appropriate habitus for dominance. It is worth lingering on the flip flop then, as something of a material culture case study to help pick apart 'the field' in which the game of social dominance is played out in St Agnes.



Figure 6.6. SH and friend in 'socks and flip-flops!' (SH 08/15)

Flip-Flops: A Case Study

Although thong sandals have existed since ancient times (Shawcross 2014) a version based on the Japanese *zori* gained popularity as fashionable beachwear in the USA in the post-war period (Knowles 2014). In 1962, Brazilian footwear company Alpargatas marketed a version of flip-flops known as *Havaianas*, the Portuguese word for Hawaiians, suggesting a strong initial connection with surf culture. Today Havaianas sell more than 250 million pairs per year (Hendriksz, 2016). The generic flip-flop sandal has been manufactured and marketed by innumerate companies, with California based 'global surf lifestyle brand' Reef dominating the surfwear market (Reef.com).

In the UK, unbranded flip-flops were available in holiday shops from the mid-sixties. 'They were really flimsy the first flip-flops and you could buy them for about 30p, 6 shillings. Then the strap always broke. That was the first time I was wearing them, I suppose' (SB 02/15). Nevertheless the sandals were favoured by British surfers too, perhaps because of the implied connection to the birthplace of surfing and for pragmatic reasons low cost, ease of removal and wear, and for protection from pebbles *en route* to the sea.

Today the flip-flop is a staple of the surfer's wardrobe and in Cornwall is worn almost year-round. In Figure 6.7 LT wears bright green flip-flops, together with 'competition striped' boardshorts and a green plaid shirt buttoned to the neck. The TopShop carrier bag and the hint of 1990s retro in the overall look suggest that LT is, 'fluent in the Esperanto' (Gilbert 2001:71) if not of 'high fashion' at least of mainstream trends. With his sun-bleached hair, beard and sunglasses,



Figure 6.7. Wearing flip flops in October 2015

LT's style exemplifies the casual, laid back dress so present in the village.

Taken in bright sunshine, the photograph could easily be a holiday snap of a tourist in clothes destined for the attic when the holiday ends, but in fact shows a local man on a chilly beach in October, expecting to return to work in the morning.

GF wore 'flip-flops, obviously' (GF 04/16) when interviewed on an April day described in my field notes thus: 'freezing out. Bitterly regretting choice of outfit. Had to scavenge for extra clothes in the car & could only find [my daughter's] panda socks'. It was not the panda socks but the shoes that distinguished me from the residents that cold day, since they betrayed my status as a non-surfer. More than mere badges of belonging to a particular taste sharing community, Flip-flops can be viewed as evidence of what Thorstein Veblen termed 'conspicuous leisure' (2007 [1899]).

Whilst Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*, first published in 1899, concerned itself primarily with the development and behaviour of the affluent bourgeoisie in late 19th century USA, his thoughts on the display of 'pecuniary strength' can to some extent illuminate consumption and display practices in the arguably less stratified society of 21st century Britain. According to Veblen, 'in order to gain and to hold the esteem of men it is not sufficient merely to possess wealth or power. The wealth or power must be put in evidence, for esteem is only awarded on evidence' (Veblen, 2007:29). Today, evidence of wealth and power can be found in social media profiles but in Veblen's time more gaudy means

were necessary. The 'conspicuous consumption' of goods was, Veblen argued, one means of providing evidence of 'pecuniary strength', and its practice has been the focus of most of the subsequent scholarship on Veblen (Souiden, M'Saad & Pons, 2011). Drawing from his observations of contemporary bourgeois mores, Veblen asks the reader to consider why a flamboyantly large or pointlessly small ladies' hat might be more desirable than a functional bonnet, or why particular materials and foodstuffs acquire value through rarity. Whilst the extrinsic value of such items may have derived in the distant past from intrinsic qualities such as beauty, he explains, their social value has accrued from their more or less exclusive use by an elevated social group, and moreover by the display of this use. The 'conspicuous consumption' of items made desirable in this way provides an 'invidious distinction' between strata of society, and is universally practiced: 'no class of society, not even the most abjectly poor, foregoes all customary conspicuous consumption' (2007:85). He points out that trinkets of some description are owned and prized above useful items by all classes. Thus, to return to surf culture, a twenty dollar T-shirt commemorating a surf competition held in Sydney could conceivably be intrinsically beautiful, but its true value, using Veblen's model, lies in its rarity and exclusive use by those who can also enjoy the consumption of related high status products, such as the costly long haul flight required to take the wearer to Sydney in the first place.

For Veblen, fashion itself arises from the 'pecuniary emulation' of the consumption practices of those of higher status by those of lower status, and the consequent efforts by the former to distinguish themselves from the latter

leading to rapid change. In respect of fashion scholarship, the sister concept of 'conspicuous leisure' has been less widely discussed, but is, I believe, central to an understanding of the ubiquity of the flip-flop. Conspicuous leisure is for Veblen, another form of consumption: 'a non-productive consumption of time', arising from 'a sense of the unworthiness of productive work, and...as evidence of the pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness' (2007:33). Fox hunting, the costly and ostentatious pursuit of inedible quarry, is considered to be a higher status activity than fishing.

As was established in chapter four, for nineteenth century missionaries in Hawaii, surfing was one of several traditional pastimes which sat uncomfortably with Calvinist Christianity's moral code and work ethic, being enjoyed by both sexes in a state of undress and taking place in daylight hours, often accompanied by drinking and gambling (Westwick & Neuschul, 2013). An activity practiced by and overseen by Hawaiian kings, surfing required entire communities to abandon productive endeavour in the pursuit of pure pleasure, and was widely discouraged by American settlers in favour of literacy and industry. Today, surfing continues to depend on the vicissitudes of natural conditions. Commitment to developing expertise in the activity is therefore not fully compatible with a nine-to five job. The flip-flop can be seen as the rejection of the rat-race given material form. Not a status marker in the sense, as Veblen would insist, of pecuniary strength, but re-framed in the affluent modern West to suggest, conspicuously, that leisure is given priority over productivity.



Figure 6.8. TW's 'smart' flip-flops.

Flip-flops are so thoroughly indicative of leisure that they are seldom allowed in the workplace. In schools, banks, offices and hospitals, regulations banning flip-flops are in place to prevent accidents and to present a smart appearance to the general public. Interviewees such as TW, a dentist (figure 6.8), who was at the time, 'wearing my smart flip flops as opposed to my not-smart flip flops' (TW 09/15) is unlikely to wear a pair, however 'smart', in the clinical environment of a dental practice. Most of those interviewed and photographed were not at work at the time, and so their adoption of casual footwear outside might be as straightforward a choice as wearing slippers in the home, were it not for the impracticality of their use in cold weather and the fact that they were worn by every single person I interviewed in their place of work.

All of my work-based interviewees were contacted on the basis of their connection with local surf culture and most were employed in some sense in surf industries. From Mary Lascelles, owner of the Aggie Surf Shop, who greeted me wearing well-worn flip-flops, to Dan Morgan, surf-style graphic designer in Havaianas, to Tom Kay, founder and CEO of Finisterre, barefoot, all ejected conventional footwear and, it transpired, to some extent, many traditional working practices. Surf industry-based interviewees spoke with pride of fitting work in around surfing, rather than vice versa, echoing the business practices of NB, whose cleaning business is 'really flexible, it just fits in around my surfing, really, lets me travel, you know, to competitions.' (NB 04/17). Flip-flops conspicuously reject not work *per se* but the prioritisation of work over leisure, and symbolically remove the wearer from the Western work ethic whenever worn. Preference for this style of footwear whatever the weather,

developed from the habitus of surfing, is indicative of what Sarah Thornton termed 'subcultural capital', a theme developed in the next section, concerned with status.

Status

The theme of rejection of capitalist values in favour of a more spiritual path emerges strongly from the research, such as in this statement from DF: 'I spend a lot of time at the beach and specifically in the water and I just love being in the sea...just kind of, this might sound corny, but just being at one with it. It just feels the right place for me' (DF 04/15). The sentiment is echoed by many respondents including HP, who says, 'that's my therapy, that wet stuff out there. Walk my dog over the cliffs and try and see it every day because that's the thing that makes me say, okay, the rest of the stuff can get left behind' (HP 04/15). The therapeutic nature of the sea has been explored in discourses of health as well as of spirituality (Nichols 2014, Westwick & Neuschul 2013, bluehealth2020.EU), and has long been closely aligned to surfing in popular culture. 'The Dude' in The Cohen brothers' *The Big Lebowski* (1998) is perhaps the best known example of a 'soul surfer' in recent years but the stereotype dates back at least as far as The Big Kahuna, played by Cliff Robertson in *Gidget* (1959, Paul Wendkos). Defining the term, Matt Warshaw quotes 'a 1968 Petersen's Surfing magazine article, [in which] writer Duke Boyd praises "the man upon his board who shuts out the world and its clamor, for the silence of rolling green passageways of bliss and beauty," then encourages the rider to "trip through the sunshines of time and eternity with bare feet and blue soul."' (Warshaw 2005:552).

In respect of clothing culture, the rejection of capitalist values is perhaps most clearly materialised in the wearing of old, 'scruffy' (DF, LS, SB et al) clothes. But as Bourdieu insists, 'there is no way out of the game of culture' (2003:12), and as Appadurai points out, 'even an unkempt beard must be maintained' (1996:66). Rejection of mainstream bourgeois dress codes does not eliminate status markers in dress. Far from it, in fact, as the following examination of the ethnography reveals.

Scruffiness

Surfing has long been associated with anti-mainstream values and was closely aligned with aspects of the counterculture since the 1960s, as I outlined in chapter four, with reference to Tom Wolfe's essay, *The Pump House Gang*. Westwick and Neuschul (2013) claim the association runs much deeper, with surfers in the 1970s using boards to smuggle drugs and a deeply entrenched 'drop out' mentality derived from the development of the anti-materialist 'soul surfer' archetype discussed earlier. Certainly in the research area, surfing was somewhat tarred with this brush. RM explains, 'In the sixties the council was forever trying to downplay the surfing, and in the beginning of the seventies they tried to ban surfing...they thought surfers were like, ok I like spending time at the beach [miming a slacker gesture] they thought they were drug takers, but there was actually nothing going on in society for surfers to deserve this, but they were a convenient scapegoat. If you were possibly living up Fraddon, inland, at about the same time, you'd be going to blame the bikers' (RM 07/13). Other sources dispute the claim that 'there was actually nothing going on,' referring to

activities at the notorious Skewjack surf village near Penzance. Skewjacks, as locals called it, was a holiday camp geared up for surfing, located near suitable waves and boasting board and wetsuit hire and surf lessons that was open from 1971 to 1986. Throughout the five years of the ethnography, no-one could be found who would go on record about it.

Mention of Skewjacks, was generally associated in interviews with a conspiratorial wink or apologetic refusal to be recorded on the subject. Although initially founded as a more wholesome venture by surfer Chris Tyler, the Skewjack surf village became a victim of its own success. He explained in a July 2008 interview with Surf Nation, 'The BBC came and filmed an episode of Holiday '76, which was great, but suddenly, after six or seven great years, we started to attract the wrong crowd. In 1977, all hell broke loose. We weren't trying to compete with the 18-30-type holidays but people wanting that kind of experience started turning up' (surfnation.co.uk). The focus of a 'moral panic' over drinking, drug taking and excess, Skewjacks contributed to an emerging construction of a surfing subculture with values at odds with society as a whole, with the 'folk devil' (Cohen 1972) of the unkempt layabout surfer at its heart.

The reputation of surfers as non-conformists continues to be embraced by some. As NH puts it, 'essentially we're all anti-establishment in our roots....And whether we want to be or not want to be we still follow that anti-establishment' (NH 04/15) referring to the surfer's desire to catch waves overriding the desire to make money or look respectable. Surfers must compete with the rest of us in

the field of social dominance, but somewhat different rules apply in the smaller milieu of surfing communities. In the literature review I evaluated the extent to which changing definitions of subculture are applied by the research community, concluding that this highly contested term is only partially applicable. However Sarah Thornton's 'subcultural capital' does not rely on a specific definition of subculture, since it refers to the workings of the cultural economy rather than its structure, so it is helpful in unpicking the means by which status is demonstrated and contested in the group studied here.

The majority of interviewees used the word 'scruffy' to describe themselves and the word was used extensively in conversation in the course of the ethnography. At the WBBC, local competitor NP tells me, 'well, I've just come in my scruffy beach outfit - a pair of scruffy denim shorts and an old T shirt and an old sweatshirt' (NP 09/17). 'Scruffy' here suggests worn and casual, rather than dirty: her outfit is immaculately clean. Although there is a vintage swimsuit competition in the day's itinerary, the event as a whole is far from formal. NP's outfit (see fig 6.9) is in keeping with the majority of attendees, dressed for a casual day at the beach. She wears artfully layered t-shirts and sweatshirts over a frayed but laundry-fresh denim mini skirt which shows off her tanned and athletic legs. But she draws attention to the age and wear of her clothing both directly and indirectly as she describes it as 'my scruffy beach outfit', suggesting she has worn it to the beach many times and alluding to the carefree surfing life she leads. NP's friends, also pictured, nod in agreement at her assessment of the local style. Their colourful hoodies and cut-off jeans purchased at some unknown point in the 'past few years' from seaside-friendly brands White Stuff



Figure 6.9. NP, centre, wearing 'a pair of scruffy denim shorts and an old T shirt and an old sweatshirt' (NP 09/15)

and SeaSalt are teamed with the ubiquitous flip-flops and are 'just what [they] always wear, really' (ibid), the everyday laid back local style that would look as out of place in an urban environment as a business suit on the cliff where I interviewed them.

Scruffiness, or at least the self-definition of it, appears as almost a badge of pride in my interviewees. Volunteer lifeboatman BB arrived to be photographed for posters promoting the St Agnes SLSC dressed in a paint splattered jacket and jeans saying, 'I'm basically wearing the same clothes that I'm wearing today that I went to the allotment in about half an hour ago, apart from wellies' (BB 02/16). As he later explained to me the incredible speed with which the RNLI must respond to a distress call it occurred to me that if anyone could pull off a quick change before arriving it was BB. He had clearly chosen to continue to wear 'scruffy' clothes, chosen for 'practicality, that's it' (Ibid).

Steve Bount, editor of surfing magazine Wavelength, tells me gleefully, 'I've got a friend who is a stockbroker and I sit next to him I look like Worzel Gummidge' (SBW 04/15), a children's TV character from the seventies who was a Westcountry scarecrow. But in my field notes I write 'SBW- long trousers, surf branded t-shirt and flip-flops (despite cold)' and make no mention of his appearing unkempt. He goes on to say, 'you go to Exeter and you see people in the pinstripe suits...here if you saw someone like that you would think, why are you here? You must be down from London. And they probably are.' (SBW ibid). The comment again suggests that locals and those from 'upcountry' can be easily identified by their dress, but taken in the context of claims of

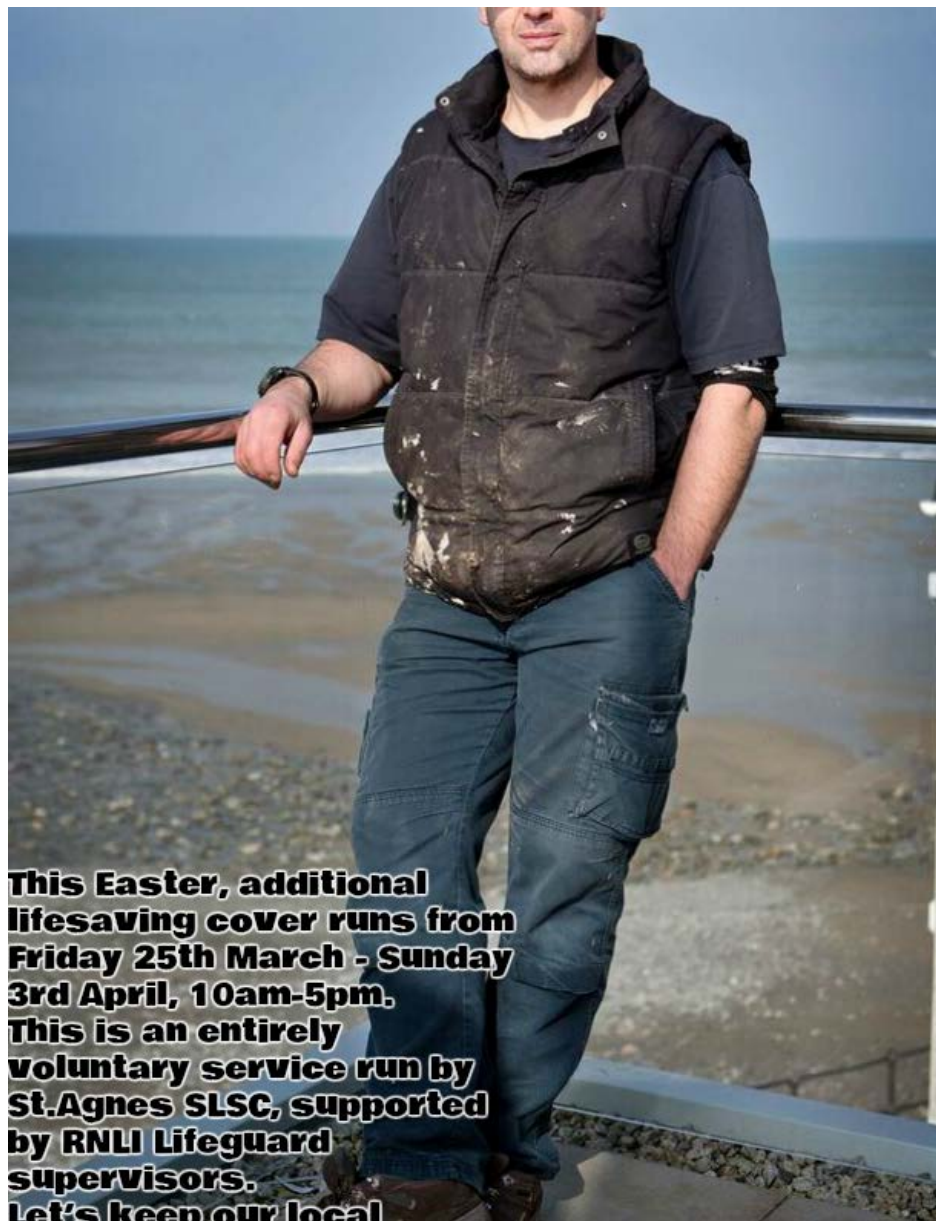


Figure 6.10. BB in the publicity poster distributed around St Agnes

scruffiness it takes on a further meaning. Conventional status markers such as well maintained, fashionable clothing are reversed here, with higher status accorded to those whose clothes suggest a lack of interest in such worldly concerns. That is not to say that someone dressed in rags would achieve social dominance: it is the appearance of being lived in, but not too much, which is prized, suggesting as it does a specific habitus, to be explored in the following section.

Patina

According to Canadian anthropologist Grant McCracken, patina was until the eighteenth century, 'one of the most important ways that high-standing individuals distinguished themselves from low-standing ones', but having been displaced by fashion as a means to achieve this goal, patina lessened in power, its function today 'a status strategy used by the very rich alone' (1990:31). Defined by McCracken as the 'signs of age that accumulate on the surface of objects...[as they] undergo a gradual movement away from their original pristine condition' (1990:32), patina was once an indicator of the pedigree of the owner of the object, and by inference of the object itself. A faded tapestry speaks of the length of time it has been owned by those of sufficiently high status to choose it and wealthy enough to afford it, and of how cherished it must have been and continues to be, to have lasted so long. In the modern world, says McCracken, patina is attached to antiques and heirlooms.

However I would argue that the worn clothes related to surf culture preferred by my respondents are prized also for their patina. Although a wetsuit may last

three seasons rather than three generations, in its short life it takes on a patina of wear that indicates its repeated use- what I will term 'materialised experience', or evidence of having carried out, like BB's now 'holey' wetsuit in figure 6.11, 'sterling work' (BB 04/15)

GF discusses the helmet he wears on the RNLI lifeboat. 'It looks well worn, doesn't it? A bit rusty on the buckles... I should maybe get a new one. But it fits me well so it's good' (GF 04/16). He is wearing his RNLI jacket, described in my field notes as 'impressively weathered', which he smilingly describes as 'well worn'. Narratives of dramatic rescue are materialised in these 'distressed' objects through their patina.

In the same interview session, HP fondly talks of a bucket barbecue (figure 6.12) that has fed her family on many happy occasions: 'It's ugly, isn't it!...When I first bought it I'd never seen anything like it and it was all the posh proper barbecues which you can't carry down to the beach. Whereas that is one handle, everything is in it, the firelighters, the matches, the charcoal, Bob's your uncle, off you go' (HP 04/16). The selection of an item which is not viewed as 'posh' or 'proper' but appropriate in the local context might have been selected on the basis of a habitus developed by the sea to display subcultural capital. Its continued use in its battered state when replacements are readily available suggests the value of its patina as materialised experience. Whilst the bucket is by no means an aspect of clothing culture, it is analogous to many of the battered garments worn with pride in the village that materialise experience in this manner.



Figure 6.11. BB's holey wetsuit and other items.



Figure 6.12. HP's bucket barbecue

Materialised experience need not be expressed through patina alone. 'I'm wearing a t-shirt that I bought from a skating website in the early two thousands. It's since closed down' (JW 09/15) JW tells me at the WBBC. He continues, 'this t-shirt, because it's quite rare, I do save for special occasions' (JW *ibid*).

The shirt, immaculately laundered and in more or less pristine condition, pictured in figure 6.13, points to a relationship with skateboarding of over a decade's standing, one which can only be interpreted by others to whom such a depth of experience might be significant. Such individuals are highly likely to be encountered at an event such as this and in the local area as a whole, owing to the significant crossover in interest between surfers and skateboarders (Brisick 2004). Just three miles from St Agnes at Mount Hawke an enormous indoor skate park and surf academy opened in 2016 to cater for both interests. The local clothing culture then, rewards materialised experience in social status conferred on those who participate in a range of activities around surfing as well as in surfing itself.

Even vicarious experience is valuable in this context. TW wears 'an Arran jumper knitted by my granny originally for my grandad and altered by my mum for me,' rather than just an arran sweater with a narrative unrevealed to the researcher (figure 6.14). The sweater also reveals what Ecological Design Consultant Kate Fletcher refers to as 'inconspicuous consumption' in *Craft of Use: Post-Growth Fashion* (Fletcher 2016:18) in which the term applies to the creativity and work that goes into modifying and altering garments such as TW's



Figure 6.13. JW in vintage t-shirt



Figure 6.14. TW in hand-me-down arran sweater.

sweater rather than buying and displaying new fashionable garments. In the book and in 'Local Wisdom,' the large photographic project on which the book is based, Fletcher celebrates the 'craft' of recontextualising clothing to assemble outfits from an existing wardrobe, and traces the 'paths of use' (2016:18) discussed by wearers of old and second-hand clothing. Such 'paths' are clearly articulated in the old, 'scruffy' or experienced garments much loved by the interviewees in my ethnography.

TW's aged garment tells of three generations living by the sea. Bourdieu asks, 'can one place in the same class, given identical frequency, those who have skied or played tennis from early childhood and those who learned as adults, or again those who ski in the school holidays and those who have the means to ski at other times and off the beaten track? In fact, it is rare for the social homogeneity of the practitioners to be so great that the populations defined by the same activity do not function as fields in which the very definition of the legitimate practice is at stake.' (2003:210). In other words, the category 'surfer' is stratified by habitus, privileging those with the maximum access to the activity. This habitus is made visible through materialised experience.

But what is the purpose of this materialised experience? RB's comments are illuminating: 'well, I don't lifeguard any more but when I was I'd just live in my lifeguard uniform' (RB 10/15). Lifeguarding, National Trust, RNLI and other uniforms are a common presence in the street in St Agnes, its local pubs and cafes, suggesting that the responsibility is not discarded, like the shoes discussed above, when the working day is done. It is not only authority but

materialised experience that is communicated by NNT's National Trust Lifeguard's jacket which she wears 'all the time' (NT/10/15) a garment that marks her out as a competent waterman- someone who can swim, sail, surf and confidently take on any aquatic activity. In short, someone who lives near the sea and is often in it.

Materialised experience, then, be it in worn clothes, hand-me-downs or uniform items expresses a habitus built up by living near and interacting with the sea on a regular basis, and convey a sense of belonging to the local area that differentiates residents from tourists. BB explains, 'If I go off skiing you go off in your nice brand new ski gear and walk around and you see all the locals in their old ski gear. It's probably exactly the same thing. You spend your money to look nice on the thing not realising that actually nobody else does' (BB 04/16). Buying the latest kit and the most expensive labels will not accrue subcultural capital. In fact, it is likely to be a source of amusement for locals, since 'there's a bit of a saying, all the gear, no idea, sort of thing' (GF 04/16). Nowhere is this more apparent than in the adoption of particular brands.

Brands

As I established in chapter four, surf style achieved something of the ubiquity of the military look in mainstream fashion in the 1990s, and was no more indicative of the wearer's involvement with surfing as military styling is to the armed forces. Billabong, Quiksilver and their competitors in the surf fashion industry grew into corporate giants by selling boardshorts and rash vests to wannabe surfers. As retailer Geoff Stein told me, 'obviously today it's gone a lot more

global but at the first instance, it was only surf dudes wore surf gear, not the guy in the street from Birmingham or London. But obviously as they came down to Cornwall and started surfing and it's got bigger and bigger and bigger, then the scene has changed totally'. What Geoff alludes to here is the rejection of the look by surfers when it was adopted by non-surfers or 'the mainstream' (GS 11/14).

Figure 6.15 shows mourners attending a memorial event in 2016 for a local surfer (taken with the permission of the surfer's family). A much-loved and respected local resident, the surfer in question had grown up in mid Cornwall, left to attend university and returned to take up a prominent role in conservation. Around four hundred people attended having been instructed to dress for the beach and a surf was to be had if the conditions were appropriate. In the wide variety of mourners the clothing culture observed is colourful, practical and outdoorsy with some variation in the extent to which surfing is connected to the overall appearance of wearers. Nevertheless there is a clear connection to the activity, if only by association, marking the group out as different to those with no connection to surfing whatsoever. They are what I refer to throughout this study as a 'taste community', some of whom surf and some of whom do not, but few are wearing clothing that is obviously linked to the global phenomenon of surf style. The elderly gentleman on the left is wearing Reef brand flip-flops and the blonde woman in the foreground has on a pair of Vans skate shoes. One of the shirtless men in the centre wears an old pair of Billabong board-shorts. But the conspicuous logos of branded sportswear are absent from this image, taken



Figure 6.15. Attendees at a memorial for a beloved local surfer.

at an event at which non-locals and indeed non-surfers were very much in the minority and tourists were completely absent.

Sarah Thornton explores the meaning of the mainstream in *Club Cultures* (1995). She asserts that 'subculture-versus-mainstream is an orderly ideal which crumbles when applied to historically specific groups of youth' and derides the 'inconsistent fantasies of the mainstream [that] are rampant in subcultural studies' (1995:93). She calls for a conception of the mainstream not as an objectively definable group but as the subjectively defined 'other' of a subculture, explaining that 'the social logic of subcultural capital reveals itself most clearly by what it dislikes and what it emphatically isn't' (1995:105). SE reflects on what he 'emphatically isn't' as follows: 'I remember I think it was the European football finals, it might have been Holland or somewhere like that, and I saw all these English football fans fighting on the news and they were all wearing Quiksilver T shirts. I looked at the news and just went, holy shit' (SE 10/15). Even without seeing such poor ambassadors for surf culture on television, surfers were turning away from big brands when they were perceived as 'mainstream' or too popular. As NH puts it, 'when [televised surf championships] reached a crescendo...and the world tuned in... that was the moment when everyone decided to turn their back on it. As soon as it got to its best point then everyone started to look for something else and I think surfing will always do that. It's always the next thing, isn't it...Who is it that said by the time something has become cool it's not cool anymore?'. His point is confirmed by NP: '[surfing has] definitely gone away from the main brand labels, nobody

wears those anymore, do they?' (NP 10/15). What NP means here by 'nobody' is nobody but 'the mainstream'.

The 'subordinate imitation' of those who ape the consumption patterns of those 'in the know' described by my interviewees above is in many respects similar to Georg Simmel's 'trickle down effect' (1904) discussed in Methodology. However, social class is not the driving force in this diffusion system. The superordinate group is made up of members of the subculture (if we can define it as such) or at least the taste community of surfing, and the layers of subordination are structured around levels of involvement with surfing. I will return to the status accorded to different surfing activities in the next chapter, but for now the focus is on those who do surf, those who say that they do, and those who don't at all.

At the Buntabout, a St Agnes 'locals only' surf competition, Steve England, editor of Carve surf magazine tells me, 'because of the basic marketing mix now a lot of the surfers wouldn't wear a lot of the mainstream brands because they see them as already being sold out' (SE 10/15). Steve's remark, made on a cold windy beach in September, belies the fact that in a crowd of around sixty people watching a local surf competition, I counted twelve pairs of Vans shoes, and at the WBBC, an event celebrating all things vintage, these thoroughly modern shoes appeared too (see figure 6.16). Now owned by Timberland, California based skate footwear company Vans reported a turnover of \$1.7 billion in 2013 (vfc.com) but since the mainstream is defined by subjectively by the subculturalists and not objectively by sales figures, Vans are the footwear of



Figure 6.16. Vans spotted a the WBBC 2015



Figure 6.17. Publicity still from VisitCornwall.com depicting backpackers and bodyboards.

surfers de rigueur. For the moment, that is. Because as NH comments, 'you're instantly looking for the next thing if it's being sold in the shops or someone has even heard about it it's like it's over' (NH 04/16). Staying one step ahead of the mainstream distinguishes the subculturalist and drives subordinate imitation.

Asked, what do you think surfers look like now? NH responds, 'Surfers? That's the thing, I don't think they fit a particular profile because it's such a broad range of people who call themselves surfers now. I don't know, do they surf three times a week, twice a year? I'm not sure. I guess if they surf more than ten times a year they call themselves a surfer. That is all manner of people from all walks of life because they're only accessing the beach ten times a year' (NH ibid). Almost anyone in possession of a surfboard can call themselves a surfer, and as SBW observes, 'everyone looks like a surfer in Newquay...you come here, it's all shorts and flip-flops. Lots of people who whether they surf or not they adopt that surf look and I think that's partly something to do with Cornwall...I think people buy into that lifestyle' (SBW 04/15). A publicity photograph for Newquay on VisitCornwall.com (figure 6.17) confirms this, depicting backpackers in shorts and flip-flops and bodyboards being carried through the town centre, promoting surfing and surf style as available to be experienced by tourists.

But such arrivistes are, according to RWS, easily identifiable. 'A lot of people who come down here ARE on holiday and just pick up a surf brand t shirt...if people have just arrived they want to get fully stuck into the surf vibe and they want to feel like they are part of- one of the locals- so they'll look for big branded

clothing, very bright colours, very in your face things. Whereas...the [local/real] surfers tend to be a little bit more subtle with it. They don't need big brands to tell them that they surf. You can spot [the wannabes] a mile off. There will always be a little bit of northern poking out somewhere...' (RWS 04/15). As a surf industry professional, working in marketing for a surf school, and a keen bodyboarder herself, RWS would be well aware that the South West is not the only place to surf, or that the biggest surf school in Cornwall is run by former British champion Sam Lamiroy who was brought up and learned to surf in Tynemouth. So her pithy comment that 'there will always be a little bit of northern poking out somewhere' may have been an oblique reference to her business rival, or an unconscious response to being interviewed by someone who is clearly a northern non-surfer, as well as an indication that northern is part of her definition of 'other'.

The 'Stuffscape'

Regardless of where you live, thanks to digital communication and commerce, most consumer goods are universally available and distributed for the convenience of the consumer. The wide-ranging distribution networks attached to global online marketplaces like eBay and Amazon have enabled the rapid movement of 'stuff' on an unprecedented scale. Like Appadurai's cultural flows of images, people and technology across the mediascape, ethnoscape and technoscape in the digital age, I propose that a further cultural flow exists: the 'stuffscape'. Today, thanks to digital communication and commerce, products once confined to a narrow geographical range can be found anywhere. Items that, in the pre-digital era, would be snapped up before they sold out in just a

handful of surf shops in the South West can now be ordered in advance online, having been inspected from every angle, reviews compared, purchased with 'One Click' and delivered to the customer's door the following day.

But in the early days of surfing's adoption in the South West, the limited range of retail opportunities in Cornwall provided opportunities for the local manufacture of surfing kit, clothing and paraphernalia that could not be easily sourced from elsewhere. A theme that has emerged throughout the research relates to necessity as the mother of invention. From the earliest days of surfboards being made locally by coffin makers (see chapter four), the lack of available imports has fostered home-grown creativity in the material culture of surfing. For example, RM recollects his first wetsuits. 'We used to make them ourselves. Obtain the patterns, cut them out, according to the patterns, glue 'em up, and add the tape on the outside' (RM 07/13). Individuals who demonstrated a knack for making them without causing 'terrible chafing' began to make a living, such as 'Dennis Cross...he was the man who started making wetsuits here in Newquay, which became Gul later on...he is the original source. He was making them individually and then out the back of his van, at Fistral..as soon as somebody had one of his wetsuits, you were like, ooh, gotta get something like that!' (ibid). The designs themselves initially held little claim to originality: 'you know, he looked at Californian magazines...oh look, O' Neill's got this new idea, and he would just design his own equivalent....and ...the first pair of surf shorts that I was really quite happy with I made myself... I ended up with a checkered coloured band around my shorts- they were called competition stripes in those days- and that was a complete copy of what I'd seen in Surfer

magazine' (ibid). Mansfield points in his book on British surfing to a copy of a photograph by local surfer and photographer Doug Wilson, (figure 6.18) in which a trio of Newquay surfers 'don't mind mingling with some top London models for a fashion mag photoshoot at Porth in 1966' (Mansfield 2011:194), claiming that the women's clothing came from London with the models but most of the menswear was locally sourced (ibid). Nevertheless these early attempts at creating surfing goods were the beginnings of numerous careers and businesses that gave those interested in the sport a means to work alongside it, often providing opportunities to partake in it through travel, proximity to surf spots and flexible working hours.

Emily Beaumont describes those who make a living in this way as 'sponsored surfers' (Beaumont 2011), alongside professional surfers and surf instructors. As the activity grew in popularity from the 1960s onwards, there were more opportunities to be 'sponsored' as Beaumont would have it. As CS puts it, 'When I was a kid, Cornwall had a whole network of surf shops. It was all the early surfers who started in the '60s and '70s and opened shops to make a living out of their passion' (CS 03/16). The shifting mediascape and ethnoscape in the same period meant that images and people travelling to and from the area provided ever more sparks to fan the flames of local invention. SB recollects having a second hand board reshaped by Tigger Newlyn 'probably one of the best surfers this country has ever produced. He shaped it after he came back from Hawaii' (SB 04/16) where he learned the craft.



Figure 6.18. A trio of Newquay surfers 'don't mind mingling with some top London models for a fashion mag photoshoot at Porth in 1966' (Mansfield 2011:194).

SB then went on to found Best Ever surfboards having been taught nearer home in the Bilbo factory in Newquay, run by local surfer Bill Bailey and Australian former lifeguard Bob Head. 'I went up to the Bilbo factory which was one of the first surfboard companies in this country and I asked him to tell me how he made them. He gave me the ideas and sold me the materials and I did this one up and then I started making the boards in my dad's garage. ...then my friends would say, oh, can you make me a board, I'd like a board like that. You were just buying and selling them to your friends because you couldn't buy them anywhere else' (ibid). Here Appadurai's concept of the spatially bounded neighbourhood is opposed to the surfing community, which at the time had only loose ties through the mediascape of imported magazines, very different to digitally linked world 'where spatial localization, quotidian interaction, and social scale are not always isomorphic' (1996:179) with one another.

The nature of the 'quotidian interaction' in the pre-digital age around the material culture might help to explain the embedded nature of surfing in the local area. SBW wonders whether, as a child in the eighties, he surfed first or read *Wavelength*, the magazine on British surfing he edits today. 'Maybe the magazine came first, I saw the magazine and that got me into surfing, because people I knew, kids from school were in it. There were pictures of beaches that I knew...and an advert for Smile Surf Shop in Newquay where we used to buy all our clothes' (SBW 04/15). In the period SBW discusses, the 1980s, local youngsters faced many difficulties when wishing to buy fashionable clothes, which, like ready-made wetsuits, were often slow to make their way to Cornwall. The alternative was to travel to a built up shopping area, the closest

being Plymouth, which even today is a ninety minute journey from Truro by train. With only one department store in the entire county at the time and a limited range of retail outlets selling fashionable clothes for teenage boys, the local surf shops with their colourful imported goods oozing subcultural capital would have been a tempting place to spend money. And when surfing friends were featured in a national magazine, conveniently based around the corner, the temptation to spend money on a surfboard and join them in the sea must have been stronger still.

The shops that did stock surf wear were a draw for visitors to the area. Reminiscing about his surf fashion business the eighties, GS explains, 'surfwear is usually very hard wearing and surfers are hard on their gear and in the early times it set us apart from all your Gap and your street, urban stuff. When you lived in [Cornwall], you were very exclusive that point' (GS 11/13). CS remembers that by the 1990s, 'there was loads of surf shops. I remember going to my first surf shop for the first time, it was absolutely amazing. There was this smell of Sex Wax and rubber from the wetsuits and all these crazy clothes and stuff. I absolutely loved it' (CS 03/16). The brands stocked in these shops were rarely British, and were increasingly finding their way into mainstream fashion outlets as surfing became more popular, as was demonstrated in chapter four.

As internet shopping developed in the early 2000s, goods were beginning to shift with increasing speed across the 'stuffscape', often with negative impacts on local surfing businesses. Andy Schollick of Second Skin wetsuits in

Devon explains, 'they don't need premises, nothing. I got a guy called me from Leicester- Leicester! And he said to me, I want you to sell me your suits for 60% of the retail price. Because if you don't I'm going to sell them at a loss and eventually, no-one will buy them from you anyway and you'll end up broke and they'll buy other suits from me. So there's the deal' (ASB 09/13). My field notes from the day of the interview tell a sorry tale. 'Interview with ASB. In shop for an hour. No customers/ calls. Early September- peak holiday season/school hols & sea definitely cold enough for wetsuits' (field notes 09/13). All manner of small retailers have proved unable to compete with online markets, and surf shops are no different. As DM observes, 'there's definitely less [surf shops in Falmouth now] I think people buying online is basically killing them' (DM 10/14). And surf-related manufacturing has buckled under the pressure of competition from outsourcing, according to Peter Robinson of the British Surf Museum. 'The first big one was Bilbo, and they stuck around in different forms until quite recently and they're now just an online retailer, so their manufacturing and the retail side of it has gone.....a lot of the hardware is made abroad and shipped in' (PR 09/13).

Local Brands

However, there are pockets of resistance to the trend of increasingly corporate, online based businesses around surfing, and support for these is perceived to be another factor that distinguishes the self-identified 'authentic' surfer in the study group from the mainstream, 'wannabe' or emmet. The ethnography evidences tremendous support for and knowledge of smaller local businesses. Peter Robinson mentions a few: 'you find the smaller companies

that are dotted around, people like say Fluid Juice in Cornwall and Gulf Stream who are their equivalent here, are mainly surfboard manufacturers, they still hand make surfboards in the UK. And then you've got people like Snug in Newquay who hand-make wetsuits in the UK' (PR ibid). Dan Morgan, a surf writer and web designer, enthuses about 'boutique-y type labels and brands that are doing their own thing that all have their own sort of style, rather than it just being these sort of global leaders' (DM 10/14) giving me Finisterre, based in St Agnes, as an example. He assures me, 'I think it's generally locals that are buying it, in fact I know for a fact it is because I know some of the guys at Finisterre, and...they have a bit of a following around Cornwall, a lot of people buy it and recognise it and think it's cool' (DM ibid).

Dan's observations are borne out by the ethnography. The Finisterre logo, although subtle is often observed on jackets, sweaters and hoodies worn in its native St Agnes (see figure 6.19). Demi Taylor is a former fashion journalist and has written several books on surfing. She looks noticeably stylish when I speak to her on Chapel Porth beach, dressed in skinny jeans 'which are really impractical when you come out of the sea because they're quite sticky to put your legs in' and a jacket, 'sort of native American inspired...from California' (DT 10/15). Describing what she is wearing, she draws attention to her hat: 'on top of my head I've got a Finisterre beanie and Finisterre are a locally-based surf company' (DT ibid). The logo is clearly visible on the right of the hat. It is assumed as a non-local and non-surfer I am unaware of the brand.



Figure 6.19. DT in Finisterre beanie.

On a freezing evening outside the local pub, The Driftwood Spars, I quiz HR, a doctor at the local hospital, about her outfit (figure 6.20). She is wearing what she describes as 'a casual dress' and 'comfy boots', which are leather, unlike the more practical wellies worn by many of my interviewees. My guess, based on the boots alone, that she is from 'upcountry' as jotted in my field notes, proves correct. Her current resident status is signalled by her jacket, one of several I spot in the pub that evening. 'It's lovely isn't it? So warm. It's from Finisterre, they're based just up the road there. It was expensive but so worth it. So warm' (HR 10/15) (see figure 6.20). The premises of Finisterre are indeed just up the road, at Wheal Kitty workshops just out of town. I interviewed the CEO, Tom Kay, who as I previously mentioned, greeted me barefoot having recently emerged from the surf. We spoke in the design offices adjacent to the shop (see figure 6.21) one of four owned by the company, the others being in Braunton, Falmouth and Soho, London.

A St Agnes resident and keen surfer, Kay is well respected in the local area as a businessman and community member. 'He's lovely,' reports FL 'and he does a lot for the local area' (FL 08/14). His company is described as a cold-water surf brand, and was founded when surf wear appeared not to fulfil the requirements of UK surfers. Kay explains, 'looking at products out there, there had to be a need for the brand and the products that we made. The products at that time were made often in far places like Singapore, board-shorts which didn't have any relevance to me as a surfer over here. So, the product that we made was a really thick, waterproof, windproof fleece' (TK 07/16).



Figure 6.20. HR in Finisterre Jacket

Again, the notion of materialised experience is relevant, because anyone who has emerged from the Atlantic in even the thickest wetsuit will tell you that warm dry clothes are needed immediately afterwards, and a windproof fleece is perfect for surveying the surf before going in at all.

Kay puts down some of the wider appeal of the brand to its local independent identity. 'We're British so it's got a kooky element to the brand. And if we can do that down here and be up against the best brands in the world that's a challenge but that's one we want to achieve. And also you walk in here and your perception of the brand is matched by the sort of place it is' (TK *ibid*) (see figure 6.22). My perception of the shop, recorded in my field notes, is 'high quality, expensive, fashionable in a non-trendy way' and despite having no place in my wardrobe for such a garment, I find myself trying on a windproof jacket I covet for weeks afterward for its beautiful cut, colour and materials. The jacket is pictured on the website (figure 6.23) and could flow across the 'stuffscape' to join anyone anywhere in the world. But my own consumer desires were motivated by the powerful sensory experience of trying it on in a shop whose open doors overlook the Atlantic, a stone's throw from St Agnes surfing beaches.

A similarly 'authentic' consumer experience is promoted in the Finisterre shop in central London: Tom Kay explains, 'the thinking there is of a community place where people can go, read a book, have a coffee, talk about a trip, look at boards and obviously buy a product because it's a business. There's not a surf shop in London and you've got a massive mobile lot of people that love the sea



Figure 6.21. *Finisterre interior offices. Note the bellyboard in the foreground.*



Figure 6.22. *Interior of the Finisterre shop in St Agnes*

and love surfing and that's somewhere where they can go and experience that. Why wouldn't they?' (TK Ibid). The London shop, pictured in figure 6.24, with its small range of products on display, is dominated by the seating area and barista bar, suggesting the casual apres-surf ambience of somewhere much closer to the sea and more in keeping with the imaginary of surfing described in the previous chapter, a place such as the Drifter Surf Shop and Cafe in Bali, pictured in Figure 6.25. The cold water surf products purchased in the store might well never leave the capital's streets but they are also highly appropriate to its cold, wet winters. When worn there they materialise the wearer's sense of identification with the imagined community of surfers, of belonging elsewhere, of the nostalgia for the present discussed in the previous chapter.

The brand's presence in central London is locally perceived as a measure of its success and authenticity, rather than as evidence of it having 'sold out'. SBW says that 'Finisterre...it's a bit more local, so you can support a more local company instead of say an Australian corporate brand', admitting that he does not buy it himself. 'I can't afford it! But it's lovely stuff!' (SBW 04/15). The brand is out of reach for the majority of St Agnes residents whose demographic was discussed earlier. High street brands are favoured for their price, as NB explains. 'Fat Face is all right and the discount is good. I'm not massively into brands, really. Surfwear is expensive and I don't go shopping in surf shops really because I can't afford it unless there's a sale on. New Look is all right' (NB 04/16). Activity in the sea is sometimes limited by damaged items that

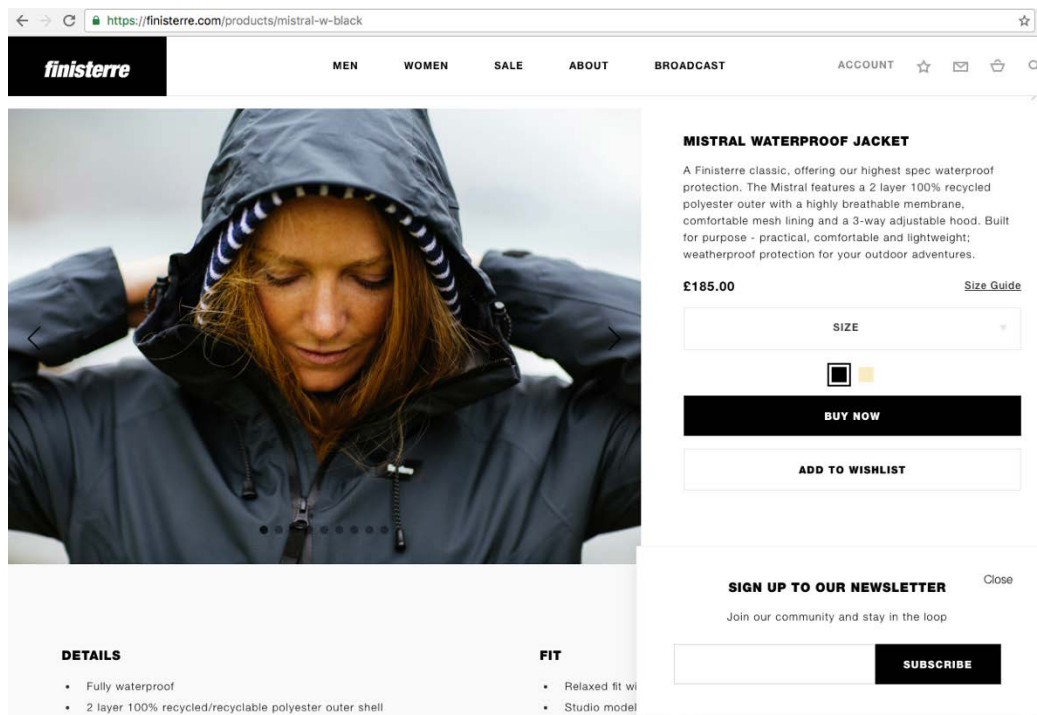


Figure 6.23. The jacket I coveted pictured on the Finisterre website

cannot affordably be replaced. PB tells me, 'I haven't gone in the sea as much this winter as I'd hoped to because I needed a new wetsuit and I didn't get one till recently, waiting for the sales. They're cheap and my old 32 was getting a bit holey and not very warm so I haven't been as much' (PB 04/16). Wetsuits and other kit is often purchased in sales or online with competitively priced products from all over the world appearing in the local 'stuffscape'. But local brand Finisterre is overwhelmingly described in positive terms and appreciation of it can be viewed as a marker of subcultural capital regardless of its accessibility in economic terms.

The affection for the brand in those who cannot afford it might be best understood by returning to Simmel's thoughts on value. For Simmel, value is partly subjective, partly objective. According to Appadurai, Simmel sees economic objects as existing in the 'space between pure desire and immediate enjoyment, with some distance between them and the person who desires them, which is a distance that can be overcome. This distance is overcome in and through economic exchange, in which the value of objects is determined reciprocally. That is, one's desire for an object is fulfilled by the sacrifice of some other object, which is the focus of desire for another.' (Appadurai, 1986:30). A customer desires an item, a shopkeeper desires cash. An exchange is made. But Simmel avers that this is not just exchanging values but an exchange of values. It is not just exchanging things of worth but determining what their worth is between the parties. In the case of Finisterre, local residents appreciate the values associated with the products, such as quality and local manufacture, and agree on the reciprocal exchange value, the price. But the

distance between the person who desires the product and their 'immediate enjoyment' is too great to be overcome. Luckily for cash-strapped surfing subculturalists, mere awareness of the product connotes taste appropriate to the surfing habitus and confers a degree of subcultural capital.

Corporate Giants

Hollister is positioned as the antithesis of Finisterre by the interviewees in the ethnography. Mention of the brand was greeted with sneers and chuckles throughout the research. SE describes it as 'basically a made up surf brand' (SE 10/15); other descriptions are less commendable to print. Based in landlocked Ohio, not usually associated with surf culture, and owned by US apparel giant Abercrombie and Fitch, the brand was set up in 2006 to appeal to teenagers who were unable to afford the price point of its parent company. Hollister has shops all over Europe and America, selling ranges of shorts and t-shirts for 'dudes' and 'bettys': men and women in the argot of American surfers. Figure 6.26 is taken from Hollister's official website in Germany. It directs traffic to 'Black Friday deals' on Hollister brand clothing and is a good example of the brand's typical offer: casual sweatpants for 'dudes' and denim shirts or stretch jersey tops and short boardshorts for 'bettys'. All bear the brand name and/or the Hollister 'seagull' logo and are described in the accompanying text as 'handpicked by our SoCal stylist', suggesting clear links with California, the coast and with the casual sportswear associated with surfing. The close but spurious association between the brand and the activity is further reinforced by the photograph taken by blogger Paul Kimber in figure 6.27 of a hoarding announcing the opening of a new Hollister store in



Figure 6.24. Interior of Finisterre shop London



Figure 6.25. Interior of Drifter Surf Shack, Bali

Birmingham's Bullring centre in 2012. Almost one hundred miles from the nearest salt water, the poster features no clothing whatsoever, just a topless male with a surfboard staring out over the pond-like surface of an un-surfable ocean and the legend, 'Pacific Merchants Hollister California 1922' referring to the fictitious origin of the company.

Hollister's shops are designed to look like surf shacks (figure 6.28) in a similar way to Finisterre London, the difference being that none of Hollister's offer is designed for surfing. That has not stopped the brand from making enormous profits and becoming 'arguably the largest surf brand in the world' in 2011 with annual sales of over £2 billion (shopeatsurf.com 12/05/2013).

Like almost any global brand today, Hollister has a huge online presence including web and social media platforms meaning that regardless of its physical absence in Cornwall (the nearest outlet is in Exeter) the brand is as accessible to St Agnes residents as it is to anyone else with a computer via the 'stuffscape'. Its enormous popularity is near uniformly derided by my interviewees, with a small minority claiming not to have even heard of the brand. The Hollister logo that appears on chests all over the globe is notably absent in St Agnes, where the local papers did not take up the controversy over the fictional backstory of its origins in 1932, the brainchild of 'spirited surfer John M Hollister', or of the company's attempts to prosecute residents of the American town of Hollister from using the name on local merchandise (Schlossberg 2015). Surf brands like Rip Curl that strayed into mainstream fashion are perceived as having 'sold out' (DM, NH, SE) but where



Figure 6.26. Hollister 'So Cal Looks'



Figure 6.27. Hoarding promoting the Hollister store to be opened in Birmingham's Bullring Centre in 2012



Figure 6.28. Exterior of Hollister, Brent Cross, London UK. Note the 'surf shack' styling.

they have 'gone back to basics' (DM 10/14) and their surfing roots they maintain a chance of recuperation into the subculturalist wardrobe. But Hollister's cultural appropriation of surfing has resulted in it being shunned by St Agnes residents who rightly view it as 'fake' and according to my field notes mostly 'wouldn't be seen dead in it' (DM *ibid*).

Conclusion

Social class is not the primary determinant of cultural dominance in St Agnes, in spite of the gentrification that has crept into the village in recent years. Although economic resources are undoubtedly unevenly distributed in the village, the local focus on surfing is a key determinant in the cultural economy of the village. Notwithstanding the problems associated with defining subculture, since the residents of the village on the whole define themselves as distinct from 'the mainstream,' subcultural capital is valued higher here than the cultural capital of Bourdieu's dominant class.

Subcultural capital is expressed through the clothing culture in a number of ways. In this surfing community, the conspicuous consumption of goods does not indicate status. Rather, the philosophies of the 'soul surfers' of the 1960s have informed an anti-materialist attitude, in which the gaudy consumption of fashionable items is rejected in favour of a more casual style. Traditional standards of western dress are undermined in the wearing of flip-flops year-round as a symbolic gesture of non-conformism. Status is demonstrated through materialised experience, in which worn clothes and kit take on a patina and differentiate the seasoned local surfer from the wannabe tourist, even when

the patina is inherited from family members, as well as in the wearing of club and official uniforms that denote a professional standard of sea proficiency.

Status is also accrued in the avoidance of goods favoured by the mainstream, defined as those outside the subculture. As surfing became increasingly popular in the 1980s and 1990s, brands that began life selling specialist surfing products capitalised on the boom and diversified into mainstream fashion, resulting in their abandonment by 'real surfers' wishing to avoid the subordinate imitation of those outside the subculture and subsequently by the subordinate group too as mainstream fashion moved on. As these brands and other consumer goods have become universally available in what I term the 'stuffscape' of items that make their way around the globe via digital commerce the selection of brands that confers subcultural capital is increasingly important in defining identity. Knowledge of brands with a genuine connection to surfing is valued and local brands, although unaffordable to many, are desirable indicators of allegiance to fellow subculturalists.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EMBODIMENT: Ethnicity, Age and Gender

In this chapter the final cluster of themes that emerged from fieldwork and interviews is tied to the central concept of embodiment. The comments, conversations and observations made in the ethnography are discussed and analysed under three subordinate categories, ethnicity, masculinity and femininity. Again, the chapter as a whole makes use of the theoretical framework outlined in the methodology in order to analyse the themes. Bourdieu's 'field' here is understood to relate to issues of attractiveness and display, with applicable rules and goals. Wacquant's 'body capital' (2013) is clearly applicable to this area of the study, owing to its focus on masculine display and dominance in a milieu wherein cultural and financial capital are in short supply. Thornton's 'subcultural capital' (1995) is also applied to the construction and maintenance of surfing identities. Bourdieu's 'habitus', contested by Appadurai in the light of shifting cultural flows as less fixed and faster changing, appears to be a more robust concept when considering gender norms that have been established and entrenched across all of patriarchy. It is applied here to the analysis of the clothing worn and talked about in the sample area.

In 'Ethnicity', the transition of the archetypal surfing body from a black body to a white one is discussed. The chapter then goes on to consider how the physical body itself is shaped and adapted by the activity of surfing. The surfing body is often dressed in the water according to requirements of practicality and

performance rather than decoration and display but remains a surfing body onshore, where negotiations and articulations of gender are more visible through clothing. This section draws on Miller, Woodward et al to examine the ways in which complex ideas around gender and sexuality are materialized. Wacquant's notion of 'body capital' is adapted to analyse the masculine surfing body, which is proposed here to possess 'embodied experience'. This embodiment is considered in the wider context of mainstream fashion and the widespread adoption of surf style by non-surfers. Clothing in the village is then considered with a focus on the perceived impracticality of feminine attire and the local preference for a 'casual' appearance, returning to spaces and places as the idea that fashion happens elsewhere is examined. The discussion makes use of Bourdieu's 'habitus' and 'capital' to delve into the anti-fashion sentiments expressed by interviewees, arguing that gender and status are negotiated in fields which do not always intersect with mainstream fashion in this surfing community but remain, nevertheless, embodied.

Ethnicity and the Surfing Body

In chapter four it was established that surfing was well developed in Polynesia long before white settlers in early twentieth century Hawaii attempted to master the activity and use it to attract tourism. I noted that the discourse around surfing in the period of its adoption by whites served to define the native Hawaiians who practiced it with apparent ease as 'exotic' and Other rather than as accomplished athletes. Returning to this notion with a specific focus on embodiment, it is possible to theorise the transformation of the archetypal surfing body from one that is black to one that is white. Ann Hall writes in

Feminism and Sporting Bodies: Essays on Theory and Practice (1996) that in order to approach the gender imbalance in sport we need theory and relational analyses which 'begin with the assumption that sporting practices are historically produced, socially constructed and culturally defined to serve the interests and needs of powerful groups in society' (1996:12). The same applies to inequalities around race.

The white surfing body is itself historically produced. Duke Kahanamoku, discussed in chapter four and Appendix 6 as 'the father of modern surfing' is described by Westwick and Neushul as being in 'racial limbo' in their discussion of the 'central but ambiguous place of race in the surfing revival' (2013:52). They recount an episode in which a waitress refused to serve Kahanamoku on the basis of his race in Lake Arrowhead, California, 'at one point in his swimming career' (2013:51). The fellow Olympians who were with him at the time are alleged to have said, 'he's not a negro. He's Hawaiian and that is not the same' (2013:52). Such a distinction elides the fact of Kahanamoku's Otherness: he was a non-white 'native' in a period of continuing white settlement in Hawaii.

Westwick and Neuschul go on to acknowledge tensions between *haoles* (whites) and native Hawaiians around the 'ownership' of surfing, as whites began to set up exclusive surf clubs and organize and win surfing competitions. They quote Alexander Hume Ford as commenting in 1909 that "at the recent surfing carnivals...practically every prize offered for those most expert in Hawaiian water sports [was] awarded to white boys and girls, who

have only recently mastered the art that was for so long believed to be possible of acquirement only by the native born, dark skinned Hawaiian” (Ibid:52) and go on to say that ‘Ford’s view suggested that white Americans, having already claimed political, economic and religious power in Hawaii, had also appropriated Hawaii’s cultural legacy of surfing’ (Ibid:52). In *Empire in Waves* (2014), Scott Laderman goes further and argues that Ford was consciously attempting to appropriate the activity from Hawaiians in favour of white tourists, and that Hawaiians were not invited to enter the competitions he spoke of.

Laderman goes on to observe that in the early days of surfing adoption outside of Hawaii, ‘for people of colour, the coast was virtually off-limits. Whether through prejudicial municipal codes, segregated housing patterns, or threats of white violence, the beach was- unlike in Hawaii- a space reserved almost exclusively for whites (Laderman 2014:51) and ‘with the massive expansion of the middle class in the 1950s there emerged a large demographic of American consumers who sought pleasure and leisure at the beach. Nearly all of them were white’ (Laderman :52). While Kahanamoku’s reputation as the father of modern surfing was being established worldwide, American cultural dominance was gathering pace with an unparalleled output of print media and advertising as well as radio and Hollywood film. Here, representations of heroes and victors were overwhelmingly white, regardless of the geographic or cultural origin of their endeavors. ‘Native’ surfers such as Kahanamoku were replaced in popular discourse with American surfing pioneers such as Tom Blake (pictured in figure 7.1).



Figure 7.1. Tom Blake with his renowned hollow boards and the blond hair of a white body, 1930

American born Blake invented an 'improved' hollow board with a fin on the underside whilst living in Hawaii, which was lighter and easier to manoeuvre than the traditional longboards that had been ridden for centuries. The boards were manufactured and sold in the USA from 1932 making surfing more accessible to American whites who were unable to acquire boards made in the traditional manner from the *Wii Wii* and *Koa* trees which grew only on the Pacific Islands. The new hollow boards were prohibitively expensive for native Hawaiians; their heavy and unresponsive traditional *olu* boards could not compete with the speed and agility of the Tom Blake designs (figure 7.1). In respect of clothing culture, the *malo* or loincloth traditionally worn by both sexes for surfing in Hawaii was abandoned around the same time as Western swimwear, unaffordable to many who had lived by the sea for generations, became the norm on beaches around the world.

Surfing was redefined and socially constructed to serve the needs of the more powerful groups in society, to the increasing exclusion of non-white participants. It went through what Canniford (2006) describes as 'sporticisation', the process whereby it was made to comply with the work ethic and values of white Western society and at the same time to require the commodities produced by the West in order to participate.

However, as I observe in the literature review and elsewhere, narratives of the development of surfing such as Westwick and Neuschul and Laderman, above, focus very strongly on its adoption in the USA. While the American cultural dominance described was increasingly experienced by the UK from the 1950s,

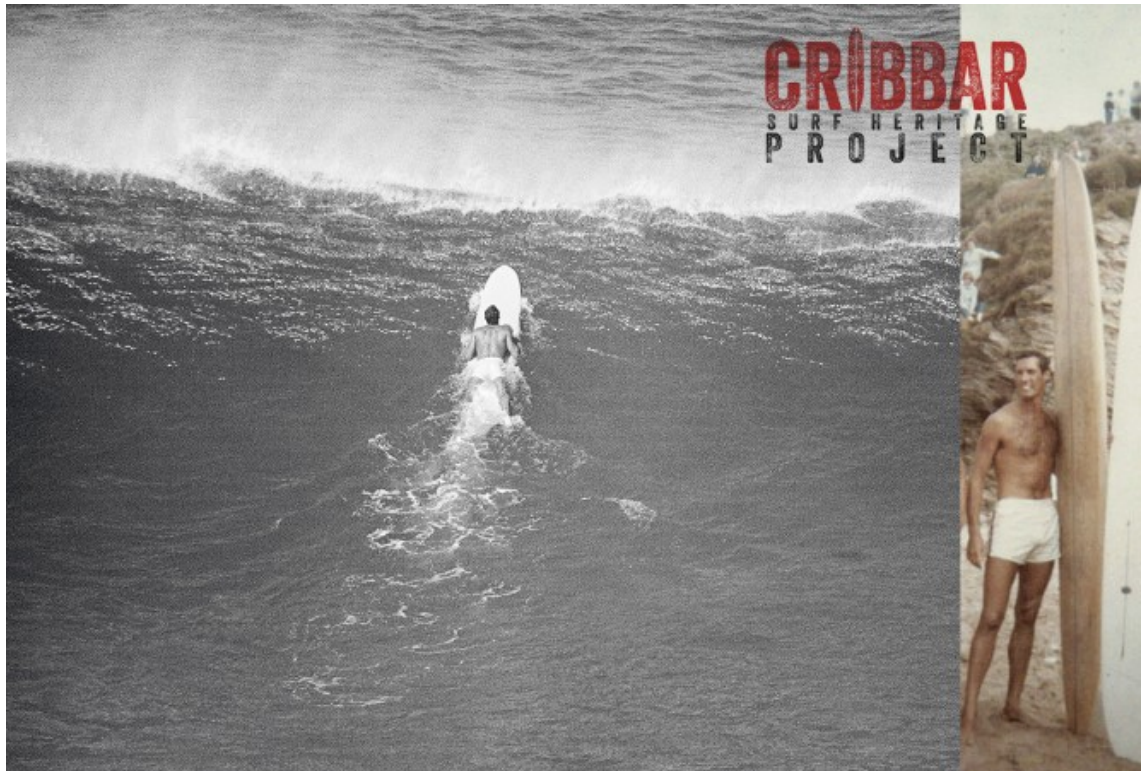


Figure 7.2. 'Mahogany Jack' paddling out for his record breaking surf in 1965 and inset, with his longboard.



Figure 7.3. An event at the 1966 Cornish and Open Championships.

in the period before the Second World War British surfing culture was, by necessity, home-grown. As I established in chapter four, imported images of surfing were slow to make their way to the South South West of England, even as late as the 1970s. Instead, as I have argued, an emergent native surf culture developed with closer links to the Commonwealth nations of Australia and South Africa than to the USA. The continued popularity of bellyboarding as a legitimate surfing activity in the region is indicative of its difference to American surfing contexts.

The body of the surfer in the UK remains a white body, but not as a result of American cultural dominance. Rather, it results from parallel conditions pertaining to race as surfing grew in popularity. Bellyboarding was, as I have argued, established in the South West by the 1930s and enthusiastically taken up by locals and holiday makers alike, almost all of whom, in the early twentieth century, were white. The growing diversity of Britons in the postwar period did not result in a diversity of surfing bodies: the affluence required to holiday by the coast was denied to most people of colour. International travel by surfers to seek employment on British beaches was also limited to whites. Many local children in Newquay, Cornwall, were taught to surf in the mid-1960s by a Hawaiian, lifeguard Jack Lydgate or 'Mahogany Jack' (Holmes 2010). Few images of Lydgate remain. Figure 7.2, taken from an online article celebrating Lydgate's 1965 record breaking surf of the Crib Bar, a twenty-foot wave that breaks occasionally near Newquay, clearly shows that Mahogany Jack was a white man. Figure 7.3 is of an event at the 1966 Cornish and Open Championships, the 'Open' aspect of the title meaning that surfers from outside

Ethnic Group (table KS201EW)

The predominant ethnic group in Cornwall is 'White', accounting for 98.2% of the population. The population that stated they were from a non white ethnic group was 9,425, an increase of almost 4,000 on the 2001 figure of 5,490.

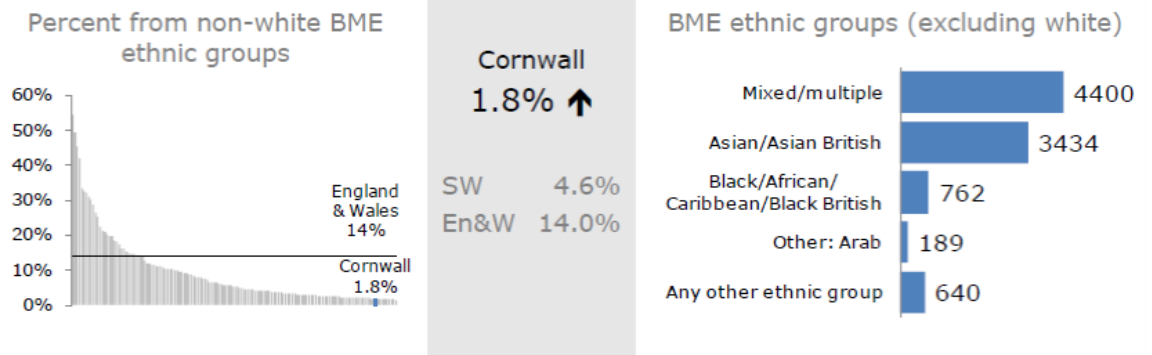


Figure 7.4. Ethnic groups in Cornwall in the 2011 census.

the county were permitted to compete. Close examination of the event reveals an exclusively white competition and audience. The surfing body is overwhelmingly represented as white in Cornwall in the twentieth century just as it is in America, the activity having been incorporated from its earliest appearance on UK shores into the cultural milieu of socially dominant whites.

Today, Cornwall remains a region with little ethnic diversity (see figure 7.4), with 98.2% of the population identifying as white in the 2011 census (ons.gov.uk). Cornwall's 'whiteness' is reflected in the ethnic makeup of my respondents, with only one of the thirty interviewees in the targeted sampling exercises identifying as non-white, and none of the surfing experts. Instead the archetypally tanned, blond, and it is assumed white surfing body is visible in the region and in the ethnographic sample area, embodied and alluded to by my interviewees and analysed below.

Masculine Surfing Bodies

It is important to note that the archetype of the surfer is necessarily embodied, since it is defined by a physical activity rather than an intellectual pursuit (unlike for example, the poet). Pictured onshore or in the sea, clothed or naked, the surfer is easily identified with the activity which defines him. He is, in the majority of representations, male. His tanned skin and sun-bleached, unruly hair are embodiments of the time spent in the waves, the lean physique acquired from the exertions of swimming and controlling the board. Strength, power and mastery of the physical environment are connoted by this body, suggesting an uncomplicated, 'unreconstructed' masculinity, 'elided with an image of Australianness' (Craik 2009:429). Represented in popular culture in

images of real surfers such as Tom Blake (figure 7.1) and Mike Hynson and friends in *The Endless Summer* (Bruce Brown 1966) (figure 7.5), as well as in fiction in *The Big Wednesday* (John Milius 1978), it is the outdoor body and the exercising body, a body that is confident to tackle the natural elements', according to Australian fashion historian, Jennifer Craik (ibid).

My interviewee NH ponders how closely he fits into this stereotype, when asked if the way he looks might make a casual observer think about any kind of surf culture. Preferring not to be photographed, he said, 'I think in Cornish surf culture, definitely. Or Australian surf culture, probably. Californian, yes, I do fit that sort of stereotypical profile in terms of slightly longer, very unkempt hair, a little bit bleached by the sun. I guess that's a giveaway but the surf image has really changed, hasn't it, particularly over the last five years, to one where mine isn't typical. Way back in the mid-80s everybody looked like me and I'm just stuck in that time warp!' (NH 04/15). I describe him in my field notes as 'weathered, outdoorsy, healthy looking. BBBH,' shorthand for the 'bushy bushy blond hairdo' celebrated in the Beach Boys song *Surfin' USA* (1963, Brian Wilson). Dressed in rigger boots and tattered shorts, NH's style is far from metrosexual and rather exemplifies at least some of the qualities suggested by Craik.



Figure 7.5. Still from The Endless Summer (Bruce Brown 1966)



Figure 7.6. The weathered face of a surfer in a 1998 Guinness 'surfer' advertisement.

Ford and Brown state that there is a 'usually unquestioned logic that the social development of surfing was a physically and symbolically 'male' activity, that in some circumstances women also participated in' (2006:83). Indeed, as I discussed in the literature review, the literature on surfing is almost exclusively populated by young white men. Likewise in the media, representations of the surfing body, in common images of other sports figures, have been predominantly male (Creedon 1994). Having analysed the means by which experience is given material form and embodied by the surfer, this section examines the embodiment of a number of other values that are articulated in the construction of the masculine surfing body.

The first of these values, closely linked to experience, is leisure. I discussed in the last chapter the way in which Thorstein Veblen's (2007 [1899]) notion of conspicuous leisure is materialised in the flip-flops worn in St Agnes that symbolically distance the wearers from nine-to-five work and suggest instead a more hedonic pursuit of capricious waves. The pursuit of leisure for Veblen is a more sophisticated marker of pecuniary power even than conspicuous consumption, since it 'does not commonly leave a material product' and requires 'the exhibition of some tangible, lasting results of the leisure so spent' (2007:34) in order to function as a status marker. Sporting trophies function as proof of leisure, but medals and cups are not sufficiently portable as to be displayed on the body and publicly viewed. Also, surfing is not just a competitive sport but an activity practiced by many who know they will never even enter a competition, with equal dedication and enthusiasm to would-be professionals. The pursuit of excellence is rewarded, for the vast majority of

surfers, with nothing more than a slap on the back, if indeed another surfer is there to witness it. Veblen argues that conspicuous leisure is an effective status marker in a small community, where a reputation for the non-productive consumption of time is sufficient evidence to convince subordinates of their place, but in a larger group, conspicuous consumption of goods is more immediate, visual and concrete and therefore more popular. Writing at the advent of mass communication and consumer culture, Thorstein Veblen could not have predicted today's context, in which social media can so forcefully communicate the commodification of leisure.

Today, the sun-blistered shoulders, the cracked feet and the tribal tattoo acquired on a gap year are broadcast via selfies on social media and are signifiers of conspicuous leisure as clearly as the pointlessly small bonnet demonstrated conspicuous consumption to Veblen in the nineteenth century. Catching a wave and riding it by controlling a board is a rare and precious thing for even the most competent surfer, but the surfing 'lifestyle' is conducted at all times. This habitus, even when not actively partaking in the sport and thereby avoiding industry, is primarily one of leisure. Hours are spent, or as Veblen would have it, wasted, waiting for the right wave. The right waves only occur in particular locations, many of them so far from home that a 'surfari' is required to find them, a worldwide quest romanticised in Bruce Brown's film *The Endless Summer* (1966). Travel to far flung surfing locales to hone surfing skills and gain 'performance capital' (Ford & Brown, 2006) usually offers only short term, casual and often part-time work and no tangible material reward. The rewards are often memories, of beach parties and barbecues, budget travel from one

surf spot to another, romance and adventure, materialised in faded t-shirts and chipped shell bracelets with a tale to tell, or embodied in deep tans and bleached hair.

In reality, and certainly in St Agnes, the surfer is not necessarily male, although the strong, athletic body, the weathered skin and the sun-bleached hair are common to many surfing bodies and function much like the materialised experience I discussed in the previous chapter. In this case, 'embodied experience' is connoted by long-term effects of exposure to salt and sunlight, the wearing of flip-flops and the sitting on waxy boards producing cracked heels and bald patches on the legs as well as an uneven suntan on patches exposed by the wetsuit. As RP tells me, you can always tell who a surfer is even onshore because, 'the skin will always look a little bit weathered, like you'll always have a brown nose or something' (RP 04/15). The weathered and sun blistered face of the surfer was exploited by beverage giant Guinness in their award-winning ad campaign of 1998 known as 'Surfer' from which a still appears in figure 7.6 The advert explores the rewards derived from patience (the same quality required if the perfect Guinness is to be poured) as a group of Polynesian surfers await the perfect wave. Conspicuous leisure in the form of embodied experience is clearly expressed in the weathered face and 'thousand yard stare' of the veteran surfer, whose pale crows' feet suggest many hours of squinting at distant breakers.

This is somewhat analogous to Loic Wacquant's (2004) 'body capital', in which the boxer's existing strength, speed and endurance are combined with the habitus more familiar to Bourdieu, derived from education, family and

employment or lack of it to produce a body which in itself has value in both the ghetto and 'mainstream society', with the boxing gym located in both realms simultaneously. The institution of the community boxing gym is both supported by the state and, as part of the ghetto, opposed to it. The surfing body is constructed and maintained similarly from raw material and habitus, and has value within the surfing community and in the world at large, to the extent that it is presented as an archetypal ideal body in advertising and the media (see figures 7.7 and 7.8). These lean, sexualised bodies are presented as engaged in the activity that defines them, unlike their female counterpoints discussed in chapter five, and therefore are in possession of both subcultural capital, to which I return later in the chapter, and body capital.

But the representation of such bodies suggests a fundamental difference between them and Wacquant's boxers and the capital they embody. Wacquant's boxers are young black men from an impoverished area, whose powerful physicality presents a threat to those who would define them as Others. Many began their accumulation of body capital not for social dominance but for survival, as self-defence in an area rife with violent crime. These men are fighters, and their body capital is as much about the potential for violence as it is about strength and beauty. The same cannot be said of the surfer, whose muscular physique is more of a by-product of surfing activity than necessarily a goal in itself. Bourdieu makes direct reference to this difference when he writes that, 'sailing, skiing and all the Californian sports... substitute man's solitary struggle with nature for the man-to-man battles of popular sports (not to mention competitions, which are incompatible with a lofty idea of the

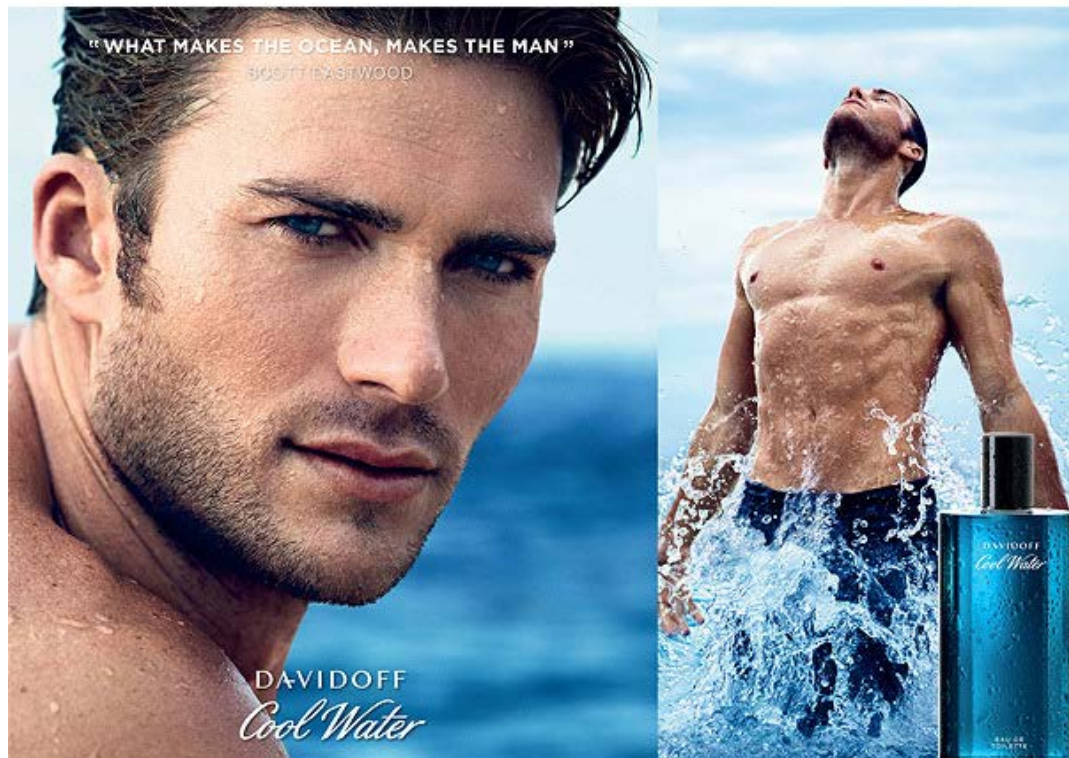


Figure 7.7. Actor and amateur surfer Scott Eastwood filmed by Paul Walker for Davidoff, 2012. Photo: Coty



7.8. Still from the TV advert for the C4 Cactus Rip Curl, Citroen's partnership with surfwear brand RipCurl.

person)' (1986:217). Nevertheless both are examples of embodied experience, like the shaved heads required by Wacquant's fellow pugilists in the ring, suggesting sharpness and discipline, as opposed to the preferred 'BBBH' of St Agnes surfers, which is quintessentially relaxed and informal. Surfing hair crops up regularly in conversation in St Agnes. On a windswept beach one October, DT, whose hat was discussed in the previous chapter, (figure 6.19) tells me, 'Yes, absolutely, absolutely, you can tell a real difference in the summer when you have people from up country come down to Cornwall because they have hairstyles. People down here don't really have hairstyles, they have hair and it's either wet or dry. We don't really use products on our hair; we don't have to use salt spray because the salt from the sea does it for us'. DT's, emerging from a stylish beanie, is blonde, tousled, described as 'long BBBH' in my notes. Her reference to not having to use salt spray (see figure 7.9) and the sea doing the job of the product implies that surfers' embodied experience makes the look sufficiently desirable as to be copied by others, using whatever artifice is necessary.

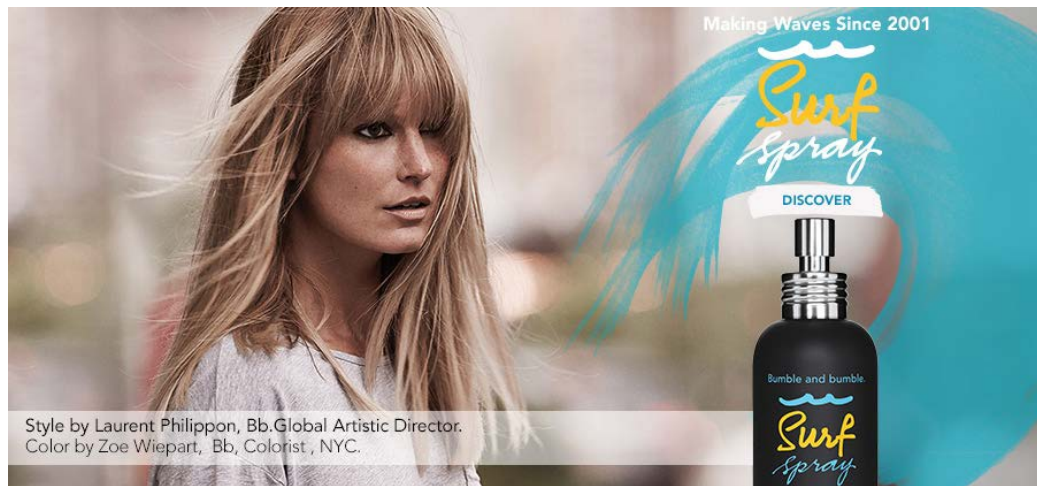


Figure 7.9. 'Surf Spray' salt spray from Bumble and Bumble

Subcultural Capital

Sarah Thornton's (1995) subcultural capital is displayed in the embodied experience of these surfers. Subcultural capital can be objectified or materialised 'in the form of fashionable haircuts and well-assembled record collections' and 'embodied in the form of being "in the know", using (but not over using) current slang and looking as if you were born to perform the latest dance styles' (1995:11-12). Analogous to the dancing aspect of Thornton's description, Ford and Brown comment that, 'as with other sports, success or subcultural capital in surfing is derived from present (and past) surfing skill, which may be termed performance capital' (2006:82). This appears to be borne out in my observations in St Agnes to some extent. Skill was certainly admired by respondents. But Ford and Brown are concerned only with stand-up surfers and lean towards discussion of surfing as a competitive sport, focusing also on 'winners' in the subcultural field. My ethnographic research is necessarily concerned with all of the players in the field, including bellyboarders and those whose skill or lack of it is never witnessed by others. In the sample group, surfing in all of its forms comes over much more as an embedded practice in daily life than as a sport, and subcultural capital to derive from the extent to which it is embedded rather than prowess in the activity.

Much was made in my interviews of the difference between 'proper' surfers and 'wannabe' surfers. On a cold Chapel Porth beach one October, RW (see figure 7.10), prior to donning his wetsuit and clad in dusty flip-flops, unbranded camo shorts and hoodie tells me,

My dad was a lifeguard, he introduced me and my brother to surfing at an early age, around ten.....but I was a lifeguard here on this beach for ten years so this is my

environment, really, down here on the beach. And we all grew up surfing and that's what we've always known and always loved and that's what we love to do. We are - I hate to say it, but we are real surfers, we've been doing it since we were kids and have grown up doing it and that's not all we know but it's mainly what we know. (RW 10/15).

RW's description of his family as 'real surfers', draws tacit comparison to the unmentioned Others, 'fake' or 'wannabe' surfers whose habitus has not involved 'doing it since [they] were kids'. Like many of those hanging around in the carpark that day, RW's own subcultural capital derives from generations of experience, embodied in a laid-back style of dress in keeping with the local style that rejects any suggestion of having only recently bought into the lifestyle. In addition, he draws parallels between this habitus and the location, the local environment as having produced him as a 'real surfer'. The clothing culture of St Agnes must draw form the 'raw material' of what is available in the shops or via the stuffscape, but as exemplified by RW, it appears to reject ostentatiously surf-styled garments that fail to convey anything but superficial interest in surfing itself.

In the last chapter, Consumption, the appropriation of surf style by non-surfers was raised through the idea of 'buying into the lifestyle', which might be helpfully considered here as emulation of the surfing body. As Joanne Entwistle points out, 'bodies are socially constituted, always situated in culture and the outcome of individual practices directed towards the body: in other words "dress" is the result of "dressing" or "getting dressed"' (2000:11).



Figure 7.10. RW, proud of his surfing heritage.

She describes how 'the individual and very personal act of getting dressed is an ongoing practice, requiring knowledge, techniques and skills' (2000:31). 'As a boy hangs with the older blokes he begins to move and behave like them through the gradual, often unconscious, absorption of their knowledge through continual exposure,' explains surfer and cultural geographer, Clifton Evers (2009:901). As the young surfer or 'grommie' picks up expertise in surfing and perhaps mimics the behaviour of older surfers on dry land, he additionally develops consumer expertise by observing the style preferences of the established elders. Expertise and taste can be further developed through study: the internet provides the most widely accessible source of information on the technical aspects of surfing as well as the social and the cultural, previously drawn from fanzines and magazines such as *Wavelength* in the UK, *Surfer* in the USA and *Tracks* in Australia. The surfer's body when clothed or unclothed articulates his 'habitus', the 'durable, transposable dispositions' (Wacquant 2013:95) that are produced in his milieu, and the extent to which he has absorbed them in his embodied experience.

Confusion arose in my sample group when embodied experience failed to be displayed. RB furrowed his suitably weathered brow as he told me, 'you know them when you see them but there is small pockets of younger surfers who are proper surfers who have grown up here, been doing it since they were young, who wear very street, city, urban clothing, haircuts, tight jeans, funny shoes. And they're surfers but they don't look like surfers' (RB 10/15). These 'proper surfers' emerge from a suitable habitus and have legitimate claims to locality, a theme developed in the previous chapter. In addition they are

experienced: they have 'been doing it since they were kids'. Yet these surfers abandon flip-flops in favour of 'funny shoes', a trend RB said he had observed 'down Penzance way', but one I never witnessed in almost three years observing the clothing culture of St Agnes.

As was noted in chapter six, consumption of fashionable surf brands is carried out with caution by the community. As GF tells me, 'Yeah, you can tell some people go overly into the fashion side of things and yeah, there's a bit of a saying, all the gear, no idea, sort of thing. It's one of those, it's a fine balance, really. You tend to find the guys that have lived and surfed and the girls, really, they don't overly present themselves, they don't wear every label going. It's what it is' (GF 04/16). Nevertheless the menswear observed in the sample area is more playful and engaged with mainstream fashion than one might expect in an area where retirees outnumber the under twenties. Regardless of age, most of the men interviewed and observed in the village reject what Fred Davis sees as the most pervasive kind of anti-fashion, what he terms 'conservative scepticism' (Davis 1992:178), the continuous wearing of menswear such as the suit that changes very little over time. Instead, there is a preference for casual clothes that change with prevailing trends and can therefore be identified broadly as fashion.

Steve England, pictured on a Saturday morning at Chapel Porth in figure 7.11, is editor of *Carve* magazine, co-director of *Orca Publications* and a well-known figure in local surf culture. As one might expect with a high-status job in the media, Steve's wardrobe is sourced from fashion outlets rather than, for



Figure 7.11. SE in casual clothes that correspond to prevailing fashion trends. clothes that change with prevailing trends and can therefore be identified broadly as fashion.

example, the agricultural stores that also provide clothing in the region. As well as wears shorts and beanie he wears Vans shoes, a brand that was established earlier as closely aligned, via skateboarding, to surfing. These shoes are available to surfers, skaters and the general public via the stuffscape almost anywhere in the world but are second only to flip-flops in local clothing preferences, indicating the 'local regional and national subtleties' (2017:4) of dress that Buckley and Clarke discuss in respect of clothing cultures.

As noted above, the tough wear experienced by surfing and beach wear means it often enjoys a relatively short life, and the consumer must replace worn out items from a selection in the shops that is likely to be in line with prevailing fashion trends. This might go some way to explain the fashionable dress worn in the sample area. But outdoor garments are likely to last much more than a season, particularly if they are marketed as performance sportswear such as North Face branded jackets, designed to withstand arctic conditions. Unbranded warm jackets are widely available but are not often seen in the village, suggesting an engagement with branding and trends that goes beyond mere local availability.

The presence of the WBBC during the ethnography would suggest that an interest in not just vintage garments but historic forms of surfing exists in the local area. Interviewees expressed a reluctance to label the trend 'hipster', perhaps because the term and the subculture were already appearing outdated: as long ago as 2014 articles were appearing in the media claiming the movement to be over (Guardian 21/06/17). DT, musing on the difference

between 'old school surfers' and the younger generation, explained, 'I think hipster is a badly used term but you've got people who are more interested in embracing the full culture of surfing. So, people who are a bit more interested in the arts and culture side of it' (DT 10/15). The 'badly used' and gendered term 'hipster' suggests beards, tattoos and a fashionable disavowal of modern technology such as in the preference for vinyl records and other analogue formats when a digital version is available. In the context of surfing, this materialises in the value of vintage objects and items crafted using traditional means such as wooden bellyboards (see fig 7.12). NH explains 'people have cracked onto the idea in the last ten years in Cornwall that our boards, our standard thruster short boards, aren't massively suited to most conditions so we've started to ride different boards and a lot of them have taken their inspiration from vintage surf craft. That then leads people to seek out the original vintage boards which have become a real collectable market but people ride them as well' (NH 04/16). NH's pragmatic explanation suggests that the interest in vintage boards arises from the unsuitability of modern boards to local conditions, implying that the current global surf industry is too homogenous to respond to local needs.



Figure 7.12. Hand crafted and vintage bellyboards at the WBBC 2014.

However the hipster movement was in no sense confined to the South West nor to surfing, and NH concurs that it is more likely that the interest in vintage boards is part of a more international nostalgic trend (discussed in chapter five). 'The hipster movement has certainly embraced surfing, hasn't it, and they're vintage-inspired, aren't they, hipsters, I'm sure...I think there is a correlation between vintage and surfing and particularly in the past two years that's becoming stronger, isn't it, from what I've seen. There's definitely a more historical aspect to surfing' (NH *ibid*). This 'historical aspect' has fostered a

lively trade in vintage boards and swimwear, online and at events such as the WBBC as discussed in chapter five.

Thornton's observations on subcultural capital finding material form in 'well assembled record collections' (1995:11) were made prior to the advent of what I have termed the 'stuffscape', in which online shopping and efficient distribution networks mean consumer goods move around the world at great speeds and are available to almost anyone, anywhere with a computer and a credit card. Rare and highly prized records and clothing was sought out by subculturalists in the pre-digital era in difficult-to-access shops and flea markets, whereas now most products can be sourced online, cheap copies are available and they can be ordered and delivered with ease. Vintage clothing, once the quarry of the dedicated junk-shop and car boot trawler, can now be hunted down online from the comfort of home. How then, is the contemporary subculturalist to demonstrate 'authenticity'? This heavily contested term cropped up in interviews in the ethnography with great regularity in discussions around clothing (BB, JI, NH et al).

Embodied Experience

In the journal *Fashion Theory*, De Long, Heinemann and Reilly comment in their essay, *Hooked on Vintage!* that consumers buying and wearing vintage must have 'an ability to discriminate the authentic product, and revalue it in a new setting' (de Long et al, 2005). The authors apply Virginia Postrel's (2003) analysis of American shopping habits to the pleasures to be had in finding and being seen in vintage clothing. They draw out a complex relationship between

meanings found in the garments themselves in respect of authenticity, which Postrel enumerates as purity, tradition and aura, and feelings derived from this authenticity: sensory pleasure, connection to time and place, and self-expression (Postrel, 2003). Applying my notion of 'materialised experience' and returning briefly to Bruno Latour's ANT here, 'meaning' and 'pleasure' cannot be considered separately, deriving from both the materiality of the objects and the significance they have accrued over their long lives and from their current use. Materialised experience in vintage clothing is both borrowed from the original owner and derived from the garments' patina of age. It is also possessed by the new owner in the implied personal story of its acquisition. Crucial to the understanding of this meaning is the 'vintagescape' discussed in chapter five in respect of the WBBC, the specific places and spaces in which these narratives of experience unfold.

Experience is given material form in vintage garments, and wearing them embodies that experience. But this is distinct from the embodiment of one's own experience, the articulation of habitus. Although vintage garments and objects that had once belonged to others were consumed at the WBBC and on a day-to-day basis in the ethnography, the use of old objects and the wearing of old clothing that had been bought new was much more common. Applying Postrel's analysis here, the embodied experience in these worn garments relates to a perception of authenticity that derives from sensory pleasure, connection to time and place, and self-expression.

The 'scruffy' or worn garments introduced in the previous chapter are described as 'comfy' (BB, CB, HP et al), 'soft' (NB, HP et al) and 'lived in' (DF, NH et al), suggesting a haptic connection to their past use as well as gratification deriving from the fit that comes with repeated wear. Sophie Woodward, discussing second hand jeans in her essay, *Jeanealogies: Materiality and the (Im)permanence of Relationships and Intimacy* (2011) explains that 'the fabric itself... carries the wearer in a... permanent way through continued wearing, the moving body leads to body- and usage-specific patterns of wearing and the fabric wears down' (2011:157). Here she alludes equally to times and places of wearing, a thread taken up by Carole Hunt in *Worn Cloth as an Archive of Memory* (2014) in which she describes worn cloth as 'a receptive substrate, something which is able to receive and hold information' (2014:216) and argues that the 'strains, stresses, stains and smells we impress upon it, make cloth into an archive of our most intimate life' (2014:215).

Tom Kay of Finisterre recognises the value of a garment which materialises experience. He explains, 'we're building stuff that lasts a long time, we repair stuff whenever we can and it's all about ... For me the product is the more you have an emotional connection to the product the longer you have it, the more you love it. (TK 07/16). The patches provided free by Finisterre's repair service (figure 7.13) are offered in the same or a different colour to the original garment, the latter drawing attention to the repair and by extension to the garment's age and use.



Figure 7.13. Before and after photographs promoting Finisterre's repair service.

‘Emotional’, or as Postrel would have it, ‘authentic’ connections to garments deriving from the times and places of wear are perhaps made more precious by the harsh treatment endured by many of the garments worn in the ethnographic sample and their consequently short lives. Sun and salt water bleach out colour, fading once vibrant prints and even clothing designed for the water will sag and stretch. Sand and sharp rocks will snag and tear the most robust textile. The short useful life of beach garments often make them unsuitable hand-me-downs, consigning them to rags. And even when not discarded, swim and beachwear is often lost or left behind. Smaller than many other garments, it is removed in unfamiliar environments like changing rooms or hotel bedrooms and can be too sandy or wet to pack into a suitcase with ease.

The feeling of self-expression is the final essential component in ‘authenticity’ in dress for Postrel (2003). In the previous chapter the rejection of mainstream dress codes by the ‘soul surfer’ was explored. Self-confessed ‘scruffiness,’ identified as indicator of materialised experience, connotes time well spent and money not wasted, and is also aligned with a rejection of making an effort with dress. Prior to having his photograph taken for flyers that would be posted around the village and sent out in a press release to the local papers, BB tells me he did not dress up for the occasion. ‘I’m basically wearing the same clothes that I’m wearing today that I went to the allotment in about half an hour ago, apart from wellies. Just work trousers, T shirt and a top’ (BB 04/16). This apparent lack of concern over his appearance could be attributed to having to rush between commitments. However, like the unkempt beard that Appadurai

notes requires maintenance, there is more to the 'scruffy' look than mere neglect as I established in the previous chapter.

SB, a man in his sixties, arrives for the photoshoot wearing jeans and flip-flops (see figure 7.14). He tells me, 'I just find them [flip flops] comfortable to wear. And I'm normally wearing shorts but it is a bit cold out walking. But normally I'm wearing shorts all year round as well. It's being a surf bum, really' (SB 04/16). Alluding to the jeans he is wearing, his tone is apologetic even though it is two degrees Celsius as I leave my car that morning. The wearing of shorts, like the wearing of flip-flops connotes a lack of formality or conformity to mainstream fashion which SB expands on in an anecdote. 'When I walked through London on a Friday night about a month ago I had my board shorts on and flip-flops, I was going through Victoria Station from Victoria coach station to the train station and there were these people dressed up and they said, do you want to come with us, we're going clubbing? I said, I don't really think I'm dressed for the occasion, like. I don't really care. It's a bit like Crocodile Dundee, isn't it, but that's who I am. You can only be who you are. My mum used to say, don't you go off up to London like that with flip-flops on and shorts, Stephen. She's eighty-six and I'm sixty-three!' (SB Ibid).

There are a number of things to unpick in SB's account. Firstly, in common with many of the St Agnes residents I interviewed, SB is conscious that his dress codes differentiate him from Others, in this case, city dwellers, but it is not a source of hostility, since the urban crowd invite him to join them



Figure 7.14. SB, now retired, wearing a t-shirt that commemorates his own brand of surfboards.

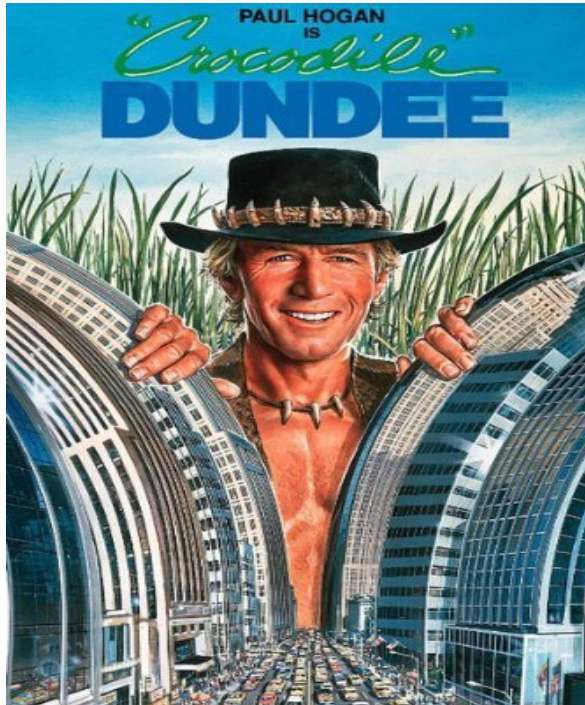


Figure 7.15. Promotional poster for 'Crocodile Dundee' featuring Paul Hogan dressed for the Australian Outback as he 'opens up' Manhattan.

clubbing. Secondly, the idea of his being differently dressed amuses him, hence the telling of the tale and the reference to the comedy film *Crocodile Dundee* (1986, Peter Faiman). In the film, an eccentric crocodile hunter from the Australian outback finds himself in New York. Steve is alluding to the character's mode of dress including shorts and Akubra hat, perfectly appropriate to his day to day habitat in the bush but deemed outlandish in an urban context (see figure 7.15). But Dundee, with whom Steve identifies in his anecdote, is no fish out of water. In the film, the challenges of the big city prove to be easily surmountable by this self-possessed individual's brand of unreconstructed masculinity. Finally, Steve perceives his clothing, even at sixty-three as a signifier of his unchanging non-conformity and rebellious spirit, still shocking his eighty six year old mother because he can only be who he is.

Age and surfing bodies

The formality associated with 'growing up' is rejected by respondents in the surfing taste community such as SB, and with it the signifiers of respectable middle-aged masculinity such as the suit and tie. SB, now retired, still surfs regularly. In the sea, wearing a wetsuit, he is indistinguishable from surfers twenty or thirty years his junior. On land, SB's clothing is broadly similar to the younger men who share his interest in surfing: the flip-flops all year round and the 'scruffy' surfing t-shirt memorializing a long-defunct brand, embodying experience and drawing attention to the habitus through which they were acquired. There is no differentiation between the ages in the kit required for surfing and very little in the onshore clothing preferences of those men who enjoy it.

Julia Twigg comments in *Fashion and Age: Dress, the Body and Later Life* that, 'though the intersections between the body and its social presentation are relevant to all ages, they take on particular significance in relation to age. To a large extent we experience our own and others' ageing through changes to the body; and these intersect with norms about dress' (2013:16). For example, the widespread traditional practice in Europe of 'breeching' that signalled a boy's transition into adulthood continued well into the twentieth century in when shorts would be abandoned in favour of long trousers when a boy reached maturity. But shorts are very much a part of the local clothing culture, particularly boardshorts and long shorts such as those worn by Steve in figure 7.14. Steve's long denim shorts, styled as cargo pants, suggest an association with rebellious 'youth' and the rejection of more formal 'parent culture' that, according to Campbell (2004) can today continue into middle age along with subcultural identification.

In her study of ageing subculturalist women's wardrobes, Samantha Holland criticises Fred Davis' conception of anti-fashion, pointing out that he is 'correct that many counter-cultural styles and movements originate from youth. Yet he ...like others... assumes that people "grow out of it".' (Holland, 2004:12). Holland's research concludes that today the abandonment of subcultural style in middle age is still expected by the majority but increasing numbers of 'alternative' dressers refuse to conform to 'befitting' dress codes. Although, as I established in the literature review, the St Agnes ethnographic sample is better conceived as a 'taste community' than a subculture, dress in the area might be

Demographics of the CNA (ONS 2012 mid-year estimates)

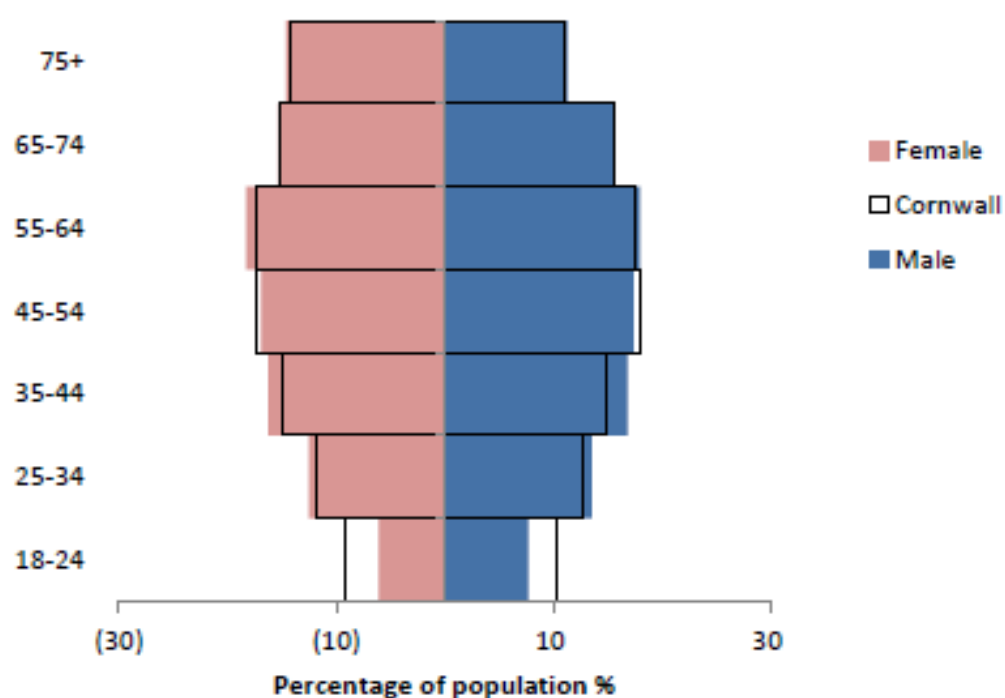
Population

All ages **17,163**

18 – 75+ **14,024** (range used for survey)

The chart below shows the Cornwall figure in black outline, compared to the CNA figure in colour.

Chart 1 - St Agnes & Perranporth male & female population against Cornwall %



The data within this report has been weighted based on these demographics.

Figure 7.16. Demographics of the St Agnes and Perranporth Area

described as 'oppositional' in respect of older men's refusal to wear what Featherstone and Hepworth called 'the mask of age' (1991).

Featherstone and Hepworth's 'mask' is the ageing or aged body itself, which conceals inside it the true nature of the person who wears it. Older people look at themselves in the mirror and see only the mask, the old person looking back at them. This is replicated in society, in which older people are treated not as individuals with unique proclivities but as stereotypical conceptions of 'the old'. The residents of St Agnes of retirement age far outnumber those under thirty (see figure 7.16). Unburdened by student debt and housing costs, retirees in the region bear more resemblance to the *Daily Mail* cartoon strip characters that Hepworth and Featherstone examine in their essay "*The Midlifestyle of George and Lynn: Notes on a popular strip*" (1991). Taking a rather more positive attitude to ageing in the same collection as their essay on the mask of age, the authors identify in the cartoon strip a 'new attitude towards middle age...[that] holds that individuals who look after their bodies and adopt a positive attitude towards life will be able to avoid the decline and negative effects of the ageing process and thereby prolong their capacity to enjoy to the full the benefits of consumer culture lifestyles' (1991:200).

A number of respondents who had retired or relocated in midlife to the area had done so with the intention of pursuing an active lifestyle. Bellyboarders PH and PH, pictured in figure 7.17, told me 'we get in the water as much as we can. Now we'll get in the water once a week at least given conditions. Sometimes we can't because it's too rough' (PH & PH 09/15).



Figure 7.17. PH & PH, wearing clothing that could be worn at any age

Tanned, fit and youthful, the couple are dressed in the same kind of clothes worn on the beach by people thirty years their junior. 'I suppose we dress the typical Cornish style of going to the beach - shorts, T shirt and flip flops,' Mr PH comments, 'during the summer months shorts is the uniform. Shorts and t-shirts and if you come to the beach, flip flops, if you're walking out it's sandals' (PH & PH 09/15). His description of shorts as 'the uniform' suggests conformity to a set of dress codes accepted in the area summarised by his wife's comment, 'just casual. That's it.' (Ibid). But also, as I have established above, the codes that govern the local clothing culture also signal a rejection of the values associated with maturity: conformity, formality and the Western work ethic. Having retired, PH and PH are now able to abandon the nine-to-five business dress they were once compelled to wear along with the lifestyle it accompanied. They have adopted instead, and contribute to, the clothing culture of the area which is, like them, 'young at heart' (ibid).

Featherstone and Hepworth's analysis of the *Daily Mail* strip provided them with evidence of 'the endorsement of a new style of life, a "midlifestyle" which suggests the middle years (30- 60) are replete with opportunities to achieve new goals, fulfilment and personal growth' (1991:201). Almost thirty years later and with an aging population, the midlifestyle is now available to many outside of the author's original category of 30-60 years. However, the means by which this midlifestyle is lived and the clothing deemed appropriate in which to do it is complicated by expectations around age and gender.

Feminine Surfing Bodies

Gwyn Haslock, pictured in figure 7.18, is one of Cornwall's best known female surfers, and is now in her seventies. Most often seen in on land in casual sportswear, Gwyn is here pictured in a warm fleece and sweatpants, having competed minutes earlier in the World Bellyboarding Championships. More commonly associated in the elderly with an inability to fasten zips or buttons, these garments in fact bear witness to the fact that Gwyn surfs at least once a week. She wears wetsuit, gloves, a hat and a helmet in the water, and has always preferred to stay warm. She remembers buying her first wetsuit in the late sixties. 'My first one wasn't a surfing wetsuit, it was a diving suit. There was a sports shop in Truro called Mike Palmer and he sold what we call zip at the front which you don't have now, you have zips at the back because of the pressure on your front, and they had diving suits so that's what I first bought. But I think the first thing I wore was a woolly jumper' (GH 09/15).

The reason that 'everybody wears a wetsuit' nowadays for surfing is 'because if you're surfing you're sitting there and it's not the water that's cold it's the air that's cold' (ibid). But unlike stand-up surfers, bellyboarders wait for suitable waves in chest-deep water, often wearing a hat to avoid heat loss from the head, and therefore feel less cold. Hence what NH describes as



Figure 7.18. Gwyn Haslock, now in her seventies, has surfed in Cornwall since she was sixteen years old.

bellyboarders 'disdain for neoprene. The ladies in particular I find are the most unflinching. Any lady above the age of sixty-five tends to stride into the sea as though it was like the Bahamas', he claims (NH 04/16). Although Evers (2009) and Horton and Cruz (2010) argue that the surfer's body in motion can escape significations of gender, without the figure-flattening neoprene of a wetsuit, a woman is easy to identify in the sea, as can be seen in figure 7.19. Instantly gendered, the bellyboarder's body is identified not just with femininity but with age, and is therefore doubly delegitimised.

In chapter four I traced the adoption of surfing in the South west from its Pacific origins, citing bellyboarding as a popular holiday pastime in the region from around 1920. Like bathing beauty contests and topless sunbathing, bellyboarding was a fashionable activity at the time, featured in many tourist brochures and publicity shots of healthy celebrities in scanty swimwear, as I discussed in chapter four (figure 4.11). By the late 1960s, images of bellyboarding were no longer used to promote seaside resorts and instead stand-up surfing was featured. Changing tastes include this shift in preference from one activity to the other. Bellyboarding is viewed by many, but by no means all in the local area as an activity enjoyed primarily by the older generation or as a stage in the development of the skills required to do 'proper' or stand-up surfing.

In common with many young interviewees, LB 'had a body board for years before a surfboard' (LB 09/15) and was taught to ride it by her mum, who continues to enjoy using one. A similar family set up was expressed by TW.



Figure 7.19. Female bellyboarders 'disdaining neoprene'.

'My mum and my aunt still get out on their wooden boards. Probably my first ever wave would have been on a belly board but when I started surfing properly when I was a teenager it was on a normal stand-up board. That's the only thing I ride now, really' (TW 09/15). TW's journey towards 'surfing properly' on a 'normal board' began on a craft associated not just with the older generation, but with women.

Bellyboarding is an activity that does not require a great deal of physical strength, since the boards are small, around a metre long, and light, being made of a thin sheet of ply. Nor does it require the boarder to venture into deep water since the boards function best in the broken waves near the shore. Women were able to participate in bellyboarding regardless of their swimming ability or physical strength, therefore the bellyboarder's body need not be the lithe and fit body described earlier in respect of the archetypal male stand-up surfer. Whereas the heavy and cumbersome boards used for stand-up surfing in the early days marginalised women's participation in the sport. Gwyn Haslock remembers, 'Trevor Roberts [Australian lifeguard] was the first one to take me into the water and I keep telling this story. I wasn't allowed to surf the surfboard until I carried the surfboard down. And in those days they were ten feet and heavy so I put it on my head and managed to get it down to the water and he was right, if you can't carry your surfboard you shouldn't be surfing' (GH 09/15), alluding to the strength required to swim back to shore should the board be lost in the days before leashes were introduced that tethered them to the surfer's ankle.

Additional barriers to young women's participation derived from the fields of education and employment. Near impossible to import owing to their size and weight, many early surfboards in the UK were home-made. Young women and girls were not equipped with the required woodwork skills to create such a thing, let alone the disposable income to buy one. Gwyn remembers the determination required to acquire her first board: 'My first I paid about twenty pounds for, working overtime. I worked at County Hall for forty-six years and you could do overtime in those days to collate printing paper so I stayed behind and managed to save up and bought my first surfboard' (GH 09/15). Gwyn too learned on a bellyboard, but was part of the vanguard that established stand-up surfing as the new, more fashionable pursuit. She was, nevertheless an active competitor in the WBBC, and event that was discussed in chapter five. In that chapter, I concluded that the vintage aspects of the event threatened to render bellyboarding a twee vintage novelty rather than a contemporary practice. As Ford and Brown point out, 'while it is a celebrated 'fact' that men and women surfed [in Hawaii prior to the arrival of Europeans], there is an important caveat that they did so with very different equipment and physical style and were differentiated in relation to the hierarchy of gender relations prevalent in the gender order at that time' (2006:94). Bellyboards can be read as a contemporary equivalent of the equipment Ford and Brown discuss. Associated with doubly marginalised groups of women and the elderly, bellyboarding and the women who practice it are pushed down a surfing hierarchy defined by the patriarchal hegemony, at the top of which is men's competitive surfing on ever bigger waves.

Sociologist Raewyn Connell (2002) argues that there are many masculinities, all positioned in relation to hegemonic masculinity, which is in itself subject to change according to the hegemonic standards of the period and location. Hegemonic masculinity is always contestable. So while there may be different masculinities, they all promote masculinity as superior and therefore support the hegemony. This can be illustrated by comparing surfing with boxing. In these two separate Bourdieusian 'fields' social dominance is sought by means of the boxer acquiring Wacquant's 'body capital' or the surfer possessing what I term 'embodied experience'. In both 'fields' the game being played is one of physical strength and control over the body, and leisure time away from the domestic environment in which to compete. Benefit in both 'fields' can also derive from 'performance capital,' success in sporting events and contests in which women are not invited to participate.

Women surfer's bodies are also socially constituted, and are arguably under more pressure to conform to society's norms than men's. Indeed Heywood (2006) argues that the 'ectomorphic' or lean body of the female surfer represents a physical ideal whose flexibility and strength are aligned with the values required for survival in a neoliberal economic landscape. Connell writes that 'the discourse of fashion and beauty...positions women as consumers, subjects them to humiliating tests of acceptability, enforces arbitrary rules and is responsible for much unhappiness' (2002:59). Before embarking on her ethnographic study of women getting dressed, Sophie Woodward acknowledges 'the current proliferation of television programmes, magazines and advertisements which promote the increasingly unrealistic ideal body'

contribute to the 'cultural norms of femininity and beauty [that] construct and define what the ideal body should look like' (Woodward 2007:17). Added to this in recent years is the abundance of digital and digitally retouched images of idealised femininity that are increasingly difficult to avoid as they appear on the mobile phones that women look at every few minutes.

The pressure to conform to this ideal is felt in the St Agnes surfing community which, thanks to the technoscape and the mediascape enabled by it has as high a degree of exposure to such images as anywhere else. However, it is somewhat at odds with embodied experience, as CB, lifeguarding at the beach, observes. 'If I was on a day off I'd make a bit more effort, a bit more feminine. I do like nice tops but I do get cold a lot though so I've got nice, thick woolly warm jumpers. I like jumpers that cover my neck. But I like to look feminine' (CB Op cit). The implications here are that femininity requires work, and that practicality and femininity are at odds. And since embodied experience is indicative of subcultural capital in the community, the wearing of frivolous or fancy clothing indicates the opposite.

On a freezing day in April, I spoke to NB (figure 7.20). With warm tights and Vans shoes on instead of flip-flops, she tells me she 'was going to wear them and then I changed my mind. I thought...[makes a face and laughs]...you would think I was dumb!' (NB 04/15). NB's denim mini skirt is a popular style in the area, worn 'preferably' (ibid) with bare legs in summer and tights and wellies in winter by several of my respondents (HP, NP, ZB, NB et al). A symbolic Interactionist analysis would indicate that like flip-flops or a bikini top worn as a

bra in winter, the denim skirt is suitable for a role played out in the surfing imaginary's warmer climes, a role that NB felt would fail to convince given the weather.

In a later conversation NB and ZB describe their summer wardrobe thus:

NB: In summer it's usually a dress, a beachy dress which doesn't feel over the top.

ZB: Surf casual, really.

NB: It's just really casual and laid back.

ZB If you wore anything else you'd look really out of place.

(NB & ZB 09/15)

So while a dress is acceptable attire, it is a 'beachy' rather than a 'summery' dress, suggesting a serviceable fabric and a loose fit. Formality is clearly frowned upon, as the suggestion that the look is anything but laid back, casual and 'thrown together'.

I spoke to BBB, whose carefully layered clothes I complimented. She dismissed the compliment, saying, 'Oh god, I've just got leggings on because it's so bloody cold here with the wind, and I've got a dress on to go over the leggings, and a cardigan to go over the dress. And I've got a scarf with me at the ready and an extra jumper round my waist'. I respond with another compliment, that they are 'all beautifully co-ordinated in shades of mauve and purple'. She replies. 'Thank you. Only because I get freezing when I sit here if the sun's not on' (BBB 09/15), refocusing the conversation almost immediately to the practicality of the outfit.



Figure 7.20. NB in winter wear

Practicality in clothing is generally an attribute more closely associated with menswear, since what has come to be termed 'the great masculine renunciation' of frivolous dress (Flugel 1930 [1966]) after which decorative and impractical clothes were deemed to belong in the feminine realm. St Agnes residents identifying as female that I spoke to went to great lengths to find the right balance between practicality and femininity.

Consider HP's description of her well-worn wellington boots. 'I wear them to the pub, I wear them through the village, because they are comfy and dry and inevitably I'm walking somewhere that involves mud, sand, or water. ...They are nice wellies, they are Lariat. Cornwall Farmers they're from. But they are a more expensive welly but the wear I get from them more than makes it up. They're probably the most expensive pair of boots I buy in a year. In fact they last more than a year and they're probably my most worn footwear.' (HP 04/16). A swimmer rather than a surfer, HP wears boots more than flip-flops, albeit the most casual variety of boots available. On the day of the interview, she is wearing these with a fitted, heather-coloured jumper (just visible in figure 7.21), grey woollen tights and a denim miniskirt and hat with a large pompom. The unashamedly muddy wellies connote the outdoorsy lifestyle in 'mud, sand or water' that HP leads. The miniskirt, much like NB's above, and the form-fitting jumper, casual but still less suited to the lifestyle, teamed with the hat that is both practical and idiosyncratic suggest a playful femininity rather than a frivolous one.



Figure 7.21. HP's wellies and just visible on the right, her sweater.

Fashion

In SB's account above, specific ideas about gender and status are articulated through his clothing. The unruly masculinity embodied in year-round beach wear, derived from the soul surfer's classless non-conformism is communicated most clearly when out of its local context. Nowhere is this clearer than in the city, where according to Buckley and Fawcett (2002), fashion emerges from the spectacle of crowds set against a backdrop of grand architecture, in which individuals must visually distinguish themselves amid the cacophony of styles in the metropolis.

For my interviewees, there is a distinct perception that fashion is something that happens elsewhere. In the pub ME tells me, 'I wear the same things [as I'm wearing now] to work....if I'm going out somewhere really special or not round here, then I would buy something posh...If I was going to friends, maybe in London then I'd wear high shoes, maybe.' She is wearing practical but fashionable clothes - my notes guess 'SeaSalt?', a mid-range daywear label founded locally and now selling well online and in franchises worldwide, including in department stores in London (drapers.com). The brand draws its inspiration from Cornwall such as the 'rushmaker' shirt in figure 7.22 that features a mackerel design. The company employs designers who work or have trained in the area and therefore enjoys, in addition to its global reach, a dedicated local following as one of the brands with a local connection that I established earlier are preferred in St Agnes. SeaSalt's range is cheerful without being loud, practical and built around classic pieces, a far cry from the fast moving and flamboyant world of high fashion.



Figure 7.22. 'Rushmaker' print shirt by SeaSalt

Returning to ME, her friend SF agrees that the local style is informal. 'I think it's [fashion elsewhere] different. When I go to my parents I always feel really scruffy. I look at them and they all wear heels.' The status afforded in the local area by 'embodied experience' has no currency in the metropolitan context. There, 'scruffiness' becomes an embarrassment. But on the treacherously steep hill outside the pub, slick with sea-spray, high heels would be a liability, as they would be all over Cornwall where many roads are cobbled, unpaved or at best uneven. Although shoe shops in nearby Truro stock many stilettos they tend to end up in the sales, because as DT points out, 'we have these dreams about wearing high heels but really there's no time in our lives for that' (DT 10/15).

Barrie Thorne's ethnography of a school describes a phenomenon she terms 'situational gender' in which gender is performative and alters depending on context (Thorne 1993). She draws on Joan Riviere's concept of femininity (or 'womanliness') as masquerade (Riviere 1929 in Ruitenberg 1966) and Judith Butler's notion of gender as performative (Butler 1990) to develop a conception of gender as malleable and subject to the requirements of the context in which a girl or woman finds herself. At the prize-giving in the pub after the Buntabout surf competition 2015 a woman commented, 'I don't have going out clothes. I wear the same things to work, eat and if I'm going out somewhere really special or not round here, then I would buy something posh' (MS 10/15). 'High heels' were again identified as an example of 'something posh' that might be worn 'not round here', where MS claimed to always wear 'trainers actually because it's always so rough' (MS *ibid*). 'Posh' is used here and elsewhere in the

ethnography to mean formal rather than exclusive or expensive. In the same interview, MS's friend described the local style as 'casual, laid back' with a fondness for high end brand Finisterre, discussed in the previous chapter. She remarked that 'St. Agnes is quite expensive and they can afford to buy it instead of the cheap brands' (Field notes 10/15). Formality, with its connotations of highly gendered occasion wear, is considered to be affordable in the area but not desirable. The situational gender in St Agnes is embodied in an informal dress style which incorporates unisex items like wellies, flip-flops and trainers for practicality but retains gendered items like skirts all the same.

The balance required between practicality and femininity in the local situational gender, alongside the impracticality of fashion styles experienced in the city, together with the fragility of surfing and beach related garments described above gives rise to micro-trends developing in the local area. MW tells me that 'if you want to wear something different, well, do, you know. If they think or kind of design their own fashions, people will wear it and it's not unusual. People don't go, hey, what are you wearing, it's just accepted' (MW 04/16) and whilst the 'really warm windproof fleece' that kick-started Finisterre was not an unconventional garment per se, it was sold 'out of [a] bedroom window in St Agnes' (TK 07/16). Proprietor of the Aggie Surf Shop for over thirty years, Mary Lascelles had similar success with a bikini in the nineteen seventies. 'I was back in Australia and I bought a load of this fabric and brought it back...I made up a half-dozen bikinis and gave them to my mates...and then we would wear them on the beach and I would sell them, right there on the beach...[laughs] I sold dozens of 'em. Everyone was wearing them that year' (ML 07/15).

As well as custom surfboard sales, the shop sells and hires out boards and wetsuits, and stocks a range of t-shirts and hoodies, some branded but many more featuring the Aggie Surf Shop's own logo on a range of designs (see figure 7.23). The logo is a silhouette of the Wheal Kitty Engine House (see figure 7.24) which overlooks the village and the small workshops occupied by Finisterre and SAS. The logo locates the brand not just in Cornwall, where such engine houses are part of the industrial heritage, but with St Agnes itself. Although the t-shirts are often bought as souvenirs as I discussed in chapter five, they are also worn locally, often with the patina of materialised experience. The tiny 'sister shop' next door selling women's wear stocks a small range of 'lovely stuff, you know? I only have really good quality bikinis and little dresses that are kind of quirky, different. People prefer that.' (ML *ibid*). As if to confirm Mary's marketing intelligence, during the course of the interview in which she made that statement, a teenage girl arrives who is known to ML by name, her sales enquiry anticipated immediately. 'Hey, that dress you liked arrived in the turquoise. Try it on, try it on'.

A further micro-trend in the area is vintage surfing. Whilst interest in retro and vintage is widespread as I discussed in chapter five, the vintagescape of the WBBC is unique in that it combines the consumption of vintage artefacts and clothing with the possibility of participating in bellyboarding, an activity with a century-old pedigree. Enthusiasing on her two passions of vintage and surfing, NL (figure 7.25) tells me, 'I used to do a lot of it when I was a kid [bellyboarding], never stand-up surfing, mainly belly board or boogie board. And now I actually



Figure 7.3. Hoodies featuring the iconic Wheal Kitty Engine House



Figure 7.24. View of the Wheal Kitty Engine House from the car park

sea swim more than anything but I've got a love of surf but in particular the 60's and 70's surf. But with belly boards the 20's, that railway poster image of the women at Fistral Beach, whatever ...' (NL 09/15).

Providing makeup services at the pop-up vintage makeover tent, NL's (figure 7.25) pincurls, scarlet lipstick and alabaster skin suggest the pin-up girl subculture. In the image NL has recently competed in a heat of the bellyboarding championships in full makeup and, vintage swimsuit and rubber cap; she has changed into a slightly warmer but no less glamorous terry cloth one-piece from the 1960s. Maria Elena Buszek (2206) traces the pin-up girl subculture to the 1980s, when feminist performance artists in particular Annie Sprinkle reclaimed the powerful feminine sexuality of pin-ups of the inter-war period typified by Bettie Page. Third wave feminist reclamation of the feminine artifice so denigrated by second wave feminism coupled with the craze for retro and vintage gave rise to a movement which was characterized by large tattoos, signifying rebellion or alternative status (Holland, 2004) and provocative mid-century outfits.

While pin-up girls are a rare sight but not unheard of in St Agnes outside of the WBBC, they might be read as the more extreme manifestation of a more widespread desire to embrace a less practical and casual femininity than the style discussed above. At the WBBC, NP, whose comments on scruffiness were discussed alongside her photograph in chapter six, (figure 7.26) explains that having won her race the year before on a red and white striped board, she made a matching bag to carry it in for this year and plans to participate in a



Figure 7.25. NL in pin-up girl attire at the WBBC



Figure 7.26. NP holding her 'competition striped' bellyboard and bag, right, and friends at the WBBC.

vintage red one- piece which she declines to have photographed. She and her friends keenly anticipate the chance to dress up for the vintage swimsuit competition, and despite describing themselves as ‘scruffy’ *en route* to it are in fact as I describe above, groomed and stylish in a studiously casual way, tanned, hair coloured and all wearing ‘natural look’ makeup.

Conclusion

In an area of startlingly little diversity it is no surprise that the surfing body locally is white. Surfing’s association with youth and its connections with fashionable and athletic pursuits is equally understandable, and constructs those who practice it as enjoying an enviably vigorous ‘midlifestyle’. But given the development of surfing in the area and its earliest incarnation as bellyboarding, a pastime that continues today, the acceptance of the masculine surfing archetype in the area is more complicated. In spite of bellyboarding’s continued practice over a century, its association with femininity and with old age have delegitimised the practice, consigning it to the bottom of the patriarchal surfing hierarchy that places masculine bodies at the top.

These bodies are shaped by the activity they pursue to produce something akin to the ‘body capital’ enjoyed by Loic Wacquant’s boxers, but unlike the aggression embodied by theirs, surfers’ bodies suggest ‘conspicuous leisure in which performance capital is built up to form together ‘embodied experience’.

“Embodied experience’ can also be found in an assemblage of vintage garments, or better yet in old, weathered and worn garments that link to

whatever the taste community perceive as 'authenticity'. In the sample area, this authenticity is constructed around a genuine commitment to sea-based activity, often going back generations, that can materialise in 'scruffy' garments to construct a non-conformist masculinity that crosses boundaries of age. Femininity in the local area is situational, where practicality must be balanced carefully with the more conventional trappings of womanhood such as high heels, which are worn, like fashionable clothes, elsewhere. In the city, scruffiness is an embarrassment and the necessity for a more 'posh' femininity is observed.

But in the sample area, identity is not fixed but fluid and micro-trends emerge, suggesting that fashion, or at least rapidly changing dress styles, happen here but are different to those observed in metropolitan areas far from the sea. The micro-trend for vintage surfing, whilst potentially freezing bellyboarding in the mid twentieth century as a now dead practice, also opens up possibilities for alternative situated femininities.

CONCLUSIONS, AFTERTHOUGHTS AND APPLICATIONS

The original contribution of this thesis is in addressing the gap in the critical literature around bellyboarding, a form of surfing that is usually disregarded as merely a developmental milestone in the history of stand-up surfing but is still practiced daily in Cornwall. It is a study of the day-to-day mundane wearing of everyday clothes that makes up the clothing culture of a small corner of Cornwall. As such it contributes to the small number of studies that investigate the quotidian clothing of ordinary people worn in non-metropolitan contexts. It is also the first to investigate how artefacts of surf culture explore and constitute, construct and reconstruct gender, class and regional identity, and how they define and redefine the region's surfing locales by their visible presence in this context. Finally, this is the first study that takes into account the plethora of goods available via digital commerce and communication in the construction of the clothing culture of a taste community such as this.

The research set out to answer three research questions. The first was: How does the origin and development of surfing in the region, now known as 'the centre of UK surfing' (Mansfield 2013:11) relate to the contemporary clothing culture? I answered this question by means of secondary and primary research in the form of interviews with local curators, collectors and historians as well as visits to collections and archives. Oral histories were consulted and conducted in order to problematise existing narratives and to draw out a story of surfing that encompassed its many forms and focused on the local area. The second and third questions were, how do cultural and commercial communities mediate

between local, global and virtual cultures of surfing? And, what is the interplay of influence between the clothing culture of surfing and wider cultures of fashion and style, both in and out of the water? These were answered by means of the analysis of an ethnography carried out in St Agnes, Cornwall, over a three-year period. In addition I carried out a number of targeted sampling exercises using interviews and photo elicitation in order to garner responses that would test out the hypothesis I developed over the three year period. Local businesses were consulted and secondary research provided a wealth of texts from which to draw in the creation of a nuanced picture of the cultural contexts in which these relationships exist.

This conclusion reflects on the material gathered and the observations made in the thesis, as well as on the learning that occurred whilst researching and writing it and how this could be applied in future research. I begin by summarising and synthesising the findings of the chapters, drawing overall conclusions based on the key concepts. I go on to critically reflect on these findings, before demonstrating that the research has made an original contribution to knowledge. Finally, I discuss some potential extensions and applications of the work.

Findings

The clothing culture of St Agnes has a degree of variation but its range is intricately bound up with the pastime that dominates the day to life in the local area: surfing. The clothing culture contributes to the formation of surfing identities by signalling belonging to a small taste community through the display

of materialised and embodied experience that cannot be easily appropriated by merely of the consumption of surfwear available in the stuffscape. Non-surfing members of the taste community, lacking access to this embodied subcultural capital, are nevertheless able to demonstrate their identification with the surfing lifestyle by the wearing of self-identified casual or 'scruffy' clothing which rejects the conformity and formality of lives governed by work patterns rather than waves.

In chapter four I examined the journey of surfing from its origins in the Pacific to one of its lesser known homes today in Cornwall. It was noted in the chapter that the sea, once the home of monsters, increasingly attracted Westerners into its shallows for pleasure from the nineteenth century. Commercial enterprises followed them to the shore, allowing them to bathe, swim and eventually surf. The beach became a zone of consumption as the century progressed, calling for an examination of the clothing culture that developed there, as distinct from that in the fashionable metropolis. A case study of the Aloha shirt which draws strongly on the visual language of Hawaii, worn and promoted by the father of modern surfing, Duke Kahanamoku demonstrated how the image of surfing was commodified. American cultural dominance and the rise of consumer culture in the post war period were acknowledged as the drivers of increasing interest in surfing in the 1960s. However the importance of Commonwealth nations, particularly Australia and South Africa during its membership, to the development of Cornwall's surf culture is proposed in the same chapter. Further chapters explore the continuing clothing legacy of the relationship

between these surfing locations, in the context of the Cornish diaspora and the journeys of gap year surfers.

In chapter five, John Fiske's conception of the beach as an anomalous zone between nature and culture was explored, further supporting the notion of culture and commerce reaching out towards the deep sea, perceived by Fiske as the zone occupied by the surfer. However the bellyboarder's territory is the shallows. Not requiring a wetsuit, as discussed in chapter seven, the bellyboarder moves swiftly away from the contested space of the car park in which surfers ready themselves for the sea. The bellyboarder is dressed on the beach, therefore avoiding confrontation derived from 'localism' that occasionally erupts in the car park. A proprietorial attitude towards the waves themselves was observed by the first white settlers in Hawaii and is evident in the ethnographic area, whose local nickname 'The Badlands' was consciously adopted to keep outsiders or Others at bay.

An economic barrier to participation in surfing today is the requirement to adhere to 'working hours'. I observed in chapter four that surfing was considered to be at odds with a Christian work ethic by missionaries to Hawaii in the 19th century because it depended on the appearance of appropriate waves, and that scholars (Canniford 2006, Westwick & Neuschul 2013 et al) have argued that for this reason it is still associated with resistance to standard working practices and remains to be fully incorporated into Capitalist ideology. In St Agnes, the symbolic rejection of bourgeois values associated with prioritising work over pleasure is materialised in a preference for casual clothing

that would be deemed inappropriate in the workplace. A case study on flip-flops in chapter six illustrated this. Worn in all weathers by the majority of my interviewees, flip-flops are not considered suitable attire in the workplace. They afford neither protection nor warmth. So closely associated with surfing that Havanas, the most popular brand, translates as 'Hawaiians' flip-flops materialise the wearers' commitment to beach activity over those with only a passing association with it.

While many of those I interviewed claimed that they had to be 'suited and booted for work' (JB 10/15), a common description of their attire when I interviewed them at leisure was 'scruffy'. The local preference for worn and damaged items among those who could afford new and undamaged ones suggested that status here was not defined only by social class, as Bourdieu suggested. In chapter six I found that 'scruffiness' in the sample area suggested the habitus of experience, and it was this 'materialised experience' that demonstrated the cultural capital most valued there. In chapter seven Thornton's notion of 'subcultural capital' was mobilised to extend this into a discussion of 'embodied experience', in which this same habitus is communicated by changes to the body itself such as tousled hair and a wetsuit demarcated suntan. Loic Wacquant's 'body capital' was defined as somewhat analogous here, although the surfing body was contrasted with the boxing body to demonstrate that the body capital acquired in surfing derives from its association not with aggression but with leisure.

Conspicuous leisure, as Veblen pointed out in the nineteenth century, is most effectively communicated without trophies. The 'embodied experience' of the leisure associated with pursuing an activity with no financial or material gain like surfing is sufficient to convey pecuniary strength. But surfing was increasingly associated with competition, athleticism and risk associated with 'performance capital' through the twentieth century, with the focus moving away from the ludic pleasures to be had in the shallows. Bellyboarding, the first form of surfing to appear in the UK, appears in the literature as a stage in the development of conventional or stand-up surfing, yet in Cornwall this delegitimised practice continues to be enjoyed.

Many women enjoy stand-up surfing and women of all social classes were observed surfing by the first Westerners in the Pacific Islands. However as I noted in chapters four and seven, disadvantages in the fields of education and employment as well as physical limitations prevented many women from making, buying, transporting and using the large, expensive surfboards designed to be ridden upright when they first appeared in the UK from the 1960s onwards. Cheap, small and lightweight, bellyboards were not damaged by sand, could be used by all members of the family, required little swimming expertise and were brought to the beach with children and lunch by women from the 1920s to today. The Annual World Bellyboarding Championships, held in St Agnes from 2003-2015 celebrated the pastime and its heritage with a vintage fair. However I found that this marginalised activity was further threatened by its association with vintage and an ironic or even twee nostalgia.

Nostalgia was examined in a case study on the vintage fair at the WBBC, and it was observed here and in chapter seven that, as part of a wider international trend for retro and vintage goods, an interest in 'historic' forms of surfing has emerged. Interviewees comments suggest a longing for the British seaside in a past that that may never have existed, an imaginary of Cornwall that has developed most recently through the mediascape but that draws on the existence of a Cornish diaspora. In chapter five, Cornwall as place both real and imaginary is discussed as the destination for what Appadurai terms the 'deterritorialised': those whose 'imagined life possibilities' take place in an idealised version of Cornwall. The nostalgia for the present felt by those who dream of surfing in Cornwall materialises in the interior of the Finisterre shop in London's Soho, far from the sea, and in the locally branded hoodies from Aggie Surf Shop worn year after year by returning tourists. And it takes virtual form in the digital marketplaces and forums that continue to propagate its existence.

I observed a local preference for products that originate from the South West and specifically from St Agnes. Yet these can be acquired almost anywhere today by online shopping, a 'stuffscape' in which goods move globally with unprecedented speed. The loyalty to local brands such as Finisterre, and the dismissal of goods from global corporations like Abercrombie and Fitch discussed in chapter six may derive from the historic isolation of the South West. A strong theme emerging across the research was of necessity being the mother of invention, in a region where poor transport links and difficulties in acquiring imported surf related goods fostered a home-grown surf industry. Amateur and professional surf board manufacturers and shapers, wetsuit and

swimwear makers, surf instructors and many more have made goods suited to the local environment and a living from their pastime and in doing so have made significant contributions to the local clothing culture.

This indigenous and emergent surf culture is what has defined Cornwall as the capital of UK surfing, long before strong links to the Commonwealth led to Australian lifeguards on Cornish beaches in the 1960s teaching a generation of children to surf. Bellyboarding in the early twentieth century had established Cornwall as the surfing destination that drew these men to work there. The links with Australia continued to the end of the twentieth century, with a wave of Australiana sweeping the UK in the 1980s and resulting in some overlap in the surfing imaginary between the two locations. A case study on the bikini top that is widely worn in the clothing culture instead of the more conventional bra illuminated the disparity between the reality of the cold sea in the local area and the dream of being the archetypal surfer girl expressed by local respondents, enjoying the wetsuit-free tropical conditions that are never available on St Agnes windswept beaches.

So dangerous are these beaches that a near constant lifeguard presence is required, and so fragile that many are managed by the National Trust. The uniforms of these organisations as well as the RNLI and fisherman's gear are visible on the streets of St Agnes by those on and off duty and contribute strongly to the clothing culture. Again embodying experience, these garments mark out the locals from the Others or 'emmetts' who are drawn to the area by the imaginary of surfing or of Cornwall or both.

The clothing culture of the St Agnes community, then, articulates and negotiates issues of identity around gender and sexuality, class and consumption, community and belonging by means of its engagement with Cornwall's treacherous coastline and unpredictable seas. Mainstream bourgeois dress codes of smartness and acceptable formal attire are to some extent rejected in favour of casual and sometimes 'scruffy' dress that instead derives its cultural and subcultural capital through materialised and embodied experience.

Reflections

The findings were in many ways surprising. Having set out to do the ethnographic research with an open mind, I nevertheless had a number of expectations concerning the clothing culture of the region. The first was around the notion that 'surf culture' automatically brings to mind California. As I discussed in chapter four, the post-war discourse around surfing as an aspect of youth culture was dominated by America, with Hollywood films and West Coast pop music contributing to an imaginary of surfing populated by affluent white teens dancing to transistor radios at beach parties with surfboards propped up in the sand. Prior to investigating the development of surf culture in Cornwall, I supposed that this imaginary was what led to the development of a local surfing culture and that Cornwall's surfing lifestyle was an imitation of California's. But what emerged was a practice that developed long before Gidget (1957) and with a far closer connection to the Commonwealth and the wave riding enjoyed in some of its member states.

This relationship with Australia, New Zealand and South Africa remains strong and continues to exert influence over the clothing culture in Cornwall with travel between the locations reuniting the Cornish diaspora and their clothing choices with their origins and young people exploring surfing destinations and bringing back the material and embodied evidence of their journeys. America's West Coast emerged as more remote: more difficult to travel to in respect of working visas and lacking in family connections. The archetype, emerging from popular discourse, of the sunkissed young Californian surfer enjoying a carefree lifestyle, free from responsibility, is further removed from surfers in Cornwall in another crucial respect. Being nothing more than a fantasy, he need not be concerned with the dangers of the sea. The theme of safety was prevalent in the ethnography and provided the basis for the embodied experience I came to analyse.

Naturally any activity in the sea has its hazards, but dealing with them efficiently came over as a key driver of clothing culture in St Agnes. Responsible attitudes to the sea were embodied in lifeguarding uniforms and wetsuits appropriate to the conditions, but also in the casual clothing and self-described 'scruffy' clothing worn on land which distinguished local residents from 'emmetts', tourists lacking in experience of Cornwall's treacherous coastline. As a lower middle-class city dweller with a great love of clothes, the casual or 'scruffy' attire adopted by middle class professionals came as a surprise to me, as did the cheerful resignation expressed by many female interviewees that there was no point in 'dressing up'.

This was never more evident than in the photo shoot I carried out for the Enhanced Cover Initiative that aimed to provide SLSA lifeguards in the off-season (figures 3.4, 6.4, 6.10). The response to the project demonstrated the commitment of local residents from all walks of life to beach safety as well as to casual clothing and flip-flops in all weathers.

The technique of photo elicitation itself proved a valuable methodology, particularly when power over the final image was given to the respondents. The ability to photograph their own belongings and to delete pictures of themselves that they did not like helped respondents to relax in interviews, and the immediacy of looking at these self-selected images of themselves and their possessions on an iPad whilst recording their comments promoted insights and critical reflection that made huge contributions to my analysis.

The photoshoot and resulting interviews were only possible after a long period spent as a participant observer in the community. The ethnography was a long slow process which felt, until a hypothesis began to emerge, too unstructured to generate any valid data. The purposive sampling that was carried on towards the end of the project, at the WBBC, the Buntabout and the photoshoot above were more fruitful. Were I to undertake the project again I would select events such as these and carry out the same photo-elicitation technique year on year to provide more reliable data.

Extensions and applications

The research has developed several concepts which could be of use in further studies. The stuffscape, the movement of goods across the globe at unprecedented speeds is developed from Arjun Appadurai's cultural flows and could be usefully applied in studies of consumption that take place in the digital age. The concept is particularly germane in potential studies of taste communities that are linked online but physically spread across wide geographical areas. Here, the local availability of consumer goods could be effectively measured against preferences for items only available via the stuffscape, thereby providing a useful metric for the global spread and reach of the mediascape that Appadurai describes.

My analysis of 'scruffiness' as an aspect of cultural capital in groups where status is not conferred by social class might also be applied to other taste communities that reject bourgeois dress codes, for example comic book fans. When 'scruffy' dress is abandoned in favour of more formal wear, remnants of what I call embodied experience such as festival wristbands often linger, like the bikini tops as underwear discussed in chapter seven. Therefore my analysis of scruffiness might also be applicable to a study of temporarily 'scruffy' dress, such as that adopted by festival goers and gap-year students. Applications of the concepts of embodied experience and materialised experience could potentially be widespread. This suggests that there is scope for further research in other small taste communities that acknowledge 'performance capital' derived from an activity such as skateboarding or rock-climbing.

There are many other surfing communities in the UK and elsewhere. A comparative analysis of the clothing cultures found in St Agnes and other places would develop the themes of consumption and display in other contexts. Further research opportunities exist around the beach itself as a liminal space and the emergence of clothing suited to the ever-developing activities that take place there. Additionally, research into other aspects of the material culture of surfing is yet to be conducted, including a critical examination of kit such as boards and sporting equipment.

Ethics considerations prevented me from interviewing under eighteens, but there appears in St Agnes a lively youth culture that engages more directly with mainstream fashion codes and a number of subcultural styles that would be interesting to study in future.

The WBBC announced its closure as I was writing up. Bellyboarding, as I have stated numerous times, is in danger of being consigned to surfing history as a twee novelty practiced only at events such as the WBBC. Although many young people take part in the activity, there is a significant proportion of elderly bellyboarders, many of whom have ridden waves on ply boards for several decades. Although I was fortunate enough to interview some of these pioneers, it would be fascinating and fruitful in future to conduct oral histories with others before their stories are lost.

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APPENDIX 1- Table of quoted interviewees

Initials/name	Date	Age	gender	Occupation	Location	Origin
AS	07/15	20-30	Female	Teacher	St Agnes	Truro, Cornwall
ASB Andy Schollick,	08/13	50-60	Male	Founder and proprietor Second Skin Wetsuits, Braunton Devon	Braunton	Liverpool
BB	02/16.	50-60	Male	Builder	St Agnes	St Agnes, Cornwall
BBB	09/15	50-60	Female	Homemaker	St Agnes	St Agnes
CB	09/15	20-30	Female	National Trust Lifeguard	St Agnes	Isle of Wight
DF	02/16	30-40	Male	NHS doctor	St Agnes	Durban, South Africa
DMA	09/16	30-40	Male	Hospitality worker	St Agnes	Truro
DM Dan Morgan,	10/14	30-40	Male	Website designer and surf writer	Falmouth	Manchester
DT Demi Taylor	09/15	30-40	Female	Surf writer and founder of the Surf Film Festival	St Agnes	Padstowe, Cornwall
FL Fiona Llewellyn	08/13-04/16	40-50	Female	Teacher	St Agnes	Plymouth
GF	04/16	40-50	Male	Homemaker	St Agnes	St Agnes
GH Gwyn Haslock	07/13; 07/14; 09/15;	70-80	Female	Retired; renowned local surfer	ST Agnes & Truro	Truro
GS Geoff Stein	11/13	60-70	Male	Independent retailer.	Falmouth	London
HP	02/16	40-50	Female	Teacher	St Agnes	St Agnes
HR	10/15	40-50	Female	Doctor	St Agnes	London

Jl	09/15	40-50	Male	Proprietor of vintage clothing shop	St Agnes	Newquay, Cornwall
JL	09/15	40-50	Male	Teacher	St Agnes	Morecambe
JW	09/15	30-40	Male	Teacher and proprietor of <i>Delipops Ices</i>	St Agnes	Lancashire
LB 09/15	09/15	20-30	Female	Student	St Agnes	Hayle, Cornwall
LS 02/16 LS St Agnes	02/15	40-50	Female	Hospital administrator	St Agnes	Truro
LT	08/14	20-30	Male	Agricultural worker	St Agnes	Cambourne, Cornwall
ME	09/15	40-50	Female	Teaching assistant	St Agnes	St Agnes
MH	09/15	50-60	Male	Engineer	Hamburg, Germany	Hamburg, Germany
ML Mary Lascelles,	07/15	60-70	Female	Proprietor of the Aggie Surf Shop	St Agnes	Bega, NSW, Australia
MS Mike Searle	03/16	40-50	Male	Photographer; founder of <i>Carve</i> magazine	St Agnes	Newquay
MW	02/16	50-60	Male	RNLI Lifeboatman	St Agnes	St Agnes
NB	02/15	20-30	Female	Shop assistant	St Agnes	St Agnes
ZB	09/15	20-30	Female	Cleaner	St Agnes	St Agnes
NH Nick Holden	04/16	30-40	Male	National Trust ranger and organiser of the WBBC 2002-2015	St Agnes	Lancashire
NNT	10/15	20-30	Female	National Trust Lifeguard	St Agnes	St Agnes
NP	10/15	40-50	Female	Homemaker	St Agnes	Hayle
PB	04/16	30-40	Male	Lifeguard	St Agnes	St Agnes
PH & PH	09/15	60-70 60-70	Female Male	Retired Retired	St Agnes	Lancashire

PR Peter Robinson,	09/13	50- 60	Male	Former journalist; founder and director of the Museum of British Surfing until 2015	Braunton	Croyde, Devon
RB	10/15	20- 30	Male	Driver	St Agnes	St Ives, Cornwall
RM Roger Mansfield,	07/14, 09/13	60- 70	Male	Surf historian and author	Newquay	Newquay
RP	10/15	20- 30	Female	Shop assistant	St Agnes	Newquay
RWS RW St Agnes	04/15	20- 30	Female	Surf school promoter	Newquay	Newquay
RW	04/15	30- 40	Male	Unspecified	St Agnes	St Agnes
SE Steve England,	09/15	50- 60	Male	Surf writer and co- founder of <i>Carve</i> Magazine	St Agnes	Newquay
SB Steve Bunt	02/16	60- 70	Male	Founder of <i>Best Ever Surfboards</i> and the <i>Buntabout</i> surf competition	St Agnes	St Agnes
SBB	09/15	20- 30	Female	Student	St Agnes	Redruth, Cornwall
SBW Steve Bount,	04/15	40- 50	Male	Editor of <i>Wavelength</i> magazine	Newquay	Newquay
SF	09/15	40- 50	Female	Student	St Agnes	Hayle
SH	07/15 08/15	30- 40	Female	Midwife	Truro	Truro
SP Sally Parkin,	05/15	40- 50	Female	Surf collector and proprietor of the <i>Original Surfboard Company</i>	Braunton	Exeter
TK Tom Kay	07/16	40- 50	Male	Founder and CEO of Finisterre	St Agnes	Norfolk

TP Tony Plant,	05/13	50- 60	Male	Collector and artist	Truro	Newcastle
TW	09/15	20- 30	Male	Dentist	St Agnes	Feock, Cornwall

APPENDIX 2- Participant Information Leaflet

Surf's Us: constructing surfing identities through clothing culture in England's South West.

Participant Information.

I would like to invite you to take part in my research into surf culture. Before you decide I would like you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it would involve for you. I will go through the information sheet with you and answer any questions you have.

What is the purpose of the research?

The research hopes to find out about the history and current state of surf culture in Devon and Cornwall. It is mainly looking at visual and material culture, rather than, for example, music. So it will focus on the clothing, accessories and gear that surfers prefer, and the images and films they make and enjoy here in the South West.

Why have I been invited?

You have been chosen to take part because you have a serious interest in surfing and a connection with the local area.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide to join the research. I will describe the study and go through this information sheet. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part? What will I have to do?

You may be asked to do one or more of the following:

- Take part in one-to-one interviews. These will last no more than an hour and will take place either at Falmouth University or at a convenient public venue such as a shop or cafe. Interviews will be audio recorded and photos may be taken.
- Take part in group interviews and discussions. Again, they will last no more than an hour and take place in the same venues.
- Be photographed by the researcher 'in situ', while surfing, at the beach or in your place of work. If you have any concerns about this, they should be addressed in the 'risks' section below.
- Submit your own photographs. These will be copied with your consent and returned to you.

You will be asked to meet the researcher no more than four times over the course of a year.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The study may take up some of your time. Hopefully it won't keep you out of the water though.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will also be assisting in writing a history of local surf culture and celebrating the South West's great surfing heritage. You will be able to read the thesis when it's complete if you like.

What happens when the research ends?

You will be contacted after the research is complete to have a look at the final document in the venue where the interviews were held. Then you can see your comments and pictures in print.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You can withdraw at any time. If, for whatever reason, you don't want the information you have submitted to date to still be used, it can be destroyed.

What if there is a problem?

You can submit a formal written complaint to me at the following address: Julie Ripley, Air Building, Penryn Campus, Falmouth University.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Your confidentiality will be safeguarded during and after the study.

All of the written, audio and visual information you supply will be stored digitally and encrypted. You won't be identified in any published document. Your contact details will be stored by the university but will not be passed on to third parties. Photographs will be encrypted in storage and your face will only be shown in photos in the finished thesis if you want it to.

Finally, you have the right to check the accuracy of data held about you and correct it if it's wrong.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The research is going towards a PhD awarded by Falmouth University. The final written document will be available in the university library and online through the British Library.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The project is organised and funded by Falmouth University, and reviewed by University of the Arts, London. You can look at their procedures for Research Ethics scrutiny and approval online:

<http://www.arts.ac.uk/media/arts/research/research-degrees/UAL-Code-of-Practice-on-Research-Ethics.pdf>

APPENDIX 3- Participant Consent Form
Surf's Us: constructing surfing identities through clothing culture in England's South West.

Participant Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research project exploring the visual and material culture of surfing. Before you decide to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Please take time to read the attached information sheet carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If anything is unclear please do ask for further information.

Activity Consents

- I understand that I have given my consent for the following to take place:
 - To be photographed during discussions
 - To take part in a video/ audio/ sensory discussion
 - To be interviewed
 - To complete questionnaires *[to be adapted accordingly]*

Data Consents

- I understand that I have given approval for my image and opinions to be shown in Julie Ripley's final PhD thesis and may also be used in future reports and publications.
- I understand that the following personal data - name, address, age, health and family details will remain strictly confidential. These personal details will be anonymised by the research using a code system. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to this data.
- It has been explained to me what will happen to this data once the initial research project has been completed.
- I understand that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for information which I might disclose in the focus group/group interviews.

Statement of understanding

- I have read the information leaflet about the research project, which I have been asked to take part in and have been given a copy of this information leaflet to keep.
- What is going to happen and why it is being done has been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions.

Right of withdrawal

- Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time without disadvantage to myself and without having to give any reason.

Statement of Consent

- I hereby fully and freely consent to participation in the study, which has been fully explained to me.

Signatures

*Participant's name &
contact details
(BLOCKCAPITALS):*

Name:
Address:

Tel:
Email:

Participant's signature:

Date:

JULIE RIPLEY

*Research Student's
Name (BLOCK
CAPITALS):*

*Research Student's
signature:*

Date:

Contacts

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Deborah.Suggryan@falmouth.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS
272 High Holborn

London
WC1V 7EY
00 44 20 7514 6263
research@arts.ac.uk

Participant's copy/ Researcher's copy (delete as appropriate)

APPENDIX 4- List of Museums

The British Library. London
The British Museum. London
Bude Castle Heritage Centre. Bude, Cornwall
Cornish Studies Library. Truro, Cornwall.
Conwalllife.com (digital archive)
Cornwall Record Office. Truro, Cornwall.
The Fashion Museum. Bath
Museum of British Surfing. Braunton, Devon.
National Maritime Museum Cornwall. Falmouth, Cornwall.
National Railway Museum. York
Newquay Heritage Archive and Museum. Newquay, Cornwall
North Devon Maritime Museum, Appledore, Devon.
Penlee House Gallery and Museum. Penzance, Cornwall
Perranzabuloe Museum in Perranporth. Perranporth, Cornwall
Private Collection: Alison Bick, ceramicist
Private collection: Sally Parkin, Original Surfboard Company
Private Collection: Roger Mansfield, surf historian.
Private Collection:
Royal Cornwall Museum. Truro, Cornwall.
St Agnes Museum. St Agnes, Cornwall.
St Ives Museum. St Ives, Cornwall.
Thefirstwave.com (digital archive)
Worthing Museum and Archives. Worthing.

APPENDIX 5- Interview questions.

St Agnes Buntabout and World Bellyboarding Championships.

Check that information form has been accepted and consent form signed.

Welcome and ask if any questions about the project.

AUDIO RECORD

Interviewee name?

Q1. What brings you here today?

Find out if they surf, whether they are competing, whether they live nearby or have come for the event. Ask how long they've lived here if they do, or why they are visiting.

Q2. What is your connection with surfing?

Get as much detail as possible about their surfing history and interests.

Q3. Please talk me through an ordinary day for you, including what you'd be wearing.

Info on occupation and interests here. Elaborate on daily outfits if possible.

Do you mind If I take your photo now please?

Q4. How would you describe what you're wearing today?

Show the iPad. Get details on brands if possible. Where did the clothes come from? Any history? Tease out meanings.

Q5 How would you describe the way people dress in this area?

Details about different groups where possible.

Can you tell tourists from locals?

St Agnes SLSA Clubhouse

Check that information form has been accepted and consent form signed.
Welcome and ask if any questions about the project.

Check they have brought six objects that are significant to them.

Ask if happy with the way the objects are displayed for photographs.

AUDIO RECORD

Interviewee name?

Q1. What's your connection to St Agnes SLSA?

Find out if they are or have been members, whether they are involved in lifeguarding. How long have they lived in the area? Are they or their children involved in St Agnes SLSA events?

Q2. What is your connection with surfing and the sea?

Get as much detail as possible about their surfing history and interests. Also note any other sea-based activities. Extent of and history of involvement.
Family history of surfing?

Q3. Please talk me through an ordinary day for you, including what you'd be wearing.

Info on occupation and interests here. Elaborate on daily outfits if possible.

Do you mind if I take your photo now please? Would you like to photograph your objects?

Q4. Can you talk me through your objects please?

Show the iPad photo they have taken. Go through objects one by one. Get details on history and significance of each object. Tease out meanings (5-10 minutes)

Q5 How would you describe the way people dress in this area?

Details about different groups where possible.

Can you tell tourists from locals?

Q6. How would you describe what you're wearing today?

Show iPad photo.