

'The Most Wonderful Wonderful Parties'

Gossip and anecdote as feminist epistemology in
women's oral histories of the creative community in
postwar St Ives

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Abstract

This thesis explores the history of St Ives' creative community using oral history interviews with women from the St Ives Archive. Focusing on gossip and anecdote, I take and develop eavesdropping as a methodology. In doing so, this reveals the importance of feminine sociability and the locus of the party as an alternative, feminine creative practice, and the complex relationships and support networks that developed between women in St Ives' creative community. By listening to the voices of women in the oral history collection of St Ives Archive, gossip and anecdote also provide a way to explore women's experiences and memories of the town's bohemian creative community, and reveal hidden feminine modernities and modernisms. The history of the post-war art colony in St Ives has largely been considered through a masculine, modernist lens that focuses on a small number of artists and a mostly formalist reading of St Ives through their work. Little consideration has been given to the wider creative community of St Ives, and to women's experiences in particular. I argue that women were attracted to move to St Ives in the years after the Second World War because of the town's reputation for utopian bohemianism, and the freedoms this promised. Women moved to St Ives in order to make new and independent lives for themselves in an alternative community that enabled them to pursue their creative practice, and participate in and shape the community in which they lived.

Acknowledgements

Champagne Party - Guest List

'I shall froth myself into sparklets; and there'll be the whole smoothing and freshening to begin again' Virginia Woolf, 22 October 1935

Professor Fiona Hackney and Dr Carolyn Shapiro

Jemma Julian Vickery

Janet Axten, and the community of St Ives Archive

Petronilla Silver Weschke

Rachel Rose Smith and Helena Bonnett

Emma Easy

Gemma Anderson

Sabrina Rahman and Michaela Young

Marie Toseland

The women of St Ives

The midwives and obstetric staff at St Michael's Hospital, Bristol

Emma Lammiman and Tara Williams

Mary Thompson and Peter Root

David Dymond and Sidonie Dymond Sinclair

My long-suffering family

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Introduction: 'Maybe I shouldn't say, but I will': Gossip, Anecdote and Oral History as Radical Feminist Epistemology

Introduction

The creative community in St Ives, Cornwall in the mid-twentieth century is characterised as a 'bohemian community dominated by art, alcohol and sex', according to Chris Stephens, former curator of British Modernism at Tate. (1997:21) He characterises the town's bohemian community as masculine and macho, driven by artistic and intellectual conflicts, alcohol, and extra-marital affairs, and defines the bohemian artist as exclusively male. 'Bohemianism is', he writes, 'necessarily distinct from the world of the hearth and home, of families', setting the the idea of the bohemian in opposition to domesticity, along with social and artistic practice (Stephens, 1997:48 & 2018:126). In doing so, he excludes any idea of artistic work and creative practice that might constitute an alternative feminine experience of bohemianism or practice of modernism that I explore in this thesis. He also describes the bohemian community in the town as a retreat from modernity, rather than viewing it as a form of modernity that is intrinsically linked to modernism. (Stephens, 1997:41) Characterising bohemianism as an exclusively male aesthetic and social practice, and situating it in the alcohol-fuelled and heterosexually promiscuous masculine social and professional network that moves between the studio and the pub, begs the question, 'but where were the women?' Far from being only 'artistic wives', women played a central role in the creative community in St Ives, not limited only to their creative practice. Women's social practice created and sustained a cohesive community in St Ives, and at the same time demonstrated alternative forms of

feminine modernist production. Rather than moving to St Ives to retreat from urban modernity, women came to St Ives to be modern, rejecting the restrictions of gendered societal norms in search of a different way of living.

My approach to discovering these alternative narratives is to listen to gossip. Gossip appears in the history of modernism in St Ives in a number of different ways. Firstly, the one that I am most concerned about here, and the way that is most obvious and easy to define, is the oral history archive. Gossip happens when two people discuss a third, absent person. Secondly, gossip happens as part of a performance of art history or heritage, often one that is in some way officially or institutionally sanctioned. By this I mean the stories that get shared in gallery talks, exhibition tours or other contexts, whether by a representative of that institution or through group discussion. Thirdly, gossip pervades scholarly art history. This is true of any art history that discusses a particular group or creative community. If gossip is found in the archive, in diaries, or in letters, or in interviews, it is still gossip even if it is masquerading beneath the veil of scholarly research. Therefore in this thesis I want to show:

what the prescient appearance and reappearance of gossip in close vicinity to master narratives, in particular, to grandiose historical moments or achievements in Modernism, actually represents.

(Rogoff, 1996:62)

In this case, gossip appears and reappears around the master narratives of British Modernism in St Ives, and in this case, it reveals stories that destabilise those master narratives.

Stephens also rightly shows St Ives as a community that is cosmopolitan, with complex social and professional networks that extend to urban centres nationally and internationally, in contrast to writers who have portrayed St Ives as isolated and inward looking, characteristics that Stephens argues defined the 1985 St Ives exhibition at Tate (2018).

The historiography of St Ives after 1939 is largely defined by this focus on a canon made up of artists from this exhibition, and this canon has been further refined by Tate's narrow focus on British Modernist artists (Stephens, 1997:4) Stephens also discussed the comparative lack of writing on St Ives and its creative community ((2018). However, at the same time, Stephens dismisses any outward-looking political aspect to the community by suggesting that the politics of the bohemian community are isolated, individualistic, and inward-looking (Stephens, 1997:43). The period 1939 to 1964 is the accepted chronology of British Modernism in St Ives, beginning with Barbara Hepworth's and Ben Nicholson's arrival, and ending with Peter Lanyon's death in 1964. He describes modernism in St Ives as lacking relevance by the early 1960s, and waning interest from the international art community, in contrast with the enduring interest in St Ives I am not interested here in adding to or expanding this canon, or even creating an alternative, feminist canon, but both the ways in which masculine modernisms are undermined by gossip in the archive, and in the alternative modernisms expressed in women's professional, domestic and social practice, through the performance of community. My chronology expands from the Second World War in St Ives, to beyond 1964 (the death of Peter Lanyon is generally used to mark the end of modernism in St Ives, and is used frequently and unquestioningly to define this period) to fit with the stories of the women in the archive. Theoretically, I look to the interwar period and early modernism to establish the foundations for my arguments in the period after the Second World War, establishing a history of feminine modernism that can be traced backwards through bohemianism and community.

There has been a lack of interest in the lives or creative practice of women, or how feminine modernism, modernity and bohemianism might be defined by looking at ideas of alternative creative practice. The failure to acknowledge women's participation in the creative community is what this thesis intends to go some way to rectify, and to undermine the existing patriarchal historiographies of modernism in St Ives and expose the myths that support them through the concealment of women's roles.

Working predominantly with women's life-story interviews from the Memory Bay project in the collection of the St Ives Archive, I have, in contrast to masculine modernism's

privileging of the visual, chosen to prioritise listening in order to find alternative and hidden histories of the creative community. I have given particular attention to gossip in the oral history archive, where I wish to highlight the historian's practice of eavesdropping. Gossip can:

serve to destabilise the historiography of Modernism by pointing to both alternative economies inscribed in the business of cultural production as well as to the psychic fantasies whose constant dissatisfaction with existing accounts continues to generate unproven speculation.

(Rogoff, 1996:62)

As such, it is the gossip in the archive that destabilises the existing patriarchal historiographies of St Ives, and reveals the alternative economies of feminine modernist production. The lack of writing about women's roles, particularly about leading figures like Hepworth, generates unproven speculation to fill the void. Misogynistic gossip from men is more often accepted as truth in the absence of alternative narratives.

To use gossip then, to frame Stephens' analysis of the bohemian community in St Ives, would lead me to summarise community as being made up of men who were artists, many of whom had problems with drugs and alcohol. Those that did not have the luxury of a private income spent their days in the studio and their nights in the pub, relying on handouts from generous friends or income from their 'artistic wives' jobs to support them while they indulged in competitive poverty with each other. In addition to spending most of their time drinking and arguing with each other in the pub in what could be characterised as either intellectual artistic debate, or violent drunken arguments, they indulged in casual extra-marital sex, and those that taught in art schools took advantage of their positions and had inappropriate affairs with their students, with at least one being sacked for doing so. (Stephens, 1997:21-52 & 2018:129) Not only is this information obviously gossip that cannot be evidenced by the archive, as it comes from letters and conversations, but because Stephens is a man, whose research is based around conversations in person or by letters to other men about men, that it is gossips obscured. However, this gossip is used as evidence to present an image of the

bohemian art colony which is masculine, virile, modernist and anti-domestic. It describes a particular idea of misogynistic, bohemian, heteronormative masculinity that is hypersexualised and normalised through its performance within a community of 'like-minded' men, who offer each other mutual support that reinforces this performance of masculine modernism (Stephens, 1996:52). As these social exchanges were often located in the pub, these masculine social and professional networks, part of more complex international networks, excluded women, according to Stephens (2018:130). As I will show here, when we listen to women's voices in the archive, it reveals that, not only were women in St Ives not excluded from its pubs, they formed their own mutually beneficial social and professional networks that operated in alternative social spaces.

Wild Women, Wild Parties and the Construction of Cornwall

If bohemian masculinity in St Ives is located in the pub, then the locus of feminine modernism in St Ives is the party. Despite local writer Denys Val Baker writing doubtfully as early as 1959 that parties in artists' studios were 'ever really as wild and wanton as the fancy that has somehow been built up in the public eye' (Val Baker, 1959:96), the party represents a particular idea of bohemian St Ives in the postwar period, and every woman who moves there discusses the importance of parties to developing her social and professional networks. Men, too, mention the parties for which St Ives was notorious as metonymic of bohemian art, booze and sex. Tom Cross pushes for the reason for painter Karl Weschke's move to West Penwith thirty years previous, in an interview from 1983:

TC: But you knew that Cornwall had a reputation as an artists' colony? Didn't you?

KW: Tom, I'm much more ignorant than (muffle) I tell you! I came down to Cornwall because I thought it was very cheap...

TC: (interjects) This is the reason that many artists heard...

KW: and again it was romantic, it was full of wild women and wild parties.

(Weschke, 1983)

Weschke plays down the area's reputation as an artists' colony, emphasising its economic appeal as somewhere that artists could live affordably. The 'wild women and

wild parties', despite being a flippant remark (gossip suggests that Weschke thought little of Cross and his banal questions, and had little time or inclination for either women or parties), fits a valorising narrative of a heroic masculine bohemian modernity in which women are objects for performance or consumption rather than active or equal participants. They are discussed in terms of a tourist attraction, with the wildness of the landscape intertwining with the idea of wildness as permissiveness and social transgression to create an appealing notion of a bohemian utopia. John Emanuel moved to St Ives around ten years later in the 1960s, and explains that:

Friend of mine in London/Packed up and came down here. John wrote me a letter saying that they've got the most fabulous parties/John Milne and all was still alive.

(Emanuel, 2001)

This quote demonstrates that not only were the 'wild parties' still enticing artists to West Cornwall, but also how word of mouth, or gossip, was important in encouraging artists to move to St Ives. It shows also that, common to many of the interviewees in the archive, it was often the case that a move to St Ives was encouraged by existing friends who had already moved to the town. These masculine professional and social networks meant that often men artists moved to St Ives knowing that they had a ready-made social and professional network.

The idea of 'wild women' and 'wild parties' are representative of a particular construction of Cornwall that conceptualises both the landscape and people as wild, romantic and passionate. Cornwall is repeatedly defined as a peninsula that is 'almost island' (Hayward & Fleury, 2020), its separateness from England reinforced by its Celtic otherness. Cornwall's landscapes are mythical and ancient, littered with standing stones and burial grounds, and conceptualised as an 'isolated, primitive and mystical location, distinct from and resistant to [...] globalised modernity' (Young, 2011:71). Furthermore, Cornish distinctiveness includes ideas of ethnicity and separateness, and a feeling that it has been neglected by central government, a literal and metaphorical 'wild west' (Willets, 2013). Rachel Moseley goes further, describing Cornwall as Balkanised, a region hostile towards, and fragmented from England (Moseley, 2013a:645). The Celtic

revival of the late nineteenth century emerges at the same time as uprisings and attempts for greater independence in Ireland are subdued by the English. The Celt had been conceptualised as 'ancient and semi-civilized Other' for over 200 years, and it was a reaction to rapid modernisation that was at the root of the 'reformulation of 'Englishness' around 1900' which 'involved a renegotiation - or perhaps more accurately a reinforcement - of the ideological power relationship between the Celts and the English (Westland, 2002:269). 'Celticizing Cornwall', tends to make Cornwall a 'repository of anti-modern values' (Westland, 2002:281). The formation of the Celtic Other came not just from the centre to the periphery. The Cornish were also arguably complicit in the formation of their own identity, where 'what it meant to be Cornish was formed in the crucible of industrialisation' (Deacon, 2007:10). In creating this native of civilising modernisation in the late eighteenth century, the Cornish adopted the opposing image of the troglodytic native of West Barbary, which industry had transformed (Deacon, 2007:11). Guidebooks and other writing from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century reinforced the idea of a wild and barbarous place, represented by the alien volcanic landscapes and gaseous vapours of industry, stinking coastal villages and bleak rocky inland wastelands. (Deacon, 2007:13-16) At the expense of this industrial modernisation, Cornish culture, and the language in particular was on the decline, and the narrative of 'vanishing Cornwall' developed (Deacon, 2007:21).

This idea of 'vanishing Cornwall' depicts Cornwall as a place of death, where industry, people, and culture are dead or dying (Laviolette, 2011). This anxiety around modernity, particularly a concern that traditional ways of life are disappearing or dying out is itself modern. The concern with preserving folk traditions and a 'traditional' way of life is one closely connected to ideas of Neo-pagans, back to the land movements and craft revivals from the late nineteenth century onwards (Marsh, 1983). These ideas are connected in turn to socialist cultural politics and modernism (Livesey, 2007), and this much earlier prewar conception of modernism is closely linked to a particular idea of postwar modernism in Cornwall, which shunned capitalism and materialism, and embraced rural self-sufficiency, craft pedagogy, and mutually supportive communities.

Equally, Cornwall is a place where death lies conspicuously in the landscape, with its standing stones, stone circles, and burial mounds, representative of the death of ancient cultures and people, resonating with the modern anxiety around the death of tradition and dying out of culture. Moreover, it is a 'region of enchantment, where it is not uncommon for strange or morbid things to take place. The coast, the moors, the very fabric of the remote hamlets all harbour a potential danger.' (Lavolette, 2011:217) Cornwall is a place of mystery, its spectral landscapes haunted by its association with Arthurian legends as well as ancient magic (Matless, 2008).

The construction of Cornwall as a place of magic and enchantment is also closely related to ideas of modernity and modernism. Artists attracted to modernism were often also attracted to ideas of magic and the occult. Both are concerned with experimenting with ways of representing the world:

the varieties of modernist experiment are often formed into some kind of coherent category through the suggestion that what they all do is to re-present the world; the truth of the world is re-presented to the reader or viewer in such a way that the familiar world is made unfamiliar, and that that unfamiliarity breaks apart our tired, clichéd perceptions and refreshes our sense of the world.

(Wilson, 2012:23)

West Cornwall is not only ancient, it is magical, attracting modern and modernist artists in 'an attempt to represent the world other than the way it was through a magical mimesis' (Wilson, 2012:23)

The 'wild woman', who, with her connection to the wildness of the landscape and its magical enchantment is very close to being a witch, is perhaps the woman that Moseley identifies, who stands on the edge of a Cornish cliff looking out to sea, the embodiment of feminine modernity, with the vastness of the world stretching out in front of her, and the sense of anxiety and possibility that this represents (2013a). Women in Cornwall are repeatedly depicted as on the edge, located on the periphery between past and future. This modern solitary woman is nonetheless heroic and independent (Moseley, 2013a). Her 'wildness' represents not only her modernity, but her freedom and independence, and this conceptualisation of Cornish femininity was not only attractive to the bohemian

men moving to Cornwall, but also to the women who moved to St Ives in search of a bohemian, free-spirited lifestyle, imagining themselves 'inside the spaces of [Laura Knight's] paintings [...as] the sturdy heroines posing heroically on the rocks, perilously perched at the point where culture meets nature, literally at the edges of the island' (Holt, 2003:19). Moseley goes on to quote Laura Knight on the wildness of the landscape, and the transformative, almost magical effect that it has:

I doubt if anybody or anything can ever lessen the magic possessed by that leg of land - Cornwall - which, kicking free of the ordinary, with its granite boot, defies the Atlantic Ocean. Neither time, nor the vulgar can conquer its indubitable spirit. See the gorse bush on this stone hedge - to the very skies its armoured branches force their golden spires, an offering so passionate, of spring, to the virgin blue. Cornwall is not like any other sort of country - it's no use trying to compare it with any other place. There are times when you think everything is quite ordinary; and there are times when you feel you are not properly you, but someone else whom you don't in the least know; and an atmosphere prevails which takes away any sense or/belief you have ever had, and you don't know why, but you aren't in England any more.

(Knight 1965, 138-139 in Moseley, 2013a:634)

Cornwall is therefore wild and foreign, and provides the existential wildness that artists sought, the brutality of life lived in an unforgiving, isolated landscape (Moseley, 2013b:233). For women, this represents an escape from the restrictive gender roles of postwar urban Britain, and the freedom to pursue an independent, creative way of living. Moreover, it is artists attracted by Cornwall's 'accessible remoteness' that make its identity and iconography visible, and with the decline of industry, a 'semantic space' formed, creating a vacuum which 'was promptly colonised by the romantic representations of outsiders who viewed Cornwall as a primitive and liminal place, an opposite of and antidote to urban civilisation' (Deacon, 2007:11).

'Wild women' and 'wild parties', therefore attracted artists to come to St Ives, and were synonymous with its creative community in the years following the Second World War. While the concept of wildness is part of a construction of Cornwall as anti-modern Celtic 'Other', the idea of the 'wild woman' is synonymous with the notion of the woman on the cliff edge described by Moseley, a distinctly modern conception of femininity. The 'wild

woman' is a strong symbol of feminine modernity, and represents independence, autonomy and (sexual) freedom, and is closely connected to the wildness of the Cornish landscape.

The Nineteenth Century Art Colony in Cornwall

Cornwall's wild and magical place-myths attracted artists long before the generation who were drawn to St Ives after the Second World War. Much like Cornwall itself, the history of St Ives' early colony often tends to be romanticised, in line with the way in which painters of the period depicted the town, a desire to show tropes of artists equal to local fisherfolk in 'honest toil'. This trope of 'elegant poverty' is a continuation of a narrative that travels from other art colonies around Europe, according to Nina Lübbren's *Rural Artists' Colonies in Europe 1870-1910*, which provides an important framing for this thesis (2001) Local populations are seen as abject subjects, objectified to represent an attractive idealised ruralism in opposition to middle-class urban life. As Lübbren points out, the reality of everyday life for artists in places like St Ives is rarely consistent with the images that are produced. The artists' written accounts are frequently at odds with the pictorial, however, Lübbren argues for a move beyond the argument between agrarian romanticism and authenticity, myth and reality in order to 'expose the underlying ideological commitments shared by both written and painted representations'. (Lübbren 2001:59) This idea of exposing the underlying myths of place by examining the conflict between different kinds of representation is central to this research. Oral history is key to exposing myths of place; voice and memory provide the connection between other kinds of historical accounts, revealing multiple 'unofficial' histories and viewpoints.

There has been a tendency to discuss the notion of art colony as a way of escaping modern life, as Lübbren suggests, an agrarian romanticism rooted in nostalgia rather than as a form of modernity in itself enacted outside of the urban. She argues that nostalgia, as a search for an idealised way of life rooted in the past (in opposition to the idea of utopia, looking to the future) is essentially a modern condition. However, nostalgia as modernity does not go far enough to explore, for example, the performing

and re-performing of identities that was allowed as a result of being outside the urban and on the periphery. Transgressing normal modes of behaviour, so performances of bohemianism, such as dressing up, not dressing for dinner, swimming, allowed women physical freedoms they would not have been able to enact as freely in contemporaneous provincial or urban society, and denote an alternative form of modernity. As Lübbren has noted, artists in the early art colonies tended to associate in a generally tight-knit social group (albeit divided along lines of nationality and class), and therefore were essentially urban socialities in a peripheral location.

Lübbren uses tourism theory (Crouch 2001; MacCannell et al. 1999) to frame her investigation, and the idea of 'place myth' developed with Crouch, which, in brief, describes the way in which images of a place are circulated and then those images become that place, regardless of the reality. And, as MacCannell notes later, place-myth not only 're-replaces', but actually prevents the visitor or local community seeing a place as anything other than a product of the images of that place. The pictorial representation becomes the hegemonic idea of St Ives. If, as Ysanne Holt describes, 'painters continued to reinforce a widespread and fashionable pastoralism and their representations of rural life were mediated through metropolitan ideals and aesthetic codes which appealed to a variety of cultural and political positions', then it is the artists themselves who were often responsible for the perpetuation of the myth of Cornwall as place of creative isolation, obscuring its networks and communities through their own narratives (Holt 2003:3). As Lübbren suggests, artists of the colonies in Europe played with familiar stereotypes and produced 'new realities by virtue of supposed authority of authentic eyewitness' (2003: 47). This thesis argues that although much had changed in terms of modernity and modernism since the earliest art colonies of the late nineteenth century, the art colony of the St Ives of the mid-twentieth century was in reality little changed in terms of its social structures. In this respect, many of the aspects of the social lives of artists that Lübbren describes in her examination of rural artist colonies in Europe remain broadly the same almost a hundred years later. Lübbren uses the anecdote as an effective tool to explore the intimate creative communities of the late nineteenth century. Using artists' letters and diaries she explores the experience of the

artists' colony beyond work, and describes the particular social life that characterised them. She describes that the artists' colonies 'were not simply haphazard collections of individuals who happened to share the same space but cohesive social entities with shared rituals and commitments' who 'lived, worked, dined, sang and played together', partied together, and 'admired, befriended, irritated and....married each other' (Lübbren, 2001:17). The artists' colony provided social networks that provided a sense of belonging, a cohesive community with 'mutual support groups' that 'reinforce and support the individual's sense of purpose as well as the activities and routines associated with cultural production' (Lübbren, 2001:17). Lübbren argues that in the rural communities where artists chose to live and work, this sociability was even more important as it enabled artists to support one another in talking to local communities that were unfamiliar with artists and their bohemian ways of living (Lübbren, 2001:17). Distinct cliques existed within artists' colonies that formed along lines of class and ideology, through engagement with both work and social groups. Lübbren argues that 'group cohesion arises as much out of demarcation and a sense of difference from those without as out of internal unity' (Lübbren, 2001:20). Gossip is one of the key aspects in creating and maintaining these sub-group identities in opposition to others, and in defining a group identity by what one is not. As previously discussed, key to community and group unity is defining internally the values, morals and ideals of that particular group, and gossip is an essential tool with which to create that identity.

Of most relevance to my argument here is Lübbren's discussion of the kinds of freedom that living in the artists' colony afforded to women. As outlined above, many of the arguments Lübbren makes about the social aspects of the art colony in the nineteenth century are equally applicable to that of the twentieth century. Just as the women of the nineteenth-century art colony were able, to some extent, to find freedom from the social restrictions they were subject to in their usual lives, the art colony presents the same opportunities to the women who chose to live in the twentieth century creative community of St Ives: that is, to pursue their creative practice and to live independently.

Despite the works of Holt and Lübbren being relevant largely to the early art colony, which this work is not focusing on, their examinations of the social and bohemianism in the creative community are highly relevant, as is Lübbren's desire to 'rehabilitate the anecdote' and her use of anecdote in relation to both the creation of the artists' colony and notions of place-myth.

[The Rhythmanalyst] will be attentive, but not only to the words or pieces of information, the confidences and confessions of a partner or client. He will listen to the world, and above all to what are disdainfully called noises which are said without meaning and to murmurs [rumeurs], full of meaning - and finally he will listen to silences.'

(Lefebvre, 2004:19)

The strategy of listening that Lefebvre suggests should be employed by the rhythmanalyst has provided a starting point for the approach to the oral history I have employed here. In a community-produced archive like Memory Bay, there is an intimacy to the interviews which take place in the subjects' homes, and interviewer and subject are often old friends. Listening to an interview is like eavesdropping on a private conversation, and often the conversation slips from anecdote to gossip. The archive is itself a community, a multiplicity of voices that are linked and interact with each other, talking to and about each other.

In this section, I will argue that gossip and anecdote in oral histories are a powerful tool of radical knowledge that might be used not just to create alternative histories, or to add to existing modernist histories, but to undermine and destabilise those histories. If the anecdote is a short and amusing story, often self-deprecating and about failure, then the anecdote has a great deal of potential to reveal the gap between women's aspirations and the reality of everyday life.

Why are anecdote and gossip important in feminist historiography, and how can they be used to create alternative narratives? Theorists writing about anecdote and gossip are frequently concerned with arguments defending or commending anecdote and gossip as a legitimate source. Despite these arguments for gossip, and even for gossip and

anecdote as the basis for historiography, it seems that any historian or scholar making serious use of gossip and anecdote must first start by advocating for the validity of their sources (Lübbren 2001; Stefanovska 2009; Trofimenkoff 1985; White 2000). If gossip's validity is in question, its morality is even more suspect. The negative moralising of those advocating for gossip in history despite its flaws is itself deeply suspect, focusing specifically on 'maliciousness and idleness' closely associated with ideas of femininity. This thesis does not seek to 'cleanse gossip of its negative associations' with its particularly and perniciously feminised associations, 'and turn it into an acceptable cultural artefact', but instead to find in gossip a 'radical model of postmodern knowledge' that can be deployed in 'rewriting gendered historical narratives' (Rogoff, 1996:59). Rogoff is interested in transdisciplinary visual culture, and particularly in critical epistemologies. Her approach to historiography addresses not only areas of feminist research, but also how epistemological structures reproduce knowledge, and the ways that critical practice can be used to find new forms of knowledge production that work to undermine existing modes of production that fail to support the production of feminist histories. As such, she advocates for a:

feminist epistemology which does not pursue a broadening of existing categories to include female subjects but revises those very categories, questions the historical narrative structures which produce them and dares to imagine alternative narratives.

(Rogoff, 1996:58)

This thesis does not, therefore, hope to add to existing histories of modernism, but uses gossip to both challenge the existing narrative structures around modernism in St Ives and begin to produce strands of alternative narratives. By analysing gossip and anecdote from the oral history archive, it is possible to trace the relationship between the St Ives artists' colony of the late nineteenth century and the art colony of the mid-twentieth century. Despite the enormous amount of change in the intervening years, the social structures had changed very little in many respects. In the case of the history of St Ives' twentieth-century creative community, women's voices are mostly excluded, and using anecdote and gossip is an effective way of tracing social structures that map out

women's experiences. The only women that are part of the existing narrative of the history of the art colony are Hepworth and Barns-Graham, and any other women are not seen to be part of the modernist canon of the town's history.

Several historians and theorists argue the case for gossip to be employed as a feminist strategy to incorporate women's stories into an existing canon or narrative in history, or as a counter discourse, as a way of articulating female power and authority (Trofimenkoff, 1985 and Leach, 2000), and as a way of articulating identity and self (White, 2000), however, there is a danger that histories written from gossip are recategorised as 'cultural studies' and remain 'supplementary to a master narrative' (Leach, 2000).

Rogoff suggests, however, that when a historian argues that gossip is a valid historical resource, it does not legitimise gossip as a historical source, but rather delegitimises the historian's work and casts her work as suspicious:

to open up the discourse of gossip as radical knowledge is to take on the dangers of the same ridicule which is visited on the activity of gossip itself, for it negates the scholarly distancing between what is said, who it is said by and who is being addressed.

(Rogoff, 1996:59)

It is within this relatively small field of gossip as a form of knowledge production and radical feminist epistemology that I locate myself, and I am eavesdropping on gossip in the oral history archive In order to find new ways of listening in order to find new narratives that unsettle existing histories. As Rogoff suggests:

the moments at which we pause, listen, are affected and attempt to theorise gossip, are the moments of a "queering" of culture, in Alexander Doty's term; moments of which we not only distrust the false immutable coherence of master narratives but also perhaps the false, immutable coherence of our identities as subjects and tellers of those narratives.

(Rogoff, 1996:59)

As such, this work is also a queering of narratives, and I have applied queer theoretical approaches in order to find alternative ways of working with oral histories.

Oral History, Gossip and Anecdote

Literary theorist Malina Stefanovska defines the anecdote as 'a short, and sometimes humorous account of a true, interesting, if minor, event' (Stefanovska, 2009:16). The anecdote is both fundamental to and the basis of historiography, yet it cannot shake off its associations with 'rumour, legend, lack of rigour or evidence', or its 'fascination with singularity', 'aesthetic form, lawlessness, contamination with fiction, and subjectivity' (Stefanovska, 2009:16). The anecdote 'proves something' but is also 'an index of extraordinariness, their reality quotient' (Stefanovska, 2009:27).

The definition of gossip as malicious talk about a third party is used by linguists Eggins and Slade (Eggins & Slade, 1997:273). However, for the purposes of my argument here, gossip embraces a wider definition, Spacks's (1985) definition of "serious gossip", which Leach describes as 'conversations that take place in small groupings, usually at leisure, in relations of trust' that enable 'the practice of a number of activities: play, moral investigation, self-reflection, wonder, self-expression, discovery, the definition of ideas, the embodiment of solidarity, and the circulation of information' (Leach, 2000:229).

The difference between gossip and anecdote is frequently blurry and indistinct. Telling a story is to share a 'remarkable event', whereas gossip can be many things, and although often defined negatively, as 'talk which involves pejorative judgement of an absent other' (Eggins & Slade, 1997:243), can also be seen as positive or neutral, as a way of sharing information, or enhancing community cohesion through shared values and experience. Mary Leach uses Spacks's (1985) definition of "serious gossip" to describe 'conversations that take place in small groupings, usually at leisure, in relations of trust', which fall into several categories: 'play, moral investigation, self-reflection, wonder, self-expression, discovery, the definition of ideas, the embodiment of solidarity, and the circulation of information' (Leach, 2000:229).

Usually, anecdote is a story about the teller, whereas gossip is usually a story about others. Like gossip, the anecdote is viewed as suspect and untrustworthy, the historian who makes use of it will be contaminated by it, and she will be suspect and untrustworthy too. Like gossip, the anecdote is also a way of bringing people together and defining a community's boundaries, both physical and moral (Stefanovska, 2009:17). The anecdote functions in a similar way to gossip, as a way of making and maintaining friendships, defining what is usual and what is unusual, but it is gossip is talk about others that defines and reinforces social norms (Eggins & Slade, 1997:273). Like gossip, the anecdote is a historiographical resource that seems frequently to require justification for its use. It cannot be used without first arguing for its validity. Lübbren argues that the analysis of anecdote is 'peculiarly suited to the perceived informalities of daily life in the countryside' (Lübbren, 2003:21). Her aim is to rehabilitate the anecdote in art history:

The anecdote...used extensively in many contexts (popular biography, museum guides, coffee table at books), has fallen into disrepute within academic history. Art historians do read anecdotes, but they tend to dismiss them as too trivial for serious consideration in scholarly treatises, preferring the "Hard" evidence provided by critics' assessments, historical data or, at most, more "literary" sources. [...] I wish to recuperate the anecdote as an analytical tool for historians and critics.

(Lübbren, 2003:21)

Lübbren's intention to 'recuperate the anecdote' is much the same argument for the validity of gossip. Much like Trofimenkoff argues, historians are perhaps after all just peeping toms and eavesdroppers on the past, and we should admit this without shame. However, it is notable that historiography tends towards a 'narrow and phallogentric narrative structure', which perpetuates masculine perspectives (Rogoff, 1996:63). Lübbren's work on the art colonies of late nineteenth-century Europe necessitate an investigation beyond painting to reveal the social practices of these creative communities. Letters and diaries illuminate details around place-myths, draw lines of friendship and enmity, and detail social lives and loves. Anecdotes in particular are important in characterising the specificities of a place, and reveal both the everyday and

the extraordinary in artists' lives. Women's experiences in particular are revealed from these sources: the art colony grants a certain freedom from rules, and being able to transgress restrictive societal expectations of gender away from urban modernity. Lübbren's defence of her material and her analysis recognises that not only will the use of anecdote attract academic condescension, but it is doubly suspect when employed in the analysis of the social lives of artists. One aspect that she does not discuss is the possibility of the anecdote to be used as a way of writing specifically about women's experience of the art colony.

The risk of using anecdotes and gossip to construct a feminist history of social practice is to risk that history being seen as trivial. As I have described, anecdote and gossip is perceived as a trivial source, or a source of trivialities, often because they originate from women, and (female) historians must first defend and justify these sources as valid.

Secondly, gossip and anecdote often deal with the everyday, the domestic, and other trifles that do not fit with ideas of grand narratives of history, and are associated with the feminine. Thirdly, the idea of a history that deals with social lives rather than working lives does not fit with an idea of 'serious' or masculine history, and if this history is also a feminist history of women which does not conform to any idea of a master narrative, or act as supplementary (but subordinate) to it, then the use of gossip and anecdote risks the kind of suspicion and ridicule that Rogoff describes (1996:59).

As feminist historian Judith M. Bennett argues, 'the profession of history is inherently hostile to feminist approaches', therefore it is hardly surprising that women using gossip and anecdote to write history feel the need to justify their methods. She suggests that 'mainstreaming' feminist histories by writing them into the 'master narrative' of patriarchal history is an inadequate but useful 'supplementary tactic' for feminist historians, however, we should not risk mainstreaming 'at the expense of marginalising issues integral to women's history' (2006:28). As Bennett goes on to say, 'most historical fields are male-centered and male-defined', we should not 'uncritically accept their questions as our questions' as this risks writing histories that are subordinate to and perpetuate the dominance of masculine histories. She argues that new methods of writing feminist histories are required that enable feminist history to 'meet other

historical fields on a level ground' and that 'what most sustains women's history, in short, is a historiography of its own' (Bennett, 2006:28).

This contributes to the approach to historiography I have chosen to take here. While some feminist historiographers might be concerned with challenging or expanding the canon of artists to include more women, like Bennett, I feel that this approach would simply be to work within the existing patriarchal structures that created the canon in the first place. Instead, I have chosen to work with methods that question the foundations on which the canon is based.

Furthermore, gossip is a form of social cultural activity is relegated to the recesses of femininity or feminised masculinity and moralised as a reprehensible activity. It is interesting to note that social scientists to theorise or analyse gossip rely primarily on interviews with women and with gay men. There is some tacit understanding here that "men of the world", men busy making the world in their own form, do not gossip, that gossip is for those "who have nothing better to do".

(Rogoff, 1996:61)

Oral histories invite the listener to eavesdrop on intimate conversations. If all history is ultimately reduced to nothing but a 'glorious gossip' and historians to 'peeping toms', then it is not unreasonable to suggest that the historian taking the:

gossip's delight in narratives about events or about others is not so different from being thrust into exciting intimacy with those we don't know (reading oral history?), savoring secrets not intended for us (reading published letters?), and encountering aspects of others' experience not ordinarily or publicly divulged (reading qualitative research?)

(Leach, 2000:234)

Leach is in agreement with Trofimenkoff on the role of historian as eavesdropper, as the anonymous listener, one who listens in and hopes to overhear gossip that reveals insight into a time or place.

In framing the interviews in the oral history archive in this way, I have chosen to embrace and celebrate gossip as feminist and feminine historiography rather than reject it for its

supposed unreliability. Enough theorists have argued the case for gossip and anecdote, or apologetically acknowledged gossip's bad-girl reputation, and this thesis has no need to justify yet again the validity of these sources. I would suggest that this is in fact a necessity when dealing with the kind of archival structure that exists in a community-led oral history archive such as Memory Bay, where to avoid the suggestion of gossip would make the entire archive almost unusable, and to edit out the anecdotal and gossipy aspects would be wholly dishonest. I argue wholeheartedly for Rogoff's celebration of gossip, in that 'the very act of acknowledging its legitimacy begins to undo the lofty categories in which we have all been working' (Rogoff, 1996:60).

St Ives Archive & Oral History

The oral history archive in St Ives is unique, and has not previously been the subject of substantial academic study. It contains a wealth of audio material, of which this thesis contains only a small part. I have chosen to work primarily with women's stories, in order to explore the possibilities of alternative feminine modernities in St Ives. I am using queer history methods in order to avoid reinforcing the existing patriarchal and heteronormative power structures that exist within the archive and in the way that we 'do' history, and by doing so, I hope to reveal hidden histories and alternative narratives. The St Ives Archive is an independent community archive, set up in 1996 to record and preserve the history of the town by members of the St Ives Tate Action Group, who were successful in campaigning to get an art museum in St Ives that recognised the importance of St Ives modernist legacy. It is run by volunteers and funded by membership subscriptions and donations. In 2008, the Memory Bay oral history project, a partnership between the St Ives Archive, Tate St Ives, the Leach Pottery, Porthmeor Studios, University College Falmouth and the St Ives School of Painting, was successful in securing Heritage Lottery funding to create an archive of recordings of local people's memories of St Ives' creative community.

The Memory Bay collection consists of around a hundred recordings of interviews with people about their memories of St Ives and its creative community, made by volunteers with varying interview skills and styles. A thorough general survey of all the recordings

contained therein is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, the collection is broad in its scope, containing recordings from older members of the community like Eric Curnow and Willie James, who had worked with Robert Nance, Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson; Brian Stevens, now the keeper of the St Ives Museum, who talks of his childhood memories of the town; Mary Quick, writer and Gorseddh Bard, who discusses her pre-war childhood and memories of Alfred Wallis. A younger generation of respondents, including Martin Val Baker, Toni Carver and John Emanuel, recall their experiences of the 1960s and 1970s, including the experience of the 'Beatnik Invasion' and the folk music scene. Together with Janet Axten, these respondents were also instrumental in bringing the Tate St Ives to the town through their involvement with the St Ives Tate Action Group (STAG), which is also recorded in the archive.

Often, the aim of an oral history archive is to address a lack or gap in the archive. The Memory Bay project specifically aimed at collecting the stories of local people about St Ives' creative community. Collecting these stories provided a way of creating a more inclusive and representative archive of the history of the town that democratised the narrative dominated by Tate's representation of only a small number of modernist artists as 'important'. However, the result of the project is somewhat uneven. Although a diverse representation of the local community, the power structures that exist within these dominant narratives of who and what is important to the history of the creative community in St Ives is reflected in the archive, mainly owing to the particular subjectivities of certain interviewers.

This thesis draws mainly on interviews with women from the Memory Bay archive. As well as being concerned with the issues around the accessibility of oral history archives, I am interested in the structural inequalities and power structures that are produced and reproduced by the oral history archive, despite the aim of oral history to create a more democratic history from the bottom up that hopes to create a more inclusive narrative through the voices of 'ordinary people'. These structures are sustained and reinforced through the practice of making the oral history archive, and undermine the egalitarian aims of using oral history to create more inclusive narratives, particularly women's stories. For example, in the Memory Bay interviews, some (male) interviewers shut down

women when their conversations strayed from discussing a 'famous artist' to talking about their own personal experiences or memories. Despite the aim of the project to collect memories of the creative community in St Ives, this sets up a hierarchical value structure where the stories of the interviewee are only deemed important if they discuss an artist that is part of a familiar canon of St Ives artists. Therefore, women's life stories are often only given value by their proximity to (usually male) artists, and are not given any intrinsic value. This is highly problematic, and reproduces the patriarchal structures of existing histories of St Ives.

My methodology for selecting the interviews that I have chosen to use here emerged as an iterative process of intimate listening. With copies of the recordings on a hard drive, I was able to spend time listening to interviews at home and when walking or travelling. This enabled me to develop an intimacy with the recordings that would not have been possible if I had been limited to listening in the space of the archive. The coldness of the archive building in winter made listening for long stretches difficult, and being able to take the archive home with me not only changed the way I listened, by spending more time with the interviews, but also reframed my relationship to them. Listening to recordings made in the domestic, intimate spaces of the interviewees' homes (often punctuated by the sounds of a cat, or the ticking of a clock), in my own home, subtly shifted my understanding of the conversations. I became the third person in the conversation, the eavesdropper listening in.

I began to notice patterns that emerged like musical refrains, resonating between voices in the archive. The more I listened, the more I heard repeated phrases in individual interviews. This became a method, listening out for phrases that repeated and connected women together across the archive, and the chorus of women voicing these refrains of the 'little cottage', 'the wonderful parties', and 'everyone went to the pub', became the women whose voices I have included in this thesis.

I also began to notice that in these intimate interviews between women friends, reminiscing in intimate spaces, stories emerged that were discussions of third parties, often other women. Some were malicious or vicious, showing disapproval of other women's appearance or sexuality, like Rebecca Craze and Coad. Others were not

intended to be mean or derogatory, but a way of discussing and commenting on hardships, or perhaps deflecting from their own difficulties at that time, such as Ann's discussion of her neighbour's arrest and mental health issues. Others were a way of expressing collective or community attitudes, such as Stella's discussion of Boots Redgrave's relationship with Janet Leach.

My first instinct was to edit out these stories, to avoid this difficult material. However, I realised that these stories revealed a great deal about St Ives' creative community, and that much of this material undermined the existing narratives and historiography of St Ives.

This gossip, therefore, provides a powerful tool in oral history to not only change the narrative, but to also rediscover what is radical in these women's stories. In an attempt to avoid reproducing the same power structures that already exist in St Ives' historical narratives, I have worked with feminist historiographer Rogoff's text on gossip as radical knowledge, which I am quoting here again to make the specific point that:

So conditioned are we by the hierarchical values of what constitutes serious cultural endeavour, that we either co-opt the small-scale narratives into the grand schemes of heroic activity or we allow them to slip into a kind of domesticated netherworld. But if one is to work theoretically and historically as a feminist, then one of the tasks is to bring into theory, by which I mean to bring into critical consciousness, that which is always languished outside it, which has remained untheorised for very good reasons: because the very act of acknowledging its legitimacy begins to undo the lofty categories in which we have all been working.

(Rogoff, 1996 59-60)

I am attempting to theorise gossip and acknowledge its legitimacy because it has the power to undermine the narrative of patriarchal modernism in St Ives. Therefore, I am not attempting through this work to bring these narratives into a larger canon of the history of modernism in St Ives. Instead, I am using gossip to undermine the existing definition of modernism in St Ives which, to quote Pollock again, 'celebrates [...] a selective tradition that normalises, as the only modernism, a particular and gendered set of practices' (Pollock, 1988:50). I suggest that gossip is a function of many oral history archives, particularly those made by a community, for a community. The same structures

of friendship and enmity that shape the community shape the archive, and as a result, risk reproducing the same narratives. These relationships determine whose voice is important, and who gets to speak.

As discussed previously, I have also employed queer history methods to look for absences and spaces in stories and narratives that reveal something that has previously been ignored. Issues around ethics make dealing with gossip in the archive problematic. When another person discusses a third person in terms that might be unpleasant, derogatory, or reveal sensitive information, it would be much easier to ignore this material. However, I have chosen to take on this material and use it to reveal hidden and alternative narratives, which would otherwise obscure what I argue are important stories. Carolyn Steedman's *Dust* refers to 'a particular kind of archive, instituted by state (or quasi-state) organisations since the late eighteenth century, in England and France. [...] In a proper and expanded definition of 'archive' this system of recording (listing, in particular), storage and retrieval, is an aspect of the history of written language, and the politics of that history' (Steedman, 2003: ix). The St Ives Archive provides something of an antithesis to this definition of archive, being of the community and the town, reflecting the relationships and structure that that suggests. By this I refer to its somewhat idiosyncratic nature; to call it non-academic or amateur would be entirely disingenuous, but it is also resolutely independent, democratic, and rigorous, and its existence is very much a product of the desires and passions of the people that brought it into being and continue to make it viable. In this way, the definition of Steedman's archive where its systems inform the politics of written history are also relevant to the St Ives Archive, despite being very different kinds of systems, and therefore, I would argue, a different kind of politics altogether. Its systems of collecting and staffing come from the bottom up, rather than the top down.

The performative nature of gossip in these interviews is central to this thesis. Often, the recordings are made by a volunteer who is on intimate terms with the respondent. This gives the recordings an interesting quality, but is also problematic; there are frequent jokes, asides, and gossipy references that are at times impenetrable to an outsider.

Despite the aim of the archive to give voice to ordinary people within the archive, there

is a hierarchical power structure created by the subjectivities of particular interviewers. At times, male interviewers talk over, shut down or dismiss older female interviewees, silencing them because the discussion loses its proximity to the 'famous' artists of St Ives. The value of these older, St Ives-born women's stories is often defined by their relationship to well-known artists, rather than being valued for their own stories in themselves. This makes for some agonising listening, the interviewer's impatience clearly audible, and leads to some missed opportunities for follow-up questions that remain unasked. At the same time, there are many interviews that work well because of the relationships between interviewer and subject. Many of the interviews between women are surprisingly intimate, because interviewer and interviewee have known each other for forty years or more, and their shared histories often overlap, producing insights into the community that might not be shared with an interviewer who does not have this shared experience. In this way, the dynamics of the archive often reflect the dynamics of the town and its community. The interviews with women in the archive tend to fall into several categories, which are complex and overlapping, but should be defined. Women largely born in St Ives between 1915 and 1939, women who moved to St Ives from elsewhere who were born between 1920 and 1945. The women who came to St Ives were largely from middle-class backgrounds, and art-school educated. There is a distinct division, therefore, along generational and class lines, with shared experiences and memories resonating between each group, and often similar opinions. There are also refrains around nostalgia for lost community and change shared by both groups. Similarities and differences between these two groups reveal much about both the divisions in the community, and the way 'incomers' have integrated.

In addition to the Memory Bay collection, during my period as research fellow I instigated a project to digitise recordings on tape that were in danger of deteriorating, and trained archive volunteers to continue to digitise material such as the recordings of Dr Roger Slack, which were previously only available on reel-to-reel tape. Slack was the first NHS GP in St Ives, arriving in 1947. He was an avid recorder of the town, and in addition to a large collection of photographs, he made many sound recordings. There is a huge variety of material within the collection, which dates from the early 1960s. There

are recordings of consultations with patients, for example, with the wife of a 'tinker', whose Cornish dialect is unheard now; recordings of musical evenings with Breon O'Casey and Bernard Leach; discussions with Peter Lanyon; and an interview with a former district nurse, which, despite being fifty years old, will have to be embargoed by the archive for ethical reasons and yet provided a useful starting point for this project in wondering how to treat gossip as a historical source.

Rhythmanalysis and the Production of Community

The archive is in itself a community, a multiplicity of voices that are linked and interact with each other, talking to and about each other. The performance of the archive is complex and multilayered, with its own internal rhythms, where stories resonate and echo, at times harmonious and at others dissonant. This cacophony represents only a fleeting moment in time where these voices have come together to talk about their memories of community. As such, the archive is a community in miniature, a container of its relationships and feelings, enmity and friendship.

The interview is a three-way performance between the respondent, the interviewer, and the archive or imagined audience, and it is necessary for the interviewer also to perform his or her part as appropriate to that particular interview; attempting to adopt a 'neutral' position is both impossible and limiting in creating an effective performance between these three actors. This is why I argue for the importance of listening and voice in the oral history interview, which should not be subjugated by the written word. An oral history is essentially aural, and should be listened to and heard, mediated through the listener, and not through the written word, mediated by the historian or the transcriber, which allows so much potential for misunderstanding in the lack of attention to the subtleties of voice. Grele describes this as 'book fetishism', meaning that texts created from oral histories are seen not as complete end-products in themselves; yet there is still a frequent tendency to describe a book as an 'oral history' in its printed form. As described in theories of performance (see, for example, Bauman 1974, Taylor 2003), the final form is not a transcript or tape, but the interview in itself.

Studs Terkel, in conversation with Ron Grele in 1974, makes the comparison between the oral history interview and jazz improvisation; the interviewer knows there will be a beginning, a middle, and an end, a narrative structure that interviewer and subject will riff on and create as well as produce (Terkel & Grele, 1985). There is both rehearsed narrative and spontaneous exchange that develops during the performance; linear and cyclical performance.

I use oral history and sound to explore how social relations produce and are produced by space, and how oral histories undermine or reinforce place-myths. I examine how everyday practice and social relations produce and reproduce space and place in the history of St Ives creative community. This methodology develops from Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis*, where the Rhythmanalyst 'will be attentive, but not only to the words or pieces of information, the confidences and confessions [...], he will listen to the world, and above all to what are disdainfully called noises which are said without meaning and to murmurs [rumeurs], full of meaning - and finally he will listen to silences' (Lefebvre 1992: 19). Although in this translation, 'rumeurs' are translated as 'murmurs', it can also be translated as 'rumours'. This meaning also has resonance in the discussion of listening to place; the rumours, or gossip, is as much part of place, and the history of a place and its community as any idea of fact or veracity. Just as the myths of St Ives' quality of light endure and inform notions of place and place-myth, so too does its gossip, rumours and half-truths. The often told story of Methodist fishermen throwing an artist and his easel in to the harbour for painting on a Sunday conceals the more unpleasant incidents of religious bigotry, such as the abuse suffered by district Nurse Daniels for being Catholic or the angry mob incited by a Methodist preacher to smash the windows of a man serving tea and cake to holidaymakers on the Sabbath (Slack, 1963). Lefebvre argues for a spatial analysis of history, which looks at social relations and everyday practice in order to reveal hidden political and ideological dialectics. This is particularly relevant to St Ives; its location on the periphery, and picturesqueness, has prevented discussion of politics and ideology with respect to social relations and practice within the town's community. Although Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* is a less resolved text compared to *The Production of Space* and *The Practice of Everyday Life*, in

it he provides instructions for an ethnographic approach, in which, 'instead of going from concrete to abstract, one starts with full consciousness of the abstract in order to arrive at the concrete', a qualitative analysis, which constitutes a 'more philosophical method, with its attendant risks: speculation in place of analysis, the arbitrarily subjective in the place of facts' (Lefebvre, 1992:5). My use of gossip here could be considered arbitrarily subjective, and certainly oral history is interested in meaning rather than facts. Queer theory uses speculation in order to avoid creating silences and absences in historical narratives. This is not to say that rhythmanalysis, though a subjective method, should not also be rigorous, demanding 'careful attention and precaution, we advance by clearing the way' (Lefebvre, 1992:5). Rhythmanalysis provides an alternative method of exploring how a community works, which circumvents the visual. The eavesdropper, who by definition is someone who listens secretly and in secret, is unknown to the speakers and therefore in the act of listening in is both dishonest and has the capacity for the betrayal of confidences and spread of gossip. Lefebvre's rhythmanalyst, on the other hand, is characterised as a (male) neutral listener. The rhythmanalyst listens in, but does so in the full knowledge of the speaker, openly and honestly, without judgement or secrecy, and creates a sense of the priest in the confessional, an objective rather than subjective listener. The oral historian is arguably more truthfully closer to the eavesdropper than the rhythmanalyst here. In listening to oral histories, the interviewer and subject are aware of a potential third person listening in, but they do not know who they are or what they might do with their stories.

In the existing historiography, especially within art history, the visual takes precedence, and obscures the social practice that produces and is produced by space. As Stephens notes, the landscape has been given undue attention in the historiography of St Ives (Stephens, 1997:4). The physical view of space and place, particularly in Cornwall, has given it meaning as objective, neutral, 'primordial', preventing critical analysis. This uncritical approach to landscape (where the local population are literally and figuratively painted as 'local colour' or 'part of the landscape') has prevented a view of place as site of class struggle or conflict, or political space. W. J. T. Mitchell suggests a different way of thinking about landscape, 'not as an object to be seen or a text to be read, but as a

process by which social and subjective identities are formed' (Mitchell 2002:1). Edward J Soja, in *Postmodern Geographies* (1989), argues that 'the generative source for a materialist interpretation of spatiality is the recognition that spatiality is socially produced and, like society itself, exists in both substantial forms (concrete spatialities) and as a set of relations between individuals and groups, an "embodiment" and medium of social life itself' (Soja 1989: 120). This research takes a spatialised approach to exploring this set of relations, between artists, locals, and tourists, in St Ives. Latour argues that, 'to regain some sense of order, the best solution is to trace connections between the controversies themselves rather than decide how to settle any given controversy' (Latour 2005: 23). As such, this thesis aims to trace these connections through the gossip between women in the archive, around the themes of home, work and play.

'A Glorious Gossip': Gossip and History

The idea of history as 'a glorious gossip' is suggested by historian Trofimenkoff (1985), as she describes the potential to see gossip as a way of articulating female power and authority. Historically associated with birth attendants, and the period of 'lying in' after the birth, where the women of a community would be gathered together and men forbidden to enter, gossip derives etymologically from the word for godparent, and originally also applied to men. Gossip's modern meaning of idle chatter, usually amongst women, is used to undermine and trivialise the value of women's words. Analogous to the negative comparisons of oral tradition versus the written word, she describes the emergence of medicine as professionalised and masculinised against the decline of the female birth attendant and midwife, drawing comparisons between the written word and book-learning (associating the rise of medicine as a profession with the invention of the printing-press) with the masculine expertise of the medical profession and their 'book learning' and the oral tradition of the knowledge of female birth attendants (of which more later). She says that 'historians still acknowledge this in the uneasy reaction to oral history: something learned by word-of-mouth is not real knowledge', a problematic function of the white, western, male approach to making

history, which excludes cultures and peoples that pass on knowledge and histories through word of mouth and oral tradition (Trofimenkoff, 1985:6). Comparing the historian to a 'peeping Tom', she concludes by saying that listening to gossip is a tool that historians might use to 'assess the extent of participation in or alienation from the... community' (Trofimenkoff, 1985:10). I suggest that this sense of voyeurism applies to the listener of oral histories, however, as voyeurism conforms too easily with the modernist privileging of the visual, the listener is necessarily an eavesdropper, overhearing, earwiggling and listening in to conversations like an unseen audience with a glass to the wall. Unless the subject of the interview is a public figure, well-rehearsed in talking about their lives, then oral histories will often contain the kinds of stories and anecdotes that can be defined as gossip, and which Rogoff describes as 'delinquent' (Rogoff, 1996:59).

Rogoff highlights the approaches that academics use when listening to gossip: 'Anthropologizing', where gossip is justified by being other, and the discourse of 'distant exotic tribes'; moralising, where scholars attempt to 'vindicate gossip from its morally inferior position'; and thirdly, gossip as result of mass culture and celebrity (Rogoff, 1996:58-9). She suggests that attempting to divorce gossip from notions of 'idleness' or 'maliciousness' is also to ignore both these terms as highly feminised, and to overlook the potential to read these as 'subjectivities or as the sites of defiance or resistance' (Rogoff, 1996:59).

As anthropologist Luise White argues, 'gossip is at least as reliable as people talking about themselves' (2000:61). Gossip, she says, 'contains interests, embodiments and local strands of power' (2000:61-62). She describes how gossip about a third person becomes a way of constructing identities and histories, that someone talking about others is just as revealing as talking about the self. Gossip is not idle talk, but reveals a great deal about the speaker, their relationship to others in their community, their values, ideals, and the ways in which they wish to present themselves. As such, gossip about others is 'part of a repertoire of anecdotes, stories, and memories that the speaker uses to make points about his or her life' (2000:62). White argues that it is possible to historicise 'rumour and gossip' not just by validating them as historical

sources, but also because of their potential for use by the historian precisely because they are both 'historical and intensely personal' (2000:62). Feminist historians have always used less conventional sources to explore women's histories, according to Burton, and have done so with the aim of creating 'an alternative archive from which to challenge exclusionary local, national, and colonial histories' (Burton, 2003:23).

Gossip in the Archive

Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the idea of gossip in oral history. It is unclear why there is a lack of theorisation of gossip in this field. There is an anthropological approach to gossip as performance, and the previously mentioned notions of gossip as sociology, but very little discussion of what gossip in oral history means, or how it creates meaning (Abrams, 2016:133). It is possible that simply by acknowledging gossip as gossip in the oral history archive undermines the seriousness or trustworthiness of oral history, and would therefore be counterproductive to the historian attempting to produce 'serious' work that does not simultaneously undermine her own position and contaminate her work (Rogoff, 1996:60). Although more likely to occur in smaller, community-led oral history projects where peer interviewing is used, in interviews like the ones from Memory Bay, where the interviewers and interviewees are often known to each other and part of the same community, gossip is used to frame their own experiences. Gossip in the archive does not fit Rogoff's definition as being 'unauthorised, untraceable and unfixed in historical time', and although some is certainly rumour that cannot be substantiated, I argue that the historical nature of the gossip of the oral history interview and its status as an object in the archive gives it credibility and elevates it to a position of respectability that it would not otherwise have. Gossip, once catalogued and ordered according to the organising power structures of the patriarchal archive, is assimilated into acceptability. Its delinquency is disguised in polite descriptions and meta information. There is a self-awareness to the performance of gossip in the oral history interview. Interviewees know that what they say is destined to be public knowledge, but they share it anyway, with the sense of glorious abandon.

The interviews made for the Memory Bay project are particular and specific. Unlike the kinds of oral histories made and discussed in the field of oral histories, but common to many oral history projects made by community organisations, they are made by people who are part of the community that they are recording, rather than an academic researcher who is an outsider. Specifically described as a reminiscence project, this suggests both a romanticised form of remembering, as well as one that is less reliable than the idea of oral history or oral testimony. In the sense that the aim of the Memory Bay project was also defined (sometimes) as memories from the community about 'the artists', rather than life-story interviews made by and of the community, there is also the notion in defining reminiscence as something that is suggestive of another thing or person, which describes the possibility of gossip (as talk between two people about another person) within the idea of reminiscence.

What does this performance between two people mean? How does the oral history interview enact memories, and what does it mean to share them as gossip? Performance historian and theorist Rebecca Schneider argues that in 'body-to-body transmission', history is not lost. The messy fleshiness of the body is associated with the feminine and with the female body, along with oral traditions:

in the archive, flesh is given to be that which slips away. According to archive logic, flesh can house no memory of bone, In the archive, only bone speaks memory of flesh. Flesh is blind spot. Dissimulating and disappearing.

(Schneider, 2011)

It is fleshiness of the feminine that disappears in the archive, which can only house the patriarchal, bare bones, of history. The archive, therefore, excludes oral traditions and performance, that which is unarchivable, memory associated with the feminine. This privileging of the visual results in the spoken word being seen as inferior to the phallogocentric document, which results in the erasure of women's histories. The sharing of stories between women strengthens narratives in recounting them, and the performance of stories in the form of gossip and anecdotes creates vectors of memory that, through oral histories, are passed on from person to person. Just as gossip has the

potential to create mythical and false historical narratives, it also has the potential to be passed on in ways that undermine those false narratives.

The same group of local people who campaigned to establish a gallery in the town to celebrate the modernism in St Ives was also responsible for the creation of the St Ives archive. It is an independent community archive, set up in 1996 to record and preserve the history of the town by members of the St Ives Tate Action Group, who were successful in campaigning to get an art museum in St Ives that recognised the importance of St Ives Modernism. In 2008, the Memory Bay oral history project, a partnership between the St Ives Archive, Tate St Ives, the Leach Pottery, Porthmeor Studios, University College Falmouth and the St Ives School of Painting, was successful in securing Heritage Lottery funding to create an archive of recordings of local people's memories of St Ives' creative community. Memory Bay consists of over sixty recordings of local people, including Willie James, a carpenter employed by furniture maker Robin Nance, who made frames for artists in St Ives; Roy Ray, former head of the St Ives School of Painting; Chris Care, a local fisherman who has a net loft at Porthmeor Studios; Jane Mitchell, widow of sculptor Dennis Mitchell who worked for Barbara Hepworth; and Brian Stevens, curator of the St Ives Museum.

Interviewers are often around the same age as their interviewees, usually local to St Ives, and are often friends with them. This gives the interviews an intimate quality that would not exist if the interviews were conducted by an external researcher. Memories are shared, rather than just told to an impartial listener, with the interviewer often sharing their own memories of a particular time or event, or prompting the speaker when a name or place escapes them, or even correcting or being corrected by them. Their histories are shared, and they are sharing their histories together. The interviewer and subject have a tendency to slip into anecdotes or gossip that involve in-jokes or other esoteric shared knowledge of people and place to which the audience/outsider is not party. Not only does this make the audience feel like they are eavesdropping on intimate gossip, but it emphasises a sense of a community by reinforcing an idea of group cohesion and belonging through intimate, shared knowledge of St Ives and its inhabitants.

This intimacy leads often to anecdotes being told that fall more accurately into the category of gossip. Despite the interviewees knowing that the recordings are being made for an audience, this often leads to what might be more accurately termed gossip. Often, the interviewee is explicit that they are about to reveal something that may be 'not nice', either by stating it before, or interrupting the flow of conversation to do so. Others take the interviewer into their confidence by dropping their voice, the tone changing to reveal something salacious, slanderous. There is a knowingness in the performance of gossip.

In listening (in) to the archive, as the audience, I often feel that rather than being the speaker's imagined audience, I am an unseen and disregarded third person, overhearing an intimate conversation, and the intimate details discussed. As such, there are times that the experience of listening to these oral histories transforms the listener into an eavesdropper, the historian-voyeur that Trofimenkoff suggests. (1985)

Gossip and Ethics

One of the interesting questions around the idea of the oral history archive that a discussion of gossip creates is that of censorship. Should a historian censor negative stories about a third person? These stories, and the issues that they bring, if not flagged up by the original interviewer, or later by someone cataloguing the interview, may only come to light if they are actually listened to. Perhaps many historians and researchers choose to self-censor, editing out uncomfortable exchanges that are extraneous to or do not fit in to a particular narrative. I suggest that some of these exchanges have the power to reveal a great deal about both women's experiences and the wider community.

There are clearly ethical implications associated with gossip. St Ives Archive embargoed, after I raised concerns, an interview with Nurse Daniels, who was district nurse for the town in the 1930s. She tells a gossipy (and also shocking and funny) anecdote about a young woman's unplanned pregnancy, which reveals important historical information about the kinds of social and material conditions and attitudes that existed in the town at that time, but also revealed enough specific information for someone to be able to

work out the identity of the child born in those particular circumstances. With the subject of the story fairly likely to still be living, and with no guarantee that they know the details surrounding their own birth, we agreed that the interview should be removed from public access for the present time. As gossip, Nurse Daniel's anecdote not only has the potential to cause harm to an individual, but also provides a commentary that aims to shock the listener at the lack of education and ignorance that existed within the community in Downalong just before the Second World War. An anecdote quoted by Tebbutt serves as a warning with an echo: 'one illegitimate child of a long-established family in the Studley Street locality learnt the details of her birth only as a result of the unmeant indiscretions of a very old woman' (Chinna, 1988 in Tebbutt, 1995:79). Another monologue, recorded by St Ives GP Dr Roger Slack, reveals his concern, as Barbara Hepworth's GP, about her health. This is problematic as it quite clearly breaks rules on patient confidentiality, and raises interesting questions around exactly why Dr Slack was making the recording. I would suggest that he has made the recording for his own personal archive, perhaps thinking of a future memoir. The other recordings by Slack in the archive have similar reflections, like voice notes. A notable technophile, Slack was interested in documenting his community in pictures and sounds. His collection of photographs of private views of exhibitions at the Penwith Gallery provide a useful record of the town, and his tape recordings of older Cornish people talking preserve dialect and accents now lost. It is this sense of historicity, and what might be valuable to a future audience, that makes the recordings in his collection interesting. Nonetheless, the recording about Hepworth's state of mind and physical health represent an unprofessional invasion of privacy, and after I brought it to the attention of the archive, and following discussions with the Bowness family, it was agreed that it should not be available publicly at the archive. Excellent examples to illustrate the ethical dimensions.

Gossip, Sex and Queerness

The examples of gossip I give here are the ones where the narrators are quite specifically and deliberately unpleasant, or using public knowledge about someone

else's private life in order to share information that they see as shocking or remarkable in some way. This kind of gossip is shared where there is an expectation of shared moral judgement, and the intimacy of a shared point of view is one that enhances a sense of group identity (Spacks, 1987). Gossip from women about other women's sexuality is murmured throughout the archive. Little comment is made about men's sexuality, although there are rare mentions of men's sexual behaviour towards women. St Ives' reputation for lasciviousness and sexual freedom was part of its bohemian appeal, and there is one bit of gossip referring to men's promiscuity:

There was also a Portuguese painter there/Who was very good looking/I don't know what his name was/He was incredibly vain/He was in the same studio/And this chap/Was so vain/And he had black curly hair/Tight curls/But he was going bald/And he was a great one for the ladies/And apparently he used to draw/With charcoal/These little curls/You know/Like you might draw/On a/He used to fill in the gaps with charcoal/[laughs/So there would be pillows all over the St Ives covered in charcoal/Or so I heard

(Kelley, 2009)

However, the vast majority of gossip that relates to sex is gendered. Local women gossip about other women's sexuality as a way of differentiating incomers in the creative community from themselves, clearly defining the difference in moral values between them and the women who are outsiders. As many of the interviews are with women who are slightly older, this moral judgement delineates not only a generational difference, but also reinforces the idea of what it means to be local, defining the values of the community of which they are a part. This gossip also serves to define the artists as other, not only because of their foreignness, but because of the looseness of their moral values, emphasising their bohemianness through their sexuality.

Listening to gossip about Isobel Heath opens up the possibility of queerness in the archive. Heath was a founding member of the Penwith Society, who later resigned in protest at artists being categorised by the kind of work they produced, and is part of the older, pre-war generation of artists. Several interviewees mention Heath and her work, having had their portraits painted by her, or that she painted beautiful flowers. They

mention how nice she was, which is followed by a mention of how 'masculine' she was, and how she wore men's clothes. Rebecca Craze repeats her description of Heath's masculinity, qualifying it by saying 'she got married after'. After saying 'can't segregate people anywhere', which suggests a somewhat strained relationship with the creative community, she admits that the artists 'were a nice type of people'. (Craze, 2009) In her interview, she announces that she is about to reveal some gossip, then discusses Isobel Heath's 'masculine' appearance before mentioning her painting. The meaning implied is quite clear when Craze describes that Heath was masculine, directly before saying that 'she got married after' (Craze, 2009). It is this line that really makes this gossip:

Oh yes no word a joke/Miss Heath/Oh my g.../Isobel Heath/No she had a studio in Custom Lane/Custom House Lane/And she was very masculine/She got married after/Yeah/She was masculine/And she did paintings/Isobel Heath/Yeah/She lived at the Bosun's Nest/Yeah/I know her as well/Bosun's Nest/I know her as well

(Craze, 2009)

Craze uses this story about Heath's sexuality to reinforce the difference of the artists, and their bohemian attitudes to sexuality and gender identity. Heath's queerness is central to the story, her transgressive performance of gender key to defining bohemian difference. Although dressing in clothes that were considered masculine or had masculine elements in the 1920s and 1930s was fashionable, and not necessarily a marker of queerness, it was relatively unusual. Heath's gender non-conforming dress would absolutely have drawn attention to her queerness, and Rebecca Craze's judgement is not only reinforcing ideas of difference through Heath's non-conformity, but also the difference between the queer bohemianism of the artists and the conservative Methodist morals of the locals. Her (possibly lavender) marriage to an Italian prisoner of war tips the scales of convention back again for Craze, rendering her queerness acceptable. For the historian, this gossip not only reveals queerness in the history of St Ives creative community, but also opens up the possibility of other gender non-conforming readings in the histories in the archive. Listening to gossip in the archive

reveals hidden narratives of gendered and queer modernity that existing historiographies do not discuss.

Two women whose names appear more frequently in gossip and anecdotes across the archive are Janet Leach and Boots Redgrave. Both are talked about more in the archive than any other women in the community. Although this is often for many reasons, they were business partners in the *New Craftsman*, and their rumoured sexuality was also clearly the subject of gossip and speculation, some of which was malicious.

With the hair salon a site for local gossip, it is not surprising that hairdresser Mary Dobbin's desire to pass on only the most salacious of titbits about the creative community involves gossip about other women's sexuality. On Janet Leach, she even precedes her judgement with 'it's none of my business':

She married Bernard/But it's none of my business/Fair enough/No she came later/
Then needless to say he died/Then she eventually died/[...]/And uh/She/When the
second Misses Leach died/[drops voice]/She left money and that to Boots Redgrave/
And uh/I mean Boots/Lived maybe two years/Three years/And she died/And then/
She was always known as Boots/I dunno why/Always never known/Never called her
anything else but Boots

(Dobbin, 2009)

The implication of impropriety in Mary's tone of voice is clear, and without being explicit her meaning is almost comically pantomimed. The interview itself is unfortunate, as the interviewer's technique is poor and fails to pick up on some of the things she says. At points, she clearly wants to be asked to expand on the gossip that she wants to pass on. These opportunities are sadly missed, and it is unfortunate that the interviewer does not sound like he is interested in Mary either for herself or what she might have to say, focusing only on the 'artists' which have subjective value, rather than what might be interesting. This compares to the interview with Stella Benjamin, who lists the people she knew including Nancy Wynne Jones, who owned a house where Boots ran an art school (Stephens, 2018:272). It is not gossip when she says:

Yes/Well/She used to see Boots/Boots was at Trevaylor/With Nancy Wynne Jones/
Boots was Mary Redgrave/And she had the New Craftsman Shop with Janet Leach

(Benjamin, 2009)

Assuming that 'she used to see' is meant in the sense of having a non-platonic relationship with someone, then this statement has the opposite kind of effect, creating a queer narrative within the conversation of a bohemian place where sexuality was not in any way remarkable, and serves to reinforce the idea of a close knit, queer, bohemian community which was sexually permissive and socially liberal.

Pubs

Women's interviews mention the pub in St Ives as a space where people got together. The pub in St Ives is an important space for socialising where diverse people come together, and as such, is an important site for the performance of gendered identities. The public house in England in the postwar period had been in decline since the 1930s, and pubs needed to modernise to survive. The pub was still very much a gendered and working-class space, and in order to slow the number of closures that were happening, pubs needed to be more welcoming to women and couples, particularly from the middle-classes. The pub was a still a very masculine space, for a specific kind of modernist masculinity performed by men artists in the space of the pub, and how this performance of masculinity associated with fishermen perpetuated a place-myth of St Ives as a 'little fishing village', which in turn attracted tourists to the town. The pub was where artists, tourists and locals met, and provided a stage for the performance of bohemian identities, which contributed further to the characterisation of the St Ives place-myth.

The individual character of each of the pubs discussed reflects the nature of its clientele and its role in the town, which is defined by its interior decor. In the postwar period, pub interiors changed to reflect their clientele, or the clientele that pubs hoped to attract, namely tourists and women. In seeking to modernise, pubs used modern design to attract women by creating spaces that were more feminine. Pubs at this time either modernised, by redecorating and introducing appealing contemporary design to their

interiors, or became more 'codified', that is, introducing an aesthetic that defined the 'traditional' British pub, through a fake authenticity that often celebrated an idea of pre-industrial rural pastoralism, with horse brasses and plough shares hung on the wall, or in coastal towns, sailors knots and model ships (Kynaston, 2009:179). Even in 1946, George Orwell laments the fake traditionalism of the pub, with its 'sham roof-beams, ingle-nooks or plastic panels masquerading as oak'.

The pub in St Ives, The Sloop in particular, was the site for the performance of a particular kind of modernist masculinity. Its outside space became a site for the staging of different kinds of modern identities, where people came to perform ideas of bohemianism and where the tourists came to watch. Owing to its position on the harbour front, and perhaps also as the oldest of the pubs, The Sloop was known as the pub of the artists and fishermen, and as such was an important locus for the formation and dissemination of place-myths. The ideal of modernist masculinity had changed little from the early artist colonies, where the valorisation of the idea of the tragic-heroic fisherman is similar to the bourgeois construct of the gypsy-myth. The man artist identified with the fisherman's position on the edge of society, his liminal position between life and death, and his heroic status as lonely hunter who battles with nature and the sea. That idea of heroic fisherman and its equivocation with the heroic artist-man is key to the perpetuation of the place-myth of St Ives as a 'little fishing village' by artists who dress in fishermen's jumpers and visit the pub after a day's labour at the studio.

The pub is where artists, tourists and locals came together. Tourists came to The Sloop for the authentic experience of both bohemian artistic St Ives and the St Ives characterised as the 'little fishing village'. As a space that is neither home nor work, but a 'third' space, the pub provided the perfect space for tourists to find an authentic 'behind-the-scenes' experience of place, in which they could participate, as well as observe, with the tourist gaze. As well as being a space where artists, tourists and locals came together, the pub was also a space where these categories were rigorously defined and differentiated.

The idea of the fishermen as 'other' is clearly articulated in interviews, complicating the narrative of St Ives as a place where everyone 'got on'. The fisherman as an important symbol in the postwar construction of bohemian masculinity in St Ives was influenced more obviously by the fisherman than the idea of the 'gypsy', however, the idea of the fisherman is also a bourgeois cultural construct for the projection of similar ideas of a 'primitive' or premodern symbiotic relationship with 'nature' and the sea and landscape. The fisherman symbolises freedom from (urban, industrial) routine, working on natural time and natural rhythms, as well as physical strength, everyday peril and mortal danger. The 'fisherman', importantly, plays the same role as the gypsy in the bohemian imagination, and is also largely, if not completely, silent and voiceless. They are both characters in the bourgeois bohemian picturesque, to be looked at like the portraits on the wall of the pub. The fisherman's exotic mysteriousness comes from his Cornishness, othering him almost as much as the 'gypsy'.

Women did go to the pub in St Ives, but it is other spaces that they discuss more frequently and enthusiastically as places where they can produce their own sociability. The two walls outside The Sloop were also spaces for the staging of masculine identities. Doble's Wall was a site for such performance, where local men sat and talked, and told stories, nostalgic for people and times past. Opposite, what became known as the Beatnik Wall, was the site for the performance of modern identities, where young people who were not from the town lounged around and were conspicuously idle. The Beatnik Wall played an important role in the 'Beatnik War', which playwright John Antrobus satirised in a play performed on the wall, which was later demolished by the town council owing to rumours of young people 'fornicating' on it.

Parties

Chapter One outlines the slippery definitions of modernity and modernism, and draws on discussions of feminism and modernism primarily from literary modernist theory. Feminist and queer literary modernism has a much broader field of scholarship than art history, and it generally only covers the period up until the Second World War, it is highly relevant to discussions around women's creativity and independence. There is

also more scholarship around modernism's misogyny and masculinity, which is perhaps easier to expose through the structures that surround literature than art. The period referred to is generally that of between the wars. However, I argue that there is an identifiable development of ideas around feminine modernity and modernism that can be traced backwards from the postwar period that I am concerned with, and that this scholarship is essential to framing this development. I have attempted to trace the development of ideas of pre-war gendered modernisms identified by literary theorists, along with ideas of the early modernist artist-as-outsider or bohemian in the early art colonies, to identify a continuum of these ideas that develops postwar and models and defines a particular aspiration to living a modern, independent creative life for women. I am not attempting to define or redefine modernism in itself, but I have employed Griselda Pollock's definition of 'what modernist art history celebrates is a selective tradition that normalises, as the only modernism, a particular and gendered set of practices' as a useful tool with which to show how women have created their own modernisms (Pollock, 1988:50).

Modernism privileges vision over the other senses, and listening provides a way of articulating narratives that are not seen (Massey, 1994:232). By amplifying women's voices, I am attempting to subvert the focus from what is seen to what is heard, and in doing so, I hope to undermine modernism's masculine ocularity. If modernism is defined by a gendered set of practices, then the practice of modernism by women is not recognised as different than that of men.

I argue that to 'do' history in the ways that it has always been done is to repeat and reinforce the same patriarchal and heteronormative practices that exclude women from the historical narrative. Therefore, I have explored 'thinking queer' as historical practice, which is particularly relevant to working with complex oral histories that do not create a simple, straightforward narrative. The oral history archive contains interviews with women that contain gossip about others and queer narratives. Rather than avoiding engaging with this often difficult material and working around it, which is a form of excision or exclusion leading to the creation of absence in the historical narrative, I have chosen to use gossip as a powerful tool to unearth hidden and alternative narratives of

queer and feminine modernisms. Interviews in the archive refer to a range of queer identities, and 'thinking queer' is a way of exploring these complex identities without attempting to apply contemporary ideas of modern LGBTQ+ identity to historic narratives (Houlbrook, 2015). This allows a different way of thinking with oral history that embraces complex and potentially problematic material, such as unpleasant gossip about a third party, particularly where that person does not have their own voice in the archive. However, to ignore this material because of its complexity and applying a heteronormative form of ethics (that is, to not use material where the subject does not have their own voice in the archive, or the right to reply, to allow others to author that person's narrative, or the concern for 'outing' someone) is to perpetuate the absence of queer narratives in history. Therefore, I have chosen to embrace the complexities of gossip in the oral history archive as a powerful way of revealing new narratives by queering history, and using talk about a third party to write the narratives of women like Boots Redgrave, mentioned in several different interviews, and clearly an important figure in the community, who would otherwise be sidelined (Boyd, 2008).

Importantly, I have borrowed from queer and feminist theories of modernist literature the notion of the party as a work of art. The party was an important aspect of social life in St Ives after the Second World War, which is evident through the way that parties echo and resonate through the interviews in the archive. Parties were created by women in particular, and rather than seeing the role of hostess as an extension of the domestic, I have articulated the making of a party as a form of social design; a living sculpture that is a performance of important notions of community, which brings people together to shape and reinforce both individual and group identities (McLoughlin, 2013). Parties were a form of feminine cultural production of a temporal and spatial frame in which women could make and perform their own modernisms, by shaping and influencing community and social practice in a way that reflected specific counter-cultural agendas and modernist ideals.

Home

In Chapter Two, I hope to show how a postwar feminine rural imaginary emerges from interviews. This pastoral idyll is part of a wider agenda of countercultural middle-class radicalism that is assembled after the Second World War, shaped by a rejection of mass consumerism, politics of the New Left, support for socially liberal ideas on feminism and civil rights, support for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and an opposition to the Vietnam War, which is particular to these middle-class, art-school-educated women. The rural imaginary particular to the postwar period demonstrates an evolution in ideas that have been identified by modernist feminist literary scholars of the interwar period, which represented an escape for women from urban modernity and restrictive class and gender roles in search of autonomy, independence and self-actualisation. Options for women were limited, and St Ives promised the possibility of a like-minded community, a creative career and independence.

The rural imaginary that resonates through the archive is particular to women in the postwar period, and has a history that can be traced through ideas of early modernist Bohemians, pre-war art colonies, ideas of the 'spinster in Eden', and the cult of the 'gypsy' in the British imagination and the association with the 'gypsy' and the primitive landscape particular to Cornwall (Holt, 2003; Deen, 2018; Lyon, 2004; Bardi, 2006). Unlike the idea of the masculine bohemian artist, the idea of the feminine bohemian tends to be discussed in terms of woman as art or sex object. For women like Mamie Lewis, I argue that the idea of woman as (bourgeois mythical construct of) 'gypsy' is a powerful idea that signifies independence, creativity, autonomous femininity and rural alternative modernity that remains resolutely outside of societal expectations of women's roles.

Finally, central to this postwar idea of the rural imaginary is the idea of the 'little cottage', which is another refrain that echoes around the archive from women's stories. The 'little cottage' indicates a particular aesthetic agenda of the feminine rural imaginary, and represents a particular expression of middle-class radicalism that is associated also associated with an idea of the 'urban pastoral'. A rejection of and reaction to American fashions and mass consumerism of the immediate postwar period, the urban pastoral

was a semblance of 'conspicuous thrift', combining modern design with authentically rustic and peasant-style homewares, exemplified by the opening of Habitat in 1964. The idea of the 'little cottage' was both a repudiation of particular ideas of modernity and, for these women, an embracing of a particular lifestyle that resisted traditional ideas of feminine domesticity. This modern feminine domestic sought out the authenticity of a pastoral idyll of the 'little cottage' with whitewashed stone walls and no mod cons, simple homely spaces where women could shape their own identities in spaces that reflected their values and aspirations.

Work

The work of the artist in St Ives has very much been characterised as masculine and physical, aligned with an idea of working class labour, often appropriated by middle-class men artists. Men dressed in fishermen's jumpers and paint-flecked or dusty overalls, associating their work with a particularly heroic masculinity, keeping regular hours and going to the pub after work. Often, this conspicuous performance of labour obscured men artists' private incomes, or that despite their displays of 'ostentatious poverty' they relied on both the domestic work and often low-paid labour of their 'artistic wives' to pay the bills while they were mostly absent, despite a proliferation of glossy magazine articles that created an idea of middle-class domesticated masculinity (Stephens, 1997 & 2018).

Women who moved to St Ives often had art-school training, and came in search of a creative career, learning and developing new skills along the way. St Ives promised opportunities that would have been unavailable to women in towns and cities. Women were able to support themselves independently, and were also able to buy their own homes. Women who came to St Ives with artist husbands were often left alone with small children and expected to both work in the home and bring in money through low-paid casual work.

One of the key reasons that women chose to come to St Ives was the opportunity to participate in a community with shared ideals. In contrast to Stephens' argument that St Ives was insular and individualistic, I argue that the construction of the creative

community in St Ives after the Second World War was inherently political. The community was based on shared ideals that reflected a dismissal of mass consumerism, materialism and American modernity, that manifested as a passive resistance to capitalism. Support for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and later, the anti-Vietnam War movement, united the community's nebulous left-wing politics. An interest in self-sufficiency, and a simple way of life through a commitment to a kind of rural authenticity is linked also to participation in a community that was mutually beneficial to women. This rural modernity was reflected in women's work, where they produced high-quality, high-end craft products, which fitted in to the aesthetic of middle-class radicalism that they often shared with their customers. Far from being apolitical, party politics were also an important part of women's lives in St Ives. Along with Patrick Heron and Barbara Hepworth, women like Shirley Beck were actively labouring on behalf of the Labour Party, raising funds in charity work, and organising events that reflected the political concerns of her social and professional networks. Women's professional networks often also defined their social networks, and a sense of group identity came from shared values and ideas.

Social

The social lives of women in St Ives are largely defined by the experiences of women who went to parties and those who were not able to because they had children. Women moved to St Ives because there was a particular kind of community that existed, which promised participation that offered mutual benefits. Women (like Deen's spinster in Eden) had the opportunity to contribute as much as they could gain from their participation. In particular, interviews reveal that women in St Ives benefitted from a support network where women helped other women. This was key to making the creative community in St Ives a place in which women could live successful independent lives. Women were often isolated both geographically and from support networks and family, and a supportive community was essential. The community was built around shared ideas and expectations, and reflects a particular kind of left-wing middle-class radical politics and countercultural agenda, which operated on both an intellectual and

practical level. There is a particular kind of rhythm and social aesthetic that defines the social in St Ives, which like the rural imaginary discussed in Chapter Two, is defined by a particular bohemian habitus, which defines a particular set of social practices.

The social in St Ives is defined by a set of practices that creates a coherent, self-identifying group with shared values that sets itself apart from mainstream cultural formations. The party is a form of particular feminine social practice within Bourdieu's restricted field of cultural production, constructed in time and space to produce and reproduce a sense of identity within networks (Winning, 2013). The modernist party can be conceived of as a work of art, which articulates the ideal community that it seeks to represent, by producing and reproducing its values. These countercultural values represent an abrogation of capitalism and materialism, embracing the nebulous socialism of the New Left, and united by support for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and opposition to Vietnam War.

Women in St Ives participated in producing the creative community not only by producing parties, but also by creating social spaces in which they could create and maintain feminine professional and social support networks. The Penwith Gallery was not only a space in which private views and jazz evenings happened, but was also a space where women could take their young children and have a coffee and a chat with like-minded people.

Women in the archive describe parties in St Ives as being made up of groups of people that share similar values and ideals, and exclude 'outsiders', as reflecting and circulating particular ideas that create a cohesive sense of group identity. The party as a work of art was often situated in the space of the gallery, such as exhibition openings. The party therefore was a literal work of art - the performance of community as a living sculpture that moved between static works of art in the gallery space, creating an interchange between art and people (McLoughlin, 2013). Barbara Hepworth hosted parties at the Palais de Danse, where she bought a space dedicated to social practice and replaced dancers with sculptures that stand in for people. When she hosted parties at the Palais, then the space was transformed, and artworks became party guests and party guests became art works (Hunt, 2009).

Hepworth

The final chapter summarises the arguments set out in the thesis by discussing Barbara Hepworth. Despite her career as arguably the most internationally successful British modernist sculptor, gossip persists around Hepworth's life. Spread through unauthorised biographies, gallery talks, magazine articles and exhibition tours that obsess over her ability as a wife and mother, insidious gossip is repeated and undermines her legacy through misogynistic personal criticism. The rumours and unpleasant gossip about Hepworth continue to circulate through local stories in spite of her carefully controlled image. These stories have created a mythical narrative that continues to circulate through informal channels, in a way that would never happen with a successful man artist.

Although of a different generation, Hepworth had a great deal in common with the women in the archive. A single parent, she lived in her own 'little cottage' and shared feelings of social responsibility and a commitment to supporting her community. She shaped and defined the community by holding parties, supporting charitable and political causes, and by preventing the St Ives Borough Council from making the Island into a car park. Hepworth's legacy shaped St Ives literally and metaphorically, and this final chapter explores how her sense of the artist's social responsibility has left its trace on the town.

Conclusion

Gossip has the potential to create powerful narratives in history, which are passed on even in the context of museums and institutions. Gossip also has the potential to undermine the predominantly masculine history of modernism, drawing attention away from the romantic view of the bohemian man artist, by looking at the experiences of women in the community. It also has the potential to reveal an alternative, feminine modernism, the ways in which women performed their creative identities in intangible ways. Gossip has been little theorised in terms of oral history previously, and gossip has a great deal of potential to reveal much about the experience of women and queerness,

whose stories have been ignored or dismissed in the history of modernism. By looking at women's experiences of the art community in St Ives through their domestic, work, and social lives, as well as exploring the pub as a site for the performance of bohemian masculinity, I hope to show how women performed alternative modernisms that have been previously overlooked.

I also intend to show how gossip can reveal the previously marginalised or hidden stories of women in St Ives who not only participated in the art community, but who, through creative practice and social and professional networks, shaped and defined it.

Chapter One: ‘Every week somebody had a party’: The Party as a Work of Art and Alternative Feminine Modernisms

Introduction

What modernist art history celebrates is a selective tradition that normalises, as the only modernism, a particular and gendered set of practices.

(Pollock, 1988:50)

As art historian Griselda Pollock states, modernist art history refers to a specific set of gendered practices (1988:50) that tends to exclude women’s narratives. According to art historian and critical theorist Irit Rogoff, the existing study of modernism has resisted being more inclusive, as it follows a ‘singularly narrow and phallogocentric narrative structure’ (1996:63). In writing art histories that engage with modernism and feminism, there is a risk of focusing on deeply ingrained ideas of what ‘constitutes serious cultural endeavour’, that the feminist historiographer risks co-opting ‘small-scale narratives into the grand schemes of heroic activity or we allow them to slip into a kind of domesticated netherworld’ (Rogoff, 1996:59-60). In working with gossip, which as a ‘social cultural activity is relegated to the recesses of femininity or feminised masculinity and moralised as a reprehensible activity’, the historian, by legitimising gossip as a way of revealing important narratives in the study of women and modernism, ‘begins to undo the lofty categories in which we have all been working’, and acts to ‘destabilise the historiography of modernism’ (Rogoff, 1996:60).

As art historian Victoria Horne has articulated a chronology of the ‘shared desire’ of feminist art historians ‘to change art history’s fundamental structures rather than limitedly arguing for the inclusion of women artists within the established discipline’, I

do not need to repeat this work here (Horne, 2014:13). She argues that this 'disciplinary reflexivity is evidently essential [...] to feminist interventions', and it is this disciplinary reflexivity that has influenced this examination of modernism through gossip to address feminine subjectivities (Horne, 2014:13).

Defining both modernism and modernity is a slippery task, as there is little consensus on exactly what either means. Feminist literary theorist Rita Felski explores the complexity of defining what is modern:

Even the most cursory survey of the vast body of writing about the modern reveals a cacophony of different and often dissenting voices. Modernity arises out of a culture of 'stability, coherence, discipline and world-mastery'; alternatively it points to a 'discontinuous experience of time, space and causality as transitory, fleeting and fortuitous.' For some writers it is a 'culture of rupture', 'marked by historical relativism and ambiguity', for others it involves a 'rational, autonomous subject' and an 'absolutist, unitary conception of truth'. To be modern is to be on the side of progress, reason, and democracy or, by contrast to align oneself with 'disorder, despair and anarchy'. Indeed, to be modern is often paradoxically to be antimodern, to define oneself in values of one's own time.

(Felski, 1995:11)

The idea of modernity that emerges from the voices in the archive is one that is at once individual and personal, and yet part of a much wider shift towards greater freedom and independence for women. It is a 'culture of rupture', in the sense that a rupture between past and present is almost consciously created, as women often come to St Ives to leave their old lives behind, a 'historical relativism' that suggests a desire to live a different kind of life from those of their mothers' generation. At the same time, in order to pursue this desire to be modern is necessarily to be a 'rational, autonomous subject', demonstrated by women's ability to achieve their creative careers and financial independence; and to be a modern woman is also to be on the 'side of reason, progress and democracy', defined by the left-leaning politics of the women in the archive. Although there is a definite sense that these women are part of a much bigger modern movement towards women's emancipation more widely, there is also a sense of a domestic modernity on several levels. Modernity on a personal and individual level as a

single woman is being able to pay your own bills and own your own house, to be a single parent and have a career. Modernity is also to create a modern environment in the home, one that displays and reflects modern as well as modernist ideals. As discussed later, this is an aesthetic that is modern by being anti-modern, a domestic modernism that rejects mod cons for the good and simple life of scrubbed pine tables, whitewashed walls and vintage French kitchenware in the 'little cottage'.

So to define what is meant here by modernity and what it is to be modern, St Ives provides a place where women can be modern by expressing socialist democratic politics, achieving financial independence through a fulfilling creative career, often while being a single parent, and living in a modernist home that is modern through its disavowal of modernity.

Rehabilitating the Feminine

To argue against a concept of the feminine in modernist art history is to deny the vocabulary necessary to critically analyse gendered modernisms, and to fall into a patriarchal trap in which women's stories and voices are only further side-lined and silenced. That is not to deny the importance of recognising and problematising the notion of 'the feminine' as a social construct of 'passivity, submission and masochism which guarantee the subordination of women' (Parker, 1984:4), but to acknowledge the importance of that work in enabling me to be able to reclaim a sense of the feminine that articulates differentiated gendered experience. Rather than referring to 'the feminine' as a socially constructed externalised form of control, a set of specific behaviours and expectations that define a particular idea of 'woman', I want to attempt to here redefine an idea of what is feminine, moving closer to Parker's idea of 'lived femininity', which she defines as 'a lived identity for women either embraced or resisted' (1984:4). Here I am using feminine as of and relating to women, and of women's experience, in all the diverse, multiple, and inclusive potential meanings that are possible with this definition. I hope that this enables me here to use a definition of the feminine that expresses women's differentiated experience of modernism and modernity. By rejecting the notion of the 'feminine' entirely, we lose the ability to fully

engage in a discussion of women's unique experiences of modernism, and also with it the power to undermine narratives of masculine modernism with women's stories. Wolff describes this best, and I have chosen to keep this extended quote for that reason:

My apparently perverse desire to resurrect the concept of 'the feminine' is best explained, I think, by characterizing this earlier feminist work as informed by a politics of correction. That is, it has generally been motivated by the imperative to challenge and contest an androcentric universe, to correct its one-sided terms and assertions, to fill its gaps and to modify its canon. Without in any way intending to detract from the importance of this work, I want to propose the value of a different project here - what we might call a politics of interrogation. That is to say, if modernism is gendered male, rather than identifying bias, inserting women artists, countering an anti-patriarchal discourse (visual or critical) to the received tradition and its texts, we would do well to immerse ourselves instead in that dominant discourse in order to explore - and perhaps explode - its strategies and its contradictions. We should not be surprised to learn, then, that the 'masculinism' of modernism is by no means monolithic. Not only that - the 'feminine' now appears differently, not just as the discrete and fantasized 'Other' produced in ideology, but rather as an integral aspect of the complex identity and subjectivity of modern culture. In another context, Griselda Pollock has proposed something along these lines, arguing that 'feminism has needed to develop forms of analysis that can confront the difference of women as other than what is other to this masculine order while exposing the sexual politics of dominant discourses and institutions' (Pollock, 1996:71).

(Wolff, 2000:34)

If, as art historians, we avoid using the idea of the 'feminine' in art history because of its potentially derogatory connotations, then by limiting the possibility of articulating gendered experience we risk condemning women's narratives to minor parts of the modernist story, as tacked on to a masculine major narrative. Instead, using gossip as a tool to hear women's stories as discrete from men's, as an experience of feminine modernism, 'can confront the difference of women as other than what is other to this masculine order while exposing the sexual politics of dominant discourses and institutions' (Pollock, 1996:71). Like Wolff, I want to rehabilitate the idea of the feminine, rejecting the monolithic idea of femininity and instead choosing 'the feminine' as

defining and encompassing the plurality and inclusivity of women's experience. The feminine, used here, relates to both women and feminism.

Feminism and Modernism

The comparative lack of scholarship on feminism and modernism in art history has led me to borrow extensively from literary modernism. Literary modernism is usually defined more concisely by a specific time period, usually from around the turn of the twentieth century until the Second World War, whereas modernism in art tends to be messier and harder to contain. Early modernism in art generally coincides with this period, and has been useful in showing the development of ideas of bohemianism and the rural imaginary up until the Second World War, and has enabled me to show how the idea of the postwar bohemian artist has evolved from those pre-war ideals and desires of creative identities. Literary theory also has a much broader range of scholarship on feminism and modernism, in which I have found a framework for this thesis, again tracing the evolution of feminine modernisms that provide the foundations for the alternative modernisms of creative women after the Second World War.

Still, there is a paucity of literature on British modernism and women, and Felski laments that:

until recently, however, most writers on modernism have depicted it as a purely masculine affair, drawing on the rhetoric of Oedipal struggle and fraternal rivalry, on close readings of the works of great men and on the history of male avant-garde subcultures in order to convey the distinctive qualities of modernist consciousness.

(Felski, 2012:193-4)

My work here is an attempt to look more closely at what feminine modernisms might be in the context of the women of St Ives' creative community in the postwar period. Not only what feminine modernisms might be, but how and where they are enacted, and how they are articulated in memory. In doing so, I hope to echo Rogoff's claim that the:

concept of modernism gets undone not via parallel cultural heroism gendered female, but by a set of small-scale actions and receptions taking place at the margins: the pleasures of conversations, the conflicts of domesticity, the agony of

rejection and failed love, the spreading of rumours, the support systems that promote ideas and make activity in the public sphere feasible. All the low moments which invariably proceed and follow the high moments. All of the moments and all of the emotions which make up the fabric of modernism just as surely as the great drama of "the birth of Cubism" ever did.

(Rogoff, 1996:59)

I do not intend to valorise the work of a particular artist or their work, but examine ideas of feminine modernism and modernity through the frame of women's everyday lives. At the same time, in suggesting that my approach to history is feminist is another equally slippery statement, fraught with potential ambiguities and misunderstandings as there are multiple feminisms, and none of them have a fixed methodology. Horne and Tobin suggest that it is a strategic and political positioning, although they state that:

it is feasible to state that feminism is concerned with exposing the ideological and socially constituted powers that consistently (re)instate the feminine (and, particularly, female subjects) as inferior, and which thereby produce gendered hierarchies throughout every social space—crucially extending from this, intersectionally, are relations of race, class and sexuality. However, consensus on how to translate this theoretical understanding into historical practice is hard to reach.

(Horne & Tobin, 2014:107)

The approach to my historical practice is developed from this understanding of the need to be critically reflexive in the way I work with the oral history archive, in order not to simply reproduce the patriarchal heteronormative power structures of existing histories. Queering oral history is the approach that I have chosen to take, and Boyd's work on queer oral history is essential, as is historian Matt Houlbrook's ideas on thinking queer. In paying particular attention to gossip in the oral history archive that relates to the creative community of postwar St Ives, I argue that by revealing women's gendered narratives of modernity, this complicates and undermines the existing histories of masculine modernism. I am in no way attempting a complete survey of scholarship on modernism and feminism, but instead looking at theories on queering the history of modernism order to define an approach to working with oral histories that undermines

existing ways of 'doing history' that produce historical narratives that reproduce heteronormative, patriarchal historiographical structures. In addition to the valuable work on feminist historiographic theories of modernism by Rogoff and Pollock, I have necessarily drawn on the work of feminist modernist literary theorists and queer historians, owing to the lack of material that deals effectively with gender and modernism in relation to art and social practice in the postwar period in Britain. By focusing on these areas of scholarship, I hope to articulate the development from early modernist ideas of bohemianism, through ideas of the interwar spinster and lesbian modernism, to postwar countercultural resistance to capitalist modernity, in order to trace a historical progression of the idea of the feminine rural imaginary. A feminine rural imaginary of the 1950s and 1960s (and arguably beyond) is articulated through the interviews with women in the archive, and demonstrates a disavowal of urban modernity, a desire for independence, and to live within a particular kind of creative community that although distinct from the pastoral ideals of prewar generations, certainly shares common features and ideas.

Modernism, Modernity and Women

There is a comprehensible sense of progression from early modernism to postwar modernity in the expression of the ways in which women wanted to live, from the ideal home in the 'little cottage', to using their art school education to develop creative careers, and how they chose to socialise. I argue that this set of practices are recognisably modern and gendered, and can be traced from an identifiable trajectory from the beginning of the twentieth century, that is underwritten by shifting notions of bohemianism. I will also show how listening to and attempting to 'theorise gossip, hearsay and rumours', has the potential to create a 'radical model of postmodern knowledge' with which to read and write 'gendered historical narratives' (Rogoff, 1996:65). Furthermore, in bringing gossip into the practice of history, this is a queering of culture, where 'we not only distrust the false immutable coherence of master narratives but also perhaps the false, immutable coherence of our identities as subjects and tellers of those narratives' (Rogoff, 1996:65). And, as Rogoff points out:

gossip as a form of social cultural activity is relegated to the recesses of femininity or feminised masculinity and moralised as a reprehensible activity. It is interesting to note that social scientists to theorise or analyse gossip rely primarily on interviews with women and with gay men. There is some tacit understanding here that "men of the world", men busy making the world in their own form, do not gossip, that gossip is for those "who have nothing better to do".

(Rogoff, 1996:61)

In this spirit, I have chosen here to amplify the voices of women rather than identifying and discussing gossip between men in the archive (which does exist). I have included a small amount of material from men where it is relevant to a particular argument.

The act of listening is in itself radical. I have chosen to privilege careful listening over the reading of transcriptions, not only because it undermines the masculine modernist privileging of the visual over other senses, but as an act of care for the materiality of the archive and for the women who have donated their time and their stories. Transcription is a form of authorship in which meaning is not only fixed but lost, and content and context can be changed resulting in words that are often distorted and misunderstood. I do not pretend to be a silent or neutral observer here, I am aware that I am authoring stories and narratives.

As masculine modernism has historically privileged the visual over other senses, I have deliberately privileged the practice of listening, against the detachment of the male modernist gaze that works to objectify and deny the materiality of the (female) body (Massey, 1994:232). Moreover, this privileging of the visual to create 'master narratives' is essential to the critique of masculine modernism in the gendered production of space and social relations (Massey, 1994:233). Above all, listening articulates narratives that would otherwise remain unheard and unseen.

Radical Craft, Women's Communities and 'Lost Modernisms'

One of the narratives that has not been well-articulated is the story of women's pedagogical networks in craft. Craft theorist and historian Tanya Harrod argues that far from being monolithic, modernism should be reconsidered to rediscover 'lost

modernisms', as modernism in fine art cannot be discussed in isolation, without also discussing the craft and design which occur simultaneously alongside it (2002). She suggests that craft made by women and based on hand processes constitutes a lost modernism, sidelined both because it is craft, and because it is performed by women (Harrod, 2002). The quietly radical communities formed and performed by women with social connections based around craft making and its pedagogies are intrinsically modernist, and should be recognised as such. Feminist craft historian Cheryl Buckley also argues that women's creative work, particularly the design and decoration of pots, is part of a patriarchal hierarchical structure where the applied arts are inferior to fine art, and therefore more suited to women as inferior to men. Women, she argues, are constrained creatively only to do work to which they are considered 'biologically suited', as they lack the creative 'genius' attributed to men (Buckley, 1990).

Craft is less concerned with notions of individual genius and masculine modernism, and is more suited to ideas of community and collectivism. Community is central to women's desire to move to St Ives, the idea of meeting like-minded people is a refrain that is repeated by women across the archive, bringing them together. For many women, this desire to find a collective of other women was not only ideological, but practical.

Motivated by the hope of being a part of a community with shared ideals, women also hoped to develop their creative careers through knowledge and skill sharing, but also find companionship and support as single women, often with children. Jenni Sorkin, in her book *Live Form: Women, Ceramics, and Community* (2016), argues that despite its marginalisation in the history of postwar art, ceramics is radical, and is 'embedded in a discourse of experimentation with materials, tactility, and performance', and importantly, 'its formal concerns resonate as a parallel medium to avant-garde movements of the 1950s and 1960s' (Sorkin, 2016:2). She situates ceramics as a 'socially engaged artistic practice that integrates aesthetic concerns with pedagogy and affective discourses' (Sorkin, 2016:2). Ceramics is not just a way of making, but a way of life. This, I argue, connects the concerns and experiences of women craft practitioners in the United States with those in St Ives in the same period, demonstrating that women's desire for a quietly radical alternative way of living supported by ceramics and craft

practice was a not an isolated phenomenon. Sorkin describes this shift in focus from inward to outward, from the object to the social that happened within women's pedagogical networks in the 1950s as 'an embrace of community engagement, personal enrichment, and social participation', without which the 'collectivity in artistic practice that flourished during the 1970s could not have occurred.' She argues that their 'relentless experimentation has gone largely unnoticed because they produced not from inside, but beside and alongside, other modernist practices' (Sorkin, 2016: 245) Women's craft has remained unrecognised because 'art world feminism bypassed craft as a pedagogical framework, instead selectively appropriating its skill and materiality into explicitly feminist narratives' (Sorkin, 2016:245).

Importantly, in the women's craft networks of St Ives and in the United States, and undoubtedly of other communities, 'what many achieved was self-sufficiency: a living wage, a modest artistic career, and the respect of one's peers' (Sorkin, 2016:245).

Modernism and Masculinity

Modernist literature scholar Katherine Mullin (2006) argues that modernism, particularly that linked to Marinetti, Futurism and fascism before the First World War, is constructed as essentially reactionary and anti-feminine as a rejection of perceived Victorian femininity (2006:136-137). Marinetti's aggressive misogyny formed part of a larger ideology and despite recent developments in feminist scholarship, modernism continues to be gendered male, with a 'powerful masculinist and misogynist current within the trajectory of modernism' according to Andreas Huyssen (2006:137).

According to Mullin, Huyssen identifies that 'an important aspect of this ideology gendered modernist high culture as masculine, as opposed to a feminized mass culture' (2006:137). This rejection of mass culture was particularly evident in the countercultural movements that followed the Second World War in Britain, and this resistance to both capitalism and materialism can be seen as a progression from the ideology of a generation before (Faulkner, 2008:411-12). Equally, if 'postwar trauma was crucial to the foundation of modernism(2006:138)', then it is arguable that although the post-Second World War generation did not experience trench warfare, the experience of urban

bombing and its aftermath made the experience of domestic trauma much more common. The aftermath of the Second World War and the devastation of Britain's cities certainly provided the motivation for young people to want to leave bombed-out urban landscapes for a simpler, pastoral idyll. Most of the women in the archive were children during the war, and though it is not discussed, Mamie Lewis's experience during the war was central to her decision to move to St Ives and become a painter. She married and joined the Women's Land Army after her husband was posted to Singapore. However, after a series of traumatic disasters, including accidentally setting a tray of chicks on fire, she left. Finding her place in St Ives, and her husband unwilling to come with her after the war ended, she left her marriage to pursue her idea of the rural imaginary (Lewis, 2009).

Queer Modernities

If historians continue to 'do' history in the way that it has always been done, this will continue to reproduce histories that are heteronormative, colonial and patriarchal. 'Queering' history, by using methods that have been developed and pioneered by queer historians as a way of uncovering hidden histories, is a way of revealing and subverting the dominant power structures that shape historical narratives. In particular, I would argue that using gossip, and listening to rumours and hearsay, is a productive way of queering existing narratives and revealing hidden meanings in the creative community. Gossip complicates historical narratives, and, like Rogoff, I have no intention of attempting to 'cleanse gossip of its negative associations (of distinctly feminised communicative activity) and turn it into an acceptable cultural artefact' (Rogoff, 1996:59). It is the complex and messy nature of gossip that makes it such a potent tool for the exploration of social relations. If the existing historiography of St Ives is dominated by the formal, official, masculine modernist history, then gossip provides the informal, unofficial feminine narrative that serves to pervert and subvert the dominant narrative. It is also gossip that persists to undermine the histories of women. The unofficial and decontextualised ahistorical narratives that circulate through gallery talks and tours persist in shifting focus from women's creative careers to their personal lives in a way

that simply does not exist for men artists. For example, the question of Barbara Hepworth's maternal ability continues to be asked in these contexts, where questioning Ben Nicholson's parenting over his painting is not. So gossip is already a mostly unacknowledged pervasive influence on art history, as Rogoff maintains:

In trying to substantiate and narrate the lives of women artists, collaborators and household members within the unconventional menages of Bohemia, we keep coming across persistent rumours speculating on illicit love affairs and illegitimate children and domestic arrangements, none of which can be substantiated. Their presence speaks of the investment we have in the imaginary concepts of Bohemia as linked to radically innovative art and to heroic artistic agents.

(Rogoff, 1996:59)

Therefore, acknowledging the influence that gossip already has on history, as well as the potential that it has to change narratives, is 'to open the discourse of gossip as radical knowledge' (Rogoff, 1996:59). Gossip reveals both misogyny within community and antipathy towards women, as well as gendered double standards, but also reveals support networks between women whilst also revealing the way in which gossip is used to police women's behaviour within a group or community to reinforce a particular set of beliefs or moral codes.

Associated as it is with women and gay men, gossip is particularly well suited to provide a counter-narrative to the masculine heteronormative history of St Ives. Historian Matt Houlbrook quotes Sharon Marcus in defining why thinking queer might be important to the historian:

I think queer in order 'to ask what social formations swim into focus once we abandon the preconception of strict divisions between men and women, homosexuality and heterosexuality, same-sex bonds and those of family and marriage'.

(Houlbrook, 2015:159)

This is particularly important in exploring the stories from the archive that are in this thesis. For example, not only it is pertinent not to attempt to use contemporary frameworks to look at identity and behaviours within these social networks, but it is important to recognise that it is impossible to impose modern labels or ideas of gender and sexuality on the relationships observed in the past. I am, here, avoiding categorising historic identities into binary modern definitions of homo/heterosexual or non-normative gender or sexuality. I am analysing women's stories who, in one way or another, have rejected or ended up outside of these preconceptions that Marcus observes. In particular, there are particular characters, like Boots Redgrave who exists across the archive as a spectre who haunts multiple narratives owing to the part she plays as a kind of fairy godmother to the creative community. She does not have her own voice, and like Janet Leach too, she is only articulated through the voices of other women. Her sexuality is never defined, and to avoid forcing on her a particular identity, queer is, I argue, both an ethical and apposite way of discussing her relationships and role within the community. Without the possibility of 'thinking queer', complex identities that do not fit into binary definitions risk being ignored because they do not fit a straightforward narrative. This, in turn, creates an absence and an erasure of queer histories because historians would often rather leave out material that is difficult than address it head on. Queer, argues Houlbrook, can only be defined by what it is not, and is:

by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence. Queer then, demarcates not a positivity but a *positionality vis-à-vis the normative*.

(Houlbrook, 2015:159)

The history of bohemianism in modern art also benefits from queer thinking, in order to articulate ideas around both the performance of gender and sexuality. Artists' identification with outsiders and others, from the persistent influence of the early modernist construct of the gypsy myth, and the later construct of the fisherman, are not only linked to countercultural ideas of Bohemians and beatniks rejecting urban

modernity and materialism, but are also powerfully gendered and sexualised figures. The gypsy myth is closely associated with seduction, androgyny and ambiguous but feminised 'oriental' sexuality and sensuality, and although I argue that for women this bourgeois construct represents a rejection of social gender norms that allows freedom to explore gender and sexual identity, and for early modernist men artists the idea of the gypsy allows both an exploration of a hypersexualised masculinity and a sensual femininity. The hypermasculine fisherman of the postwar period represents a move from this mystical and sexually ambiguous sensuality, to a masculinity that, like formalist abstraction, resists any possibility of depth or meaning below the surface.

In the postwar period, although the gypsy myth was less obviously prevalent among women's performance of gender, there is still a notable visual aesthetic to the transgression of gender norms, which was also suggestive of ambiguous sexual identities. For example, the long, full, peasant-style skirt references a bohemian bourgeois idea of Eastern European 'gypsiness', while the bluestocking remains as a derogatory (nineteenth-century) term used for an intellectual woman, who has 'unsexed herself' and transgressed gender norms by erasing her femininity through her education (Jordan, 1999:89), and the beatnik woman obscures her femininity and embraces androgyny by wearing scruffy jeans. Women in the creative community, even as artists, cannot avoid being objectified because of their gender or sexuality, despite their attempts to subvert the male gaze. This queering of identity does, however, serve as a resistance to, and signals a rejection of, the male gaze and patriarchy.

Gossip and hearsay in oral history is important, as queer practices in oral history are key to not creating absences through erasure by failing to engage with 'difficult' material that raises ethical issues. The heteronormative application of ethics to oral histories which might seem perfectly reasonable, for example not discussing gossip or unfounded and unprovable stories about a third person in an interview, raise different issues for queer histories. In attempting not to 'out' someone, or by respecting their privacy, these queer histories are often completely ignored, because of their messiness and potential to complicate narratives. Not ignoring complex and messy narratives that emerge as gossip in the archive, and choosing to focus on 'difficult' material, can reveal

a great deal about gendered identities and social practices in bohemian creative communities.

The moment we embark on the task of locating the 'real' biographical individual we are doomed to failure; the moment we attempt to isolate the 'sexuality' of past actors we reiterate inappropriate restrictive binaries. Far better to explore the possibilities of a critical historical practice that accepts 'an irreducible dimension of opacity' and considers the particular forms, practices and processes that animated their mobilities and which generate new ways of thinking about interwar Britain. This is what I mean by thinking queer.

(Houlbrook, 2015:159)

Although I am unavoidably caught up in the business of searching for the 'biographical individual', in order to 'think queer' around oral histories, and avoid these kinds of 'restrictive binaries', queer oral historian Nan Alamilla Boyd has much to offer in her critical reading of other queer oral historians' work (Houlbrook, 2015:159). According to Boyd, queer theory challenges a transhistorical and cross-cultural interpretation of history that conflates same-sex behaviour with the ipso facto existence of sexual identities (Boyd, 2008: 179). She highlights, in a similar way to Houlbrook, how talking about sexual identities constructs them according to specific social and cultural norms, and it is impossible for researchers relying on the 'voices of historical actors' to narrate the past without using modern language with which to define historical identities (Boyd, 2008:179-80). Boyd refers to John Howard's work on men who had sex with men in Southern America after the Second World War, where he struggled to find subjects who did not identify as gay, which was a particular issue in researching interracial same-sex sexuality (Boyd, 2008:185). In the ethics of standard oral-history practice, the historian would hesitate in allowing an individual to author the identity of another who was not able to articulate their own self within the archive, or be given the right to reply. Indeed, I acknowledge my role as author here, but only inasmuch as I am authoring possibilities, not people. Certainly, standard oral history might call for the anonymisation of a third party outed by an individual in an interview. However, in the histories of non-heteronormative sexuality, not using real names is another form of silencing that leads

to the historical erasure of narratives that do not conform to simple binaries (Boyd, 2008:183). Like gossip in the oral history archive, if the historian chooses to ignore those parts of the narrative that are complicated and difficult, they are creating a historical absence in failing to address those parts of the story that might be uncomfortable or unpleasant. By amplifying rather than quieting these often problematic narratives, I am choosing to commit to making them audible, queer or not, as a way of countering the historical erasure that exists in the histories of women, people of colour, LGBTQ people and people with disabilities.

Howard's way of avoiding these issues was to use a method of listening to what he referred to as 'twice told stories', or what might be also referred to as gossip or hearsay (Howard in Boyd, 2008:185). He argues that 'whose stories get told and how they get told are a function of power' and is persuasive when he states that 'the age-old squelching of our words and desire can be replicated over time when we adhere to ill-suited and unbending standards of historical methodology' (Howard in Boyd, 2008:185). He therefore challenges the historian to 'read the silence' in the history of same sex desire', because in not challenging the heteronormative and patriarchal in dominant historical methodologies, the historian tends to access and privilege the spoken (or written) over the unspoken (or unwritten)' (Howard in Boyd, 2008:186). As such, Boyd calls for a different approach:

Queer historians must assume the presence of queer desire despite the silence. Howard's method enables previously silent voices to emerge by privileging the same-sex experiences of those who do not fall within the confines of modern sexual identities. It is not that their voices are silent, but that their experiences are often vilified as cowardly or unintelligible within the limits of comprehensible speech. By using a different method, Howard uncovers new actors and new social worlds that are shaped by sexuality, but he also identifies the limits of a method that privileges the historical agency of those who claim a gay or lesbian identity.

(Boyd, 2008:186)

It is this method to which I have referred in looking at issues of women's identities as third parties across the oral history archive. Both Janet Leach and Boots Redgrave are

important members of the community who exist in the archive only as articulated by others. To ignore these women who haunt the archive with both their presence and absence, would be to create another form of silencing and erasure. I argue that listening to this gossip, and amplifying it rather than ignoring it, is the only way of articulating these identities.

Gossip also has a powerful potential to undermine dominant discourses of male modernist heroism, revealing abandonment of wives and children, extremes of poverty, hidden addiction and mental health issues, or other, more generalised misogyny in attitudes to women, like Terry Frost's insistence on flirting creepily with young women (Beck, 2009).

The Party as a Work of Art

If gossip is to be heard, it will be overheard at the party. Personal or professional, local or national, kind or mean and bitchy, gossip is part of the exchange of knowledge and ideas that make up the social discourse of the party. The party can be read as an important locus for not only the exchange of ideas, but also exploring ideas of self in relation to community (McLoughlin, 2013:2). The act of throwing (perhaps not inconsequentially like the act of making a pot), a party is a creative act particularly associated with women (McLoughlin, 2013:4). Literary modernist Kate McLoughlin highlights Virginia Woolf's description of Clarissa Dalloway's creative skills in the art of giving a party:

Clarissa's hurt is that of the insulted artist, her art-form that of the living sculpture or installation, inspired by her sense of people's separateness and her wish to bring them together: 'anyhow, it was her gift. Nothing else had she of the slightest importance; could not think, write, even play the piano.' In the latter work, the same sense of anguished protectiveness towards her artistic creation is evident in Mrs Ramsay's reaction when her dinner-party is in danger of foundering on a guest's awkwardness: Party-going, as has been suggested, is as much an art-form as party-giving.

(McLoughlin, 2013:4-5)

The party is a performance, a living sculpture, an opportunity for (self) promotion and to 'give or go to a party is to signify information about wealth, class and status, to participate in a complex nexus of manufacture, commodification and advertising' (McLoughlin, 2013:6). The party, suggests McLoughlin, is rich in potential meaning:

'Reading' a party yields a barrage of information about social position, means, leisure-time and gender roles; this semantic proliferation explains attempts at (excessive) control on the part of the symposiarch, whether in real life or in text.

(McLoughlin, 2013:4-6)

If 'the party as a work-of-art leads to the idea of the work-of-art as a party' then this opens up a number of possibilities for reading not only the actual parties in St Ives, but also for the reading of the oral history archive itself (McLoughlin, 2013:7). If the party is an artwork, (Hepworth Chapter 6), where people come together and perform the idea of community, then I argue that the oral history archive itself can be read as a party. The oral history archive brings together people from the creative community in St Ives, whose stories are interwoven, gossip which comes from different angles and crosses over like overheard snippets of conversation, listening in, eavesdropping. The interaction between guests' stories can be read as social discourse, the same stories resonating between guests. Gossip flows like drink: stories are vital social currency, and form the basis for the making and breaking of social and professional networks. Social discourses can be read across the archive, with interviewees referring to each other as if across the room, and absent guests are third parties that do not have their own voice in the archive but are present through the voices of others. As such, if modernist 'parties were of huge significance in extending patronage, forging creative alliances (and *mésalliances*), sparking productive disagreements and enabling knowledge transfer', then the archive-as-party represents all of these qualities (McLoughlin, 2013:9). The party was not just a pace of conviviality, frivolity and harmonious enjoyment, however,

and the limitations and frustrations that existed within the community were often distilled and concentrated into the space of the party. As McLoughlin asserts:

The party-host/party-guest relationship exemplifies par excellence Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the 'field of restricted production' in which is achieved 'the truly cultural recognition accorded by the peer group whose members are both privileged clients and competitors'.

(McLoughlin, 2013:9)

This is particularly relevant for the party in St Ives, which would often have been an exhibition opening, situated in the space of the gallery, blurring the edges between professional and social, where guests were artists, patrons, and curators. As a small creative community, most parties had similar guest lists, providing a distinctive and exclusive coterie.

That the party is frequently hosted within the space of the gallery underlines the idea of the party as a work of art. The party becomes an installation or performance where the guests mingle with the art works, creating exchanges that move in and out, circulating ideas and opinions, reinforcing friendships and enmities. The party-as-artwork reproduces the community-as-artwork, the careful curation of shared relationships, creativity, ideas and politics. The party is where gossip is passed on and overheard, listened-in to, eavesdropped on, as an important way of defining guests at a party as members of a community with shared knowledge and experience, where gossip helps to define and regulate social norms and community values. The party-as-artwork *par excellence* is arguably Hepworth's party at the Palais de Danse, where after it was bought as an extra storage space, sculptures replaced dancers, until art and life converged and dancers joined sculptures (explored in Chapter Six).

In literary theorist Joanne Winning's essay on lesbian modernism, she argues that Bourdieu's theories on cultural production, where a group has its 'own criteria for the evaluation of its products, thus achieving the truly cultural recognition accorded by the peer group whose members are both privileged clients and competitors', are particularly relevant to framing her discussion on the modernist party (Bourdieu in

Winning, 2013:127). If modernism is a field of restricted production, with 'its protean attempts at innovation, its experimental emphasis on form and its reliance on network and coterie culture for dissemination', as Winning suggests, then 'the art objects produced for consumption – objects defined as “pure”, “abstract” and “esoteric” – rely upon an audience – a peer group – capable, intellectually and critically, of their consumption' (Winning, 2013:127-128). She argues that Bourdieu's idea of the 'legitimising authority' might be extended beyond 'literary circles, critical circles, salons, and small groups surrounding a famous author or associating with a publisher, a review or a literary or artistic magazine' (Bourdieu in Winning, 2013:127-128) to include the modernist party. Winning writes specifically about the literary salons held by Natalie Barney, Adrienne Monnier, and Sylvia Beach in interwar Paris as a form of lesbian modernist creative production, asserting the party's potential as a 'generative site in which intellectual and literary authority is defined and disseminated and in which cultural influence and intervention take place' (Winning, 2013:128).

As such, the party in St Ives has a similar function. Although not exclusively female or produced as a reaction to women's cultural exclusion from the mainstream in the way that Barney's salons were, the parties mentioned in the archive are notable for being hosted by women, and as such they play an important role in shaping and defining the creative community in St Ives (Winning, 2013:133). Barbara Hepworth's parties at the Palais de Danse, Janet Leach's parties at the pottery, and the social events organised by Cathy Watkins at the Penwith Gallery are all mentioned specifically in the archive. There is no mention of parties hosted by men. These are larger social events, along with the annual arts ball, that are entirely or largely the creative production of women. Other parties are more general, and fall into the category of smaller, intimate social events that happen in people's homes, or the informal gatherings or after-parties that occur after the pubs close.

It is women in St Ives who create the 'spatial and temporal frame' in which the party can happen (Winning, 2013:133). Hepworth, Leach and Watkins were able to use the spaces that they owned or were custodians of to create social gatherings that reflected a

collective sense of what the creative community was, or hoped to be. As Winning again quotes Bourdieu:

the reason why submission to the collective rhythms is so rigorously demanded is that the temporal forms or the spatial structures structure not only the group's representation of the world but the group itself, which orders itself in accordance with this representation.

(Bourdieu in Winning, 2013:128)

As such, the party becomes a spatial/temporal frame in which cultural authority is asserted, and ideas of group and individual identity are defined (Winning, 2013:128). Perhaps even more obviously than in the literary salon, in the space of the gallery guests are surrounded by art works that are visibly and constantly present, generating, reflecting, and reinforcing notions of modernism and artistic authority. It is through the party that the sense of the creative community is produced, where the 'submission to collective rhythms' enables the individual to understand themselves in relation to the group, and for the group to understand itself in relation to the world. As such, Hepworth, Leach and Watkins exerted their influence and asserted their authority on modernism through their hosting of parties. Moreover, this provided them with the possibility to both 'participate within and actively control cultural production' (Winning, 2013:142). Like Winning's description of Monnier's bookshop as 'almost house' through its production of social space, the Penwith Gallery in particular also functions as a meeting place for women. The gallery is a space not only for parties, but is also a community space, where people can come for a coffee and a chat during the day (Winning, 2013:142). Women in St Ives were essential to creating and producing social space in St Ives that articulated and defined modernism.

Bohemians

The idea of the bohemian is an interesting and contested term in post-war St Ives. Later, 'bohemian' becomes synonymous with 'beatnik', and then later, 'hippie'. The bohemian can be theorised in several ways. Historian Mary Gluck's (2000) ideas on the cultural

roots of the bohemian artist, argues that although the existing theories of bohemianism set out by Benjamin, Siegel and Bourdieu et al. are important, they do not properly contextualise or historicise the idea of the bohemian, or connect the spaces and places of bohemianism with bohemianism's aesthetic function (Gluck, 2000). This draws attention to the lack of historically specific theorisation of bohemianism as a spatial construct, which I argue is essential to its definition in the history of St Ives, in which notions of the bohemian change and develop over time both locally and nationally, and also suggest an examination of the relationship between the bohemian as social type, which 'appears detached from, if not in direct conflict with, the bohemian as aesthetic creator'. Elizabeth Wilson describes the difference between the new bohemia of Britain in the 1950s:

[..] Bohemia was still flourishing in the 1950s, even if bohemians now had a series of new names - existentialists, beats, the counterculture - and traditional bohemians passed on the baton of genius damned to the heroes, male and female, of the new youth cultures. Marianne Faithfull emulated William Burroughs just as Patti Smith modelled herself on Rimbaud. Wild and often 'deviant' sexuality was a feature of the countercultural life.

(Wilson, 2000:67)

This conflict between social bohemian and artistic bohemian, played out on the cobbles of the quay outside the Sloop, is a conflict between ideas of artistic authenticity, and the authenticity of place.

Tourism theory, specifically MacCannell's (2011) development of Erving Goffman's notions of the 'backstage' to produce a theory of 'staged authenticity' is highly relevant to the staging of notions of bohemianism and creativity via the 'back regions' of the artists' studio and the public house. The search for an authentic tourist experience can also be read as a search for an authentic artistic experience. This staging of artistic identities, the 'authentic artist' off-duty in the pub, is important to the idea of St Ives. Although the pub is essentially a front region, according to MacCannell's theory, when we examine the notion of a fictional backstage where there are 'intentional

arrangements, including architecture and decor for tourists', we see the pub, in the display of 'authentic artworks', and a tourist clientele attracted by the cache of drinking in an authentic St Ives pub, who become actors playing the part of bohemians, despite being tourists themselves. MacCannell points to San Francisco in the sixties and seventies, where hippies of Haight Ashbury themselves became a tourist attraction. The case is much the same in St Ives, where the bohemian/beatnik/artists become a spectacle to be looked at by tourists. This is another complex issue of spectacle and gaze that requires further problematisation. As we see in the quote from Val Baker, the 'tourist' is stereotyped as working class, possibly from the north of England, and is presumed to be fascinated by the spectacle of bohemianism. This reveals the complexity not only in the idea of a beatnik identity, but the presumption of a press that is both patronising and 'in' on the joke, at the expense of both a lower class of northern English tourist and a middle-class creative tourist.

Rather than Hebdige's argument that subcultural styles are always brought back to the mainstream either through fashion or being defined as deviant, Gluck argues that both of these processes are happening simultaneously (Gluck, 2000). Bohemians became 'objects of satire in mainstream journals, which both exaggerated their eccentricity and deflated their seriousness' (Gluck, 2000:54). In St Ives, the bohemian, later beatnik, is satirised in the mainstream media, framing the bohemian/beatnik identity as 'not-artist', as a fake and pretender, but also as anomaly, often framed by opposing gender norms. For example, the 1951 Giles cartoon depicts women in trousers, with hair cut short, drinking pints, and men wearing cravats and drinking wine, in opposition to the obvious masculinity of the fishermen. This phoney artist-tourist is further set in opposition to 'genuine artists' in a cartoon by Giles ten years later in 1961, where the Sloop is depicted displaying signs saying 'no beatniks allowed', but makes distinctions for a well-dressed man with a nude model. Cedric Rogers' *How to Spot a Beatnik* again reveals this idea of authentic artist beatnik in opposition to phoney pretender, with an entire book on defining types that one might spot in St Ives. The joke here is that although many of the characters depicted look like beatniks, they are in fact fakes, being variously journalists or aristocrats, but certainly not 'real' bohemians. Whilst Berlin describes the

crowd outside the Sloop as 'a company of drinkers stood outside in their gay clothes, chattering like tropical birds in a sparkling tree of conversation', Caddick describes the beatniks as the 'hitch-hiking hordes of Art's hangers-on [...]' coming to St Ives 'like the locusts, to waste the substance of endeavour, and turn St Ives into the Clapham Junction of the beatnik world', and the beatniks are said to smell, although they can't have smelt half as bad as some of the local fishermen who drank in the Sloop. Caddick describes it as 'purgatory to be in the same bar as them; to sit near them is hell. Why do these men spread like impetigo on the face of Cornwall? The women are worse. The Beat-Wench-Stench would knock [anyone] for six', emphasising the beatnik's difference through their transgressions of gender and sexual heteronormativity (Caddick, 1956). In a 1951 Giles cartoon, the depiction of the hypermasculine local fishermen, wearing fishing gear and drinking pints of beer from tankards, sets the scene for the othering of the artist/bohemian tourists. The area outside the Sloop serves as a stage, from which we observe the both the performance of the fishermen, but also of the spectators. The spectators, who are also actors in this performance of place, are the artist-tourists, the Chelsea arts-club set. We understand their otherness by the cartoonist's drawing them as stereotypes transgressing heteronormative gender roles; a stocky woman with short hair wears jeans and drinks beer, next to a thin-faced, cravat-wearing man. These figures are not laughing at the fishermen's drunkenness. They stand on the side-lines, watching and being watched. In fact, they are pushed towards the edge of the frame - the fishermen's raucous singing takes up space within the picture frame; the Chelsea set are physically contained. The difference in class is obvious, between the working fishermen and the bourgeois bohemian artists. The fishermen represent honest drunkenness, the known; the artists an aloof middle class. We are intended to laugh with the fishermen, and to laugh at the artists.

Caddick emphasises not only the conspicuous idleness of the beatniks, but also their visible difference. As in the Giles cartoon, the beatniks are transgressing traditional gender norms through their 'flamboyant' dress, with women wearing jeans and men with long hair. The subtext to this androgyny and gender confusion is the queerness of modernity and the threat of transgressive sexuality, with which the idea of the bohemian

artist is associated. The smell of the beatniks is something that is also emphasised, popularised perhaps by the media reports where beatniks are refused entry to cafes and pubs, even to wash their hands (BBC, 1960).

The contradictions around the idea of the bohemian as artistic creator are described here, where the role of the artist is differentiated from the notion of the idle bohemian.

This is exemplified by Tony Shiels' argument in the letters page of the St Ives Times & Echo, that 'real' artists who might look like beatniks or bohemians have children, and mortgages to pay, and should have a badge to prove it (Shiels, St Ives Times & Echo, 1961). This emphasises that a 'real' or 'authentic' artist in St Ives is male, heterosexual, and does not subscribe to ideas of transgressive behaviour associated with artistic bohemianism. This is also reflected in interviews with local people like hairdresser Mary Dobbin, who says:

When I say you didn't take any notice/Not that you could care less/It wasn't that attitude/Just that they were an artist /And that man's a butcher/You know what I mean

(Dobbin, 2009)

This again differentiates local artists from the idea of the bohemian, to some extent, comparing artists to the ordinary working man.

The myth of the bohemian represents an imaginary solution to the problem of art in industrial Western societies. It seeks to resolve the role of art as both inside and outside commerce and consumption, and to reconcile the economic uncertainty of the artistic calling with ideas of the artist's genius and superiority.

(Wilson, 2000: 3)

For St Ives people, the artists who lived and worked in the town were both bohemian, and 'part of the scene'. Words like 'bohemian' and 'flamboyant' are used repeatedly to describe the incomers.

Bohemians, Beatniks, Bluestockings

Berlin's notorious roman a clef on the community of St Ives, published in 1961 and quickly withdrawn following Caddick's accusations of libel, was not republished until 2009. It is a creative work that is essentially gossip, and has continued to attract readers because of their attraction to its bitchy portrayals of the characters in St Ives' art scene. Berlin's thinly disguised characterisation of Caddick as 'Eldred Haddock' is deeply unflattering, and he describes The Sloop, and Haddock thus:

As I came to the Poop on that sunny day a company of drinkers stood outside in their gay clothes, chattering like tropical birds in a sparkling tree of conversation. Towering above them there was Eldred Haddock, the scorpion-tailed poet who so often stung himself with his own wit. His great eyes stood out like those of Norway haddock when first caught. This was one of his drinking bouts in which, to commemorate his cure from dipsomania, he indulged every three months. He was reciting some doggrel written the day before - perhaps the year before; it was very funny. Everyone who had not heard him already was laughing and buying him pints of beer, which he drank like Gargantua. He was in truth a defeated giant who was pegged down by his many children and his pale little wife who loved the pain of his delinquency when he smashed up the home and and broke furniture and and crocks and strode over those granite hills to get roaring drunk, only to be brought low again.

(Berlin, 1961(2009):27)

This emphasises domesticity as the enemy of creativity, with Haddock 'pegged down' by his wife and family. Berlin's *The Dark Monarch*, provides a brilliant counterpoint to Arthur Caddick's unpublished book about St Ives in the same style, which Caddick wrote ten years earlier. *Two Can Sleep Cheaper*, set in Trebogus on Sea, Caddick viewed as so libellous that he'd have to sue himself for defamation of character. Haddock, or Caddick, was a St Ives poet, renowned for his booming poetry performed in the pubs of St Ives, from which he was also frequently banned. He wrote many odes to the drinking establishments of St Ives and the surrounding areas, even producing a guide to 100 pubs in Cornwall, as well as his countless poems. His vitriol for the beatniks is evidenced in his posthumously published autobiography, where he describes the 'hitch-hiking hordes of Art's hangers-on [...] coming to St Ives 'like the locusts, to waste the

substance of endeavour, and turn St Ives into the Clapham Junction of the beatnik world'. (Caddick, 2006)

The performance of bohemian identities is evident in this newspaper report from the Western Morning News from the late 1950s:

Outside the Sloop the regulars sun themselves obtrusively, beer mugs balanced precariously on the hallowed cobblestones; beards, corduroy, coloured shirts, leather belts, duffles, the full standard uniform, with numbers somewhat swollen by the annual pilgrimage from Chelsea and Fulham Road. Here and there a long-haired girl not wearing jeans catches the eye: but closer inspection reveals regulation blue stockings and positively hand woven skirt. Gossip whirls round faster than the cigarette smoke, reputations are expertly torn to shreds, usually while their owners are conveniently absent. Most of the established artists are working hard at their studios, but these will serve as superficial representatives, enough at least to give the gogglers from outer space their annual thrill. "Eh, lad, this place is proper Bohemyan - never seen so many bloomin' artists all at once."

(Val Baker, 1959:)

The idea of the bohemian is an interesting and term in post-war St Ives. Later, 'bohemian' becomes synonymous with 'beatnik'. The bohemian can be theorised in several ways. Mary Gluck's in her work on the cultural roots of the bohemian artist, argues that although the theories of bohemianism set out by Benjamin, Siegel and Bourdieu et al are important, they 'fail to provide a fully contextualised, historically specific image of the bohemian'. (2000:28) Gluck further argues that there are no 'convincing empirical or theoretical connections between the social spaces that the bohemian occupies and the aesthetic function that he fulfilled in modern society'. (Gluck, 2000:8) This draws attention to the lack of historically specific spatial theorisation of bohemianism, connecting the bohemian to place and time. The nebulous nature of the notion of bohemianism creates a fluidity of meaning that changes and develops from generation to generation, and yet there are consistent elements of the idea of the bohemian that reflect its origins in the early part of the nineteenth century. However, the idea of the bohemian changes after the Second World War:

Definitions of the bohemian change and develop over time and are both universal and specific to place. The distinction between the 'aesthetic' beatnik and the 'intellectual' beatnik of St Ives is an example of the relationship between the bohemian as social type, which 'appears detached from, if not in direct conflict with, the bohemian as aesthetic creator'. (Gluck, 2000:5) One is committed to a particular kind of bohemian way of life as a philosophical worldview, and the other appears to be bohemian through the consumption of specific cultural products. This division is repeated, with the idea of the 'respectable' artist, who might look like a beatnik, but is married with a mortgage, and therefore the authentically real artist is not really bohemian at all.

One of the endearing things about St. Ives has been its comparative freedom from snobbishness and its tolerance of people who do not conform to the average middle class Englishman's notions of respectability. The inns of St. Ives and especially The Sloop, must surely have been for at least half a century among the least class-conscious meeting places in the world. It is sad therefore that a deplorable and thoroughly untypical incident should have occurred recently at The Sloop to provide publicans with further justification for their growing disinclination to serve with drink young men and women who look as though they might qualify for the title 'beatnik', [...] whose understandable aspirations towards freedom from the restraints imposed by antiquated conventions lead them to grow beards, wear their hair long and dress sloppy.

(St Ives Times & Echo, 1961)

This conflict between the social bohemian and artistic bohemian, played out on the cobbles of the quay outside the Sloop, is a conflict between ideas of artistic authenticity, and the authenticity of place. MacCannell's (1999) development of Erving Goffman's notions of the 'backstage' to produce a theory of 'staged authenticity' is highly relevant to the staging of notions of bohemianism and creativity via the 'back regions' of the artists' studio and the public house. The search for an authentic tourist experience can also be read as a search for an authentic artistic experience. This staging of the artistic identities, where the 'authentic artist' can be viewed off duty in the pub, is essential to the idea of St Ives. Although the pub is essentially a front region, according to MacCannell's theory, when we examine the notion of a fictional backstage where there are 'intentional arrangements, including architecture and decor for tourists', we see that

the pub, in the display of 'authentic artworks', and a tourist clientele attracted by the cache of drinking in an authentic St Ives pub, who become actors playing the part of bohemians, despite being tourists themselves. (MacCannell, 1999:18) MacCannell points to San Francisco in the sixties and seventies, where hippies of Haight Ashbury themselves became a tourist attraction. The case is much the same in St Ives, where the bohemian/beatnik/artists become a spectacle to be looked at by tourists. This is another complex issue of spectacle and gaze that requires further problematisation. As we see in the quote from Val Baker, the 'tourist' is stereotyped as working class, possibly from the north of England, and is presumed to be fascinated by the spectacle of bohemianism. This reveals the complexity not only in the idea of a beatnik identity, but the presumption of a press that is both patronising and 'in' on the joke, at the expense of both a lower class of northern English tourist and a middle class creative tourist.

Modern Masculinities

Where some public houses moved towards modernisation after the Second World War, others entrenched themselves resolutely in a kind of rustic traditionalism that was also absolutely modern. This kind of pub decorated itself in displays of nostalgia, with objects representing kinds of work and ways of life that had been in decline before the turn of the century. For some pubs this might be agricultural paraphernalia such as plough shares, horse brasses or other tools hung about the place. For pubs in coastal towns like St Ives, objects displaying a proud but lost maritime heritage were common. Despite the necessity of modernisation, the surroundings in the pub were reassuringly anti-modern, providing a space that was a cosy refuge from modernity and modern anxieties.

It is not only the decor that self-consciously enacts this nostalgia for lost industry. As the quote from *Honey* says, 'you'll find artists of all shapes and sizes in rough fishermen's jumpers taking a quiet drink'. (1960) The relationship between the (male) artist and (mythic) fisherman is specific to the creation of St Ives' place-myth. Lübbren defines the bourgeois myth of fisherfolk as constructed through images, articles and tourist guides as distinct from the romantic notion of the peasant. Both were 'imagined to be poorer

and hard-working, and to be preserving traditional ways of life and intact social relationships', however, fisherfolk were defined by specific qualities from their relationship to the sea, which Lübbren summarises as 'heroic struggle in the face of constant danger'. (Lübbren 2002: 29) Fishermen were hunters 'further ennobled by the glow of mortal danger cast over their profession, and by the implied heroism arising from the struggle against it'. (Lübbren 2002: 29) Furthermore, Lübbren argues, fishermen were located in the liminal and exotic space of 'the deep waters', a space that was 'loaded with connotations of danger and death - very different to the familiar idylls of the countryside conjured up by the image of peasants'. (Lübbren 2002: 29) Importantly, Lübbren argues that, much like the myth of the gypsy (discussed in Chapter Two), the image of the fisherman is not about actual fisherfolk, but a construct around bourgeois anxiety around modernity that is a resistance to, and rejection of, urban modernity. (Lübbren 2002: 29) As such, artists were participating in the construction of a seaside modernity, materially and ideologically, and functioned as an important part of change in places like St Ives from fishing town to tourist resort. (Lübbren 2002: 31) Much later than Lübbren's discussion on the rise of the seaside resort from the disappearance of the traditional fishing industry, the myth of the fisherman prevails. The male artists that frequent The Sloop were not only attracted to the traditional fisherman's jumper as workwear, but also to the romantic association of the construct of the fisherman with tragedy, danger and death. (Lübbren 2002: 39) The sea has a special place in the British (English) imagination as a scene of struggle and heroism, where men overcome both foreign enemies and savage nature, (Lübbren 2002: 41-42) and like the myth of the gypsy, the fisherfolk live a semi-nomadic life on the edge of both land and society, (Lübbren 2002: 42) and are associated with smugglers and pirates through stereotypes and cliches perpetuated by artists through place myths. (Lübbren 2002: 44). As tourism replaced fishing, and modernity locates itself on the periphery, the images of fisherfolk 'acted as nostalgic continuity of traditional ways of living for bourgeois, urban audiences', and provided a reassuring antidote to the anxiety of modern urban living. (Lübbren 2002: 52) This is much the same for the tourists and artists of the postwar period. The idea of the heroic fisherman persists, is vital to the identity of the male

modern artist in St Ives, and is enacted in *The Sloop* by both actual fishermen and artists posing in fishermen's jumpers.

The Sloop is the best known, and the oldest pub in St Ives. Occupying a position on the Wharf, overlooking the harbour, with the sun on the front all day, it was the place historically, to see and be seen. Described by Caddick as the oldest pub in St Ives, the idea of the pub as a place of performance is central to the idea of the bohemian as tourist attraction, where:

St Ives has become what Paris might have been, if French painters hadn't painted quite so well, and this inn is now the bistro of its Quartier Latin. Everybody arrives at the Sloop. They come to stare at the geniuses, who haven't arrived and the geniuses love it. If nobody looks at your paintings, well, it helps a bit if someone looks at you.

(Caddick, 1956)

Caddick expresses here, with his characteristic acerbic wit, St Ives' position as a fashionable centre for post-war cultural tourism. He emphasises the Sloop as site of spectacle, the centre of St Ives artistic scene, where those he witheringly describes as 'geniuses' come, as place to look and be looked at. The Sloop is the site where St Ives' place-myths are produced, reproduced and enacted. By comparing it to the Quartier Latin in Paris, he emphasises both the pub as the centre of bohemian St Ives, and its pretentiousness.

The Sloop is a site for the performance of artistic identities, and also a site of conflict for identities to be played out:

As in any artistic community, controversies rage in St Ives, coming to a head in the selection committees of the two main galleries, running in a strong current through everyday conversation, and frequently leaking into the more universal talk of the mixed company that gathers night after night in the Sloop - a harbour pub where there is still something of the communal atmosphere of a fishing village.

(The Studio, 1959)

This quote from an article on St Ives emphasises The Sloop as a site for the performance of artistic identities, and art as essentially combative and competitive, where arguments

over exhibitions are the biggest concern, and by noting that the company in the pub is 'mixed', or not exclusively male, it also emphasises the masculinity of the artistic community. It reflects also the commentary that runs through the archive around levels of drinking, with people gathering 'night after night', yet this in this conspicuous display of bohemianism the place-myth of St Ives as fishing village still remains.

In the public bar, surrounded by other marine objects of decoration such as life preservers and framed sailor's knots, Hyman Segal's pictures of local fishermen are hung on the walls. Segal came to St Ives following service in North Africa in WWII, a human rights campaigner, vocal anti-racist, president of the west Cornwall RSPCA, portraitist and re-homer of cats from his studio. His portraits replaced the Harry Rountree cartoons of the immediate post war years, described by Sven Berlin in *The Dark Monarch*, as 'a cock sparrow of a little man from New Zealand', his cartoons 'covered the walls like a second crowd; vicious drawings disguised as good humour.' (Berlin, 2009)

The Sloop, according to Val Baker, is

[..] undoubtably one of the main reasons for its fame has been its association with artists. There are stories that in the past more than one painting was presented to 'clear the slate'! Some were no doubt purchased, others given, particularly in the days of Billy Baragwanath, one of the most famous landlords of the pre-Great War era. Many older painters have been hung at the Sloop and in more recent times there was assembled a famous series of caricatures of local residents, executed by Harry Rountree who lived for many years in St Ives until his death. Visitors will find these amusing portraits hanging around the walls of the main bar (on the right as you enter) there is also a comparatively modern cartoon by Giles of the Daily Express, commemorating a visit. A few years ago the Sloop turned over the walls of one of its rear rooms to the local artist, Hyman Segal, several of whose portraits and cat drawings may now be seen there.

(Val Baker, 1959)

This association with art and artists invites comparisons between the pub and the art gallery. Despite retaining its traditional decor, The Sloop is absolutely modern, providing both a retreat from urban modernity and a space for the display of contemporary art. It is a bohemian tourist attraction, the place to be seen, and is yet also,

by displaying its portraits of local 'characters', a site of nostalgia, representing a way of life that had long been in decline.

The Sloop Inn is the age-old haunt of fishermen. It is the only waterside tavern in St Ives, and the last waterside tavern on this coast. After this, the land down to Cape Cornwall has no refuge for sailors, only menace. The lifeboat is launched from the nearby slipway, and this splendid old inn has found its real history in the lives and deaths, by drowning, of Cornish seafarers, in the gales rising in no time at all to a roaring crescendo of fury, in the wind-lashed waves that crash against the harbour walls. However, nothing lasts, and five centuries of sea-faring history are now passed into memory. The Sloop is now voyaging through the deep waters of cultural fame. Phil Rogers sometimes comes and stands on your side of the bar. Stand is a word of posture. He is a well-known, well-liked landlord, perched imperturbably between pilchards and Picassos. He looks at both with the smile of a dreamer and the eyes of a hawk, and somehow, manages to make two worlds happy.

(Caddick, 1956)

Caddick summarises both the romanticism and and tragedy of the maritime industry, and the nostalgia for the seafaring tradition that has been lost, which is represented by The Sloop. In describing the landlord as perched between 'pilchards and Picassos' he describes perfectly The Sloop's as a space which celebrates tradition, is nostalgic for the past, and is also absolutely modern. The original cartoon's by Harry Rountree were sold or taken away by a succeeding landlord, but were replaced by portraits by Hyman Segal. The originals were again sold, so the portraits that hang in the pub now are copies. The portraits of local fishermen surround the drinker in the bar, and the artist in his fisherman's jumper and a hard day of manual labour, can stand and drink with them, and identify with their quiet heroism. For the man artist in St Ives, identifying with the fisherman myth is much like artists such as Augustus John identifying with the myth of the gypsy. (Holt, 2003) In appropriating the notion of the fisherman, the artist is setting himself apart and on the edge, occupying a peripheral space that rejects modern urban modernity in exchange for a mythical idea of a pre-modern way of living that is the embodiment of simplicity and authenticity. Sven Berlin cultivates both the image of the gypsy myth and an association with the fishermen. He wears a neckerchief and cap that fits an idea of the bourgeois construction of the gypsy, and in his peripatetic lifestyle

identifies himself with a nomadic freedom that finds its apogee in living in a gypsy caravan, like Mamie Lewis. (It is very possibly the same gypsy caravan, but I have found no evidence to confirm this.) The pub is a great social leveller, and if the artist drinks with the fisherman, he can imagine himself to be on the same level as him. There is an imagined fraternity between them, they occupy a liminal space, on the edge of society between the sea and the land, and together they resist the encroaching tide of the frivolity of modern urban life. This identification with the fisherman lends authenticity to the artist as a working man, emphasising the physicality of painting and sculpture, enhanced by his wearing of the fisherman's jumper as work wear. It emphasises his separation from urban bourgeois modern middle-class life, and sets him apart from the concerns of everyday life, and suggests that for the artist too, work is a daily struggle that transcends to trivial needs of the ordinary person. The construction of this romanticised relationship between man and sea and man and art echoes that of the romantic bourgeois construction of the idea of the gypsy, however, arguably the myth of the fisherman is more suited to this later modernist period. The 'gypsy' retains an idea of mystery and mystique, an association with magic and the occult, and a femininity in his masculinity, whereas the idea of the fisherman is one of the simple and authentic masculinity of the hunter. Like the modernist art work, the fisherman refuses analysis. His struggle is on the surface, a heroic battle between nature and man, which happens off stage, and only evidenced by his physical strength and lack of emotion. The fisherman is rarely mentioned by name in *St Ives*, and exists only as a stereotype of modernist masculinity. Like the drawings in *The Sloop*, they are silent and nameless.

Artists, Tourists and Locals

There is a comprehensible community, not just artists, but all people, writers and musicians, and all the local people, who have such a natural perception that they're warm neighbours and friends and one can understand how communities have to integrate. Here, I feel that we're closely bound together for good or bad, or in bad weather or foul weather, and that the Cornish people here have this amazing instinct as indeed they did in the industrial north, about the shapes of things, how to do them, how to be independent, and be free and explore, and appreciative, and I think it does make a tremendous difference to one's outlook.

(Hepworth, 1968)

I want to describe here the often contradictory nature of the relationships between artists, tourists and locals. Barbara Hepworth subtly defines here the creative community as separate from the 'local people', othering the Cornish as a people who have 'natural perception' and 'amazing instinct'. At the same time, she describes a coherent community and the need to integrate. This dissonance is repeated frequently in the archive interviews, by both local St Ives-born people, and the artist-incomers. The relationship between 'the artists' and 'the locals' is an issue that is raised in all of the interviews in the archive, as the creative community is one of the things that has defined St Ives for over a hundred years, and as such is part of its identity. The friction that this relationship causes is also part of how St Ives sees itself.

People's perceptions of particular places are indebted to what could be called 'place-myths'. Place-myths are conglomerates of place-images, that is, stereotypes of and clichés associated with particular locations, in circulation within a society. Place-myths need not necessarily be faithful to the actual realities of a site; they derive their durability, spread and impact from repetition and widespread dissemination. [...] It would appear that visual images may constitute crucial components of a place-myth. An image can evoke a particular association or category of place in a powerful synecdochical and iconic way. That is, the image can conjure up an entire site, region and structure of experience by representing only a fragment, and the image can also address viewer directly by virtue of a mimetic visual language. [...] Arguably the power of signs shifts from the objects themselves to their circulation in representations, their fuller consumption dominated by their sign value, their value invested in anticipation.

(Lübbren and Crouch, 2003:4-8)

The pub continues to provide the stage for many of these interactions. The Sloop in particular features as a meeting point, where the artists and fishermen, specifically, congregate and engage with each other.

As far as/Um/Getting to know the locals/So to speak/The actual Cornish/Like I said to you earlier/And we um/We used to gather in The Sloop/Um/Stella Benjamin and myself/And Bryan Ingham/And Leslie Ilsley/In the early days/And Friday night was

booze-up night/You know/Let your hair down/Very much so/And all the fish/All the old/All the fishermen used to be there/On one side of the pub/They probably thought we were awful/But amusing as well/I suppose/They sort of/We used to be/They used to be/A bit of argy bargy/We'd take the Mickey out of each other quite a lot/But also quite a lot of/Talking to the fishermen/Especially a bloke called Willie somebody/Who had a/A sweet man/Who had a little dog/I think at one stage/His little dog fell off/Fell off of Haines Walk there/And I think he had to/Sort of/Go and rescue it/Anyway/That's aside/But yes/That's where we sort of communicated

(Ritman and Eyre, 2009)

Contradictions and cognitive dissonance in oral interviews are common in the local/artist relations discussion. Often, interviewees both speak of the unity of the community. Lieka Ritman, an Australian artist who arrived in St Ives via Ibiza in the early 1980s and worked as a picture framer, describes going to the Sloop with artists and friends Stella Benjamin, Leonard Ilsley, and Lesley Bingham. In her jolly Australian accent, she explains that pubs were a meeting place for artists and locals, and there was often singing in both the Union on Fore Street and in the Sloop. 'Friday night was booze night', and an opportunity to 'let your hair down' (Ritman, 2008). She goes on to explain that the fishermen would be on one side of the pub (the public bar), and they would be on the other (the lounge bar). There is a literal division of space. When asked what they thought of 'you' ('you', it is probably safe to assume, meaning 'the artists'), she laughingly replied, 'they probably thought we were awful!'. She adds that the 'fishermen' were also probably amused by them. In this Ritman conflates 'local' with fisherman. Whilst many were fishermen, the term is used in an indiscriminate way, othering the local, suggesting that all locals are also fishermen. (One 'local' who at this time was also a 'fisherman', was also a former Vogue photographer who came to St Ives in the 1960s and never left.) These encounters often included what Ritman describes as 'a bit of argy bargy', and 'taking the mickey'. The pub, she says, is where the artists communicated with the locals. The pub is a place of convergence for the town, where all people come to play. It is not, however, a place of confluence. It is a concentration of different people in one place, reflecting the social structures of St Ives. Barriers that exist in everyday life in the rest of the town's social structures remain, and are magnified by being brought together in the

space of the public house. As such, the pub becomes a site of conflict, a place where everyday grievances and community politics are acted out. The myth that locals and artists came together in the spaces of St Ives' inns is found repeatedly. Whilst 'artists' and 'locals' drink in the same establishments, and there is evidence of general bonhomie when they did, it is also a space in which their separation is both reinforced, and where the binary of 'artist' and 'local' and disrupted entirely. However, in order to understand these social relationships performed in the space of the pub, as a microcosm of the town's wider society, it's necessary to question exactly what defines a 'local', what makes an 'artist' and to take apart the myth of everyone getting on. Peter Lanyon's son, Andrew, describes his father's relationship with 'local people':

There was a high level of interchange of ideas. And, of course, there were those who came from abroad, such as Gabo and Rothko. When my father had visitors, it was out of bounds for us to go near the room. He was shut in, talking away - we'd be outside fighting. You used to have that intellectual interchange quite a lot, though probably not so much in the pub. He would go out in the evening to play dominoes with the locals. But the thing was, being a local himself, and mixing with intellectuals as well as locals, he felt he couldn't really do anything that didn't have integrity, because he'd be questioned all the time by people in the pub about the stuff he was doing. He felt that whatever you made, you had to make it bloody well. So he was essentially a craftsman first - he mixed his own paint and was careful about what he used.

(Lanyon, 2006)

It is interesting to note the complexity and conflict within this interview statement.

'Locals' tend to not be as intellectual. Peter Lanyon is a 'local'. He mixes with 'locals and intellectuals'. This is an interesting paradox. Peter Lanyon is both 'local' and 'intellectual', but 'locals' and 'intellectuals' are defined here in separate categories. So 'local', in this case, could be described as being 'not intellectual'. There is a distinct sense of the othering of the local community, which is particularly evident in the space of the public house.

The asymmetric relationship between artist and local is noted by Stephens, who defines the artist-tourist-local as triangular. (Stephens, 1997) Discussing the ways in which artists identified with fishermen, (the hypermasculine, the honest, hard-working, the physical,

working against the landscape/seascape, against the elements, Stephens rightly identifies the relationship of artist-tourist-local:

The drawings are revealing in that they represent a point of intersection for the triangular relationship between artists, local residents and tourists. Whilst the figures in Segal's drawings are picturesque objects of the artists gaze, the artists join with the fisherman as similar objects of the tourists' gaze. The artist needs to obscure his own presence and activity to maintain the authenticity of his location in and identification with St Ives - a traditional fishing port. Thus these pictures help to construct a fictional image of the town in which fishing still dominates tourism and artistic production whilst, inevitably, also acting as signifiers of the artist colony as well.

(Stephens, 1996, 114-115)

While Stephens acknowledges the role of the artists in the construction of place myth, I argue that the man artist does not obscure 'his' artistic presence or activity in order to 'maintain the authenticity of his location'. (Stephens, 1996, 114-115) Instead, he contributes to place-myth through his performance of masculinity and his visible appropriation of the idea of the fisherman. St Ives' place-myth as fishing village was inextricably bound up with art and bohemianism by the postwar period, and by wearing fisherman's jumpers and beards, the man artist is simultaneously rejecting urban modernity and embracing an idea of St Ives constructed from place-myth, where the artist and fisherman blur into one. Although many artists in St Ives after the war were no longer producing images that celebrated an idea of pre-modern fishing industry, their performance of self as artist/fisherman/hero became part of the picturesque display of place-myth, where fisherman and artist meet at The Sloop and perform and perpetuate an idea of St Ives for the tourist gaze.

The attraction of St Ives for artists is its remoteness from modernity and its inaccessibility, creating a narrative of a place that had been recently discovered by artists, and is still yet to be touched by tourism. It reinforces the idea of St Ives as a recently discovered fishing village despite fishing having been in decline since the second half of the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

Modernism is frequently characterised as masculine, and its practice has been defined in such narrow terms that women have been excluded from the narrative of modernist art history. This is, in part, owing to the privileging of the visual in modernism, and I hope to show that by listening instead of looking, alternative feminine modernist practice emerges, in the form of the performance of community. The party provided an important locus for the exchange of ideas and the development of social practice for women in St Ives, and by hosting parties and other social events, women controlled, to some extent, the way in which the community was made.

The new bohemian of the 1950s embraced the idea of passive resistance to the mainstream of the new counterculture, and inspired by the Beats, searched for new experiences framed by deviant sexuality, drugs and freedom. Women rejected the restrictive gender norms of mainstream society and searched for alternative ways of forming relationships on their own terms. Artists, locals and tourists converged at the pub in St Ives, with artists and locals drinking together and sharing stories that often reinforced their differences more than it brought them together. Both artists and fishermen were a spectacle of place-myth for tourists, who came to experience St Ives either as a little fishing village or as a centre for bohemian modernity, or perhaps both. This division is reflected in the interviews with local women, who define the artists as different and bohemian, drawing attention to their difference primarily through the ways in which the artists dressed.

Chapter Two: 'Nice Little Place It Was': The Construction Of Domestic Spaces and The Feminine Rural Imaginary

Introduction: The Little Cottage and the Postwar Rural Imaginary

The true and the false may be found in abundance in St Ives, and sometimes, as in a dreamy montage, they bewilderingly overlap. The best food in town is served in a restaurant called the Outrigger, with a Polynesian decor and Hawaiian music on tape. There is a small factory in the upper Stennack said to be the headquarters of the world's largest cutters of ivory. Top pop guitarists swear by St Ives plectra. Peter Johnson, the proprietor of Comus Boutique, who has something of a reputation as a creator of beach hats, recently summed up the new spirit of St Ives in these words: 'People with oomph don't want to tart up some little mews house in London any more. They want to get up and go, and tart up a little cottage in St Ives. This is Chelsea by the sea'.

(Skene Catling, 1964)

By the time this article was published in the Weekend Telegraph magazine in 1964, St Ives had reached the height of its fashionability. If anything suggests that St Ives had reached its peak, it is an article published in a conservative newspaper supplement celebrating the bohemian nature of St Ives and its desirability for people with 'oomph' (and presumably money). This paragraph sums up the 'new spirit' of the town in a variety of forms of modernity to be consumed, with a restaurant that serves up an exotic idea of transatlantic surf culture, the suggestion of pop stars through plectra, and fashionable beach wear in exclusive boutiques. 'Chelsea by the sea' suggests all of the advantages of cosmopolitan city life, its bohemian coolness, fashionability, and creativity, and explains the desirability of a 'little cottage'. It encapsulates the arguments that I will set out in this chapter around the ways in which radical middle-class politics

became countercultural consumerism, and the aesthetics of modernity that represented this desirable lifestyle. Women who had the get-up and go to move to St Ives to find and participate in the creative community were looking for a way of life that was represented by the idea of the 'little cottage'. It was the little cottages of Downalong, and this modern, bohemian sense of place, that attracted women to St Ives. Many of them had lived in St Ives for some years before the Weekend Telegraph article was published, and through participated in making the community that created the idea of St Ives as bohemian utopia, through jazz evenings, rustic studio pottery and political activism. The little cottage represents a particular kind of aesthetic, with its lack of mod cons and whitewashed stone walls, of authentic simplicity, rustic peasant chic, and conspicuous thrift, and it is in these little cottages that women are able to begin to create their own, independent, creative identities. In this respect, this differs from urban modernisms and relates more to the kind of bohemian modernist tradition associated with the rural art colony, that seeks an idea of the rustic, primitive and pre-modern in landscape and identity (Holt, 2003).

The aesthetic of the 'little cottage' had also reached its peak in 1964. As design historian Ben Highmore explains, 'even in 1964 when Habitat opened its first shop it was clear that it wasn't simply inventing a look, a style ex nihilo (2016:111)'. It is no coincidence that the article about tarting up a 'little cottage' in St Ives appears at the same time that Habitat opens. This attraction to 'rural urbanism' (Highmore, 2016:111) is described by Fiona MacCarthy as 'an elaborate townsmen's code for country living'. The kinds of things that Habitat sells are, like the 'little cottage', 'fashionably basic' (MacCarthy, 1965 in Highmore, 2016:111). This fashion for rustic interiors:

wasn't specific to Habitat, it could be found in any number of boutique shops, and 'new' antique shops that were selling 'not just stripped pine' but a whole panoply of retro bric-à-brac: Piled high on the chests and dressers and plain scrubbed trestle tables there are stoneware kitchen crocks, apothecary jars, preserving pans, giant pestles and mortars, rural English china with pictures of cows paddling lugubriously in brooks. People lug them off to countrify their cottages in Fulham.

(Highmore, 2016:111)

And for some, countrifying their mews house in Chelsea or Fulham lacked the appeal of 'tarting' up a cottage in St Ives. The attraction to this rustic idyll was a reaction against the inauthenticity of the American domestic modern, with its big shiny style that was so fashionable in the 1950s. Habitat's style emphasised an idea of the 'natural', and hybrid styling that mixed old and new to create an 'urban pastoralism' that was perfectly expressed in the 'little cottage' in St Ives, where whitewashed stone walls combined with Troika pottery to create an idealised rural version of the urban pastoral. According to MacCarthy, Habitat's customers 'in any big city, on Saturdays, you find them, living like peasants, exchanging rustic jokes. [...] These are Conran people' (MacCarthy, 1965 in Highmore, 2016:112). The women in the archive had taken it one step further, and actually moved to St Ives to live like peasants. Their concept of the rural imaginary was expressed by taking the idea of the urban pastoral and transporting it to a rural construct of rural urbanism. In fact, they are often at the vanguard of both this aesthetic and this way of life, and their construct of the rural imaginary predates Habitat, which is exported to London to create the urban pastoral. However, the fantasy idyll of the 'little cottage' also worked to obscure the grinding poverty that came with living in one. Frequently, the 'little cottage' had few basic utilities, some without even running water (Benjamin, 2009). There is an element of masculine competitive poverty in the desire for a certain aesthetic ascetic lifestyle that conforms to the 'romantic stereotype' of the artist where poverty is fetishised (Stephens, 1997: 45). While Stephens has argued that this was a part of a retreat from modernity that sought out hardship as a marker of authenticity modelled on artist Alfred Wallis, I will show here that this poverty was part of a larger nebulous anti-capitalist politics that was widespread in the middle-class art-school educated of the postwar period (Stephens, 1997:45). Not only that, but this romantic poverty, whether through choice, or whether imposed upon them by husbands, had a very real impact on women's lives.

The sort of place that women wanted to live in when they came to St Ives was important. The dream of moving to St Ives related to a particular idea of St Ives, and the attraction is the same as for the visiting tourist. Most of the women in the archive had been tourists in

the town before making the decision to move permanently, and the things that had attracted them to the town as tourists, such as its bohemian little streets and fishermen cottages, were still the romantic pull to move to live there. Several women mention explicitly or implicitly their desire to live in Downalong, rather than the more bourgeois Upalong, with its less unique Victorian terraces and banks and shops.

Local women, on the other hand, often tell of their lack of regret at moving from Downalong, with its tiny streets and lack of parking. For them, selling the home occupied by their family for generations and moving to newer, bigger houses further out of town or the suburban bungalows of Carbis Bay is a kind of nostalgic break, a way of moving away from the site of loss. By leaving St Ives, the women are able to leave behind their sense of loss of community that is anchored in place by their memories, and go on to build new memories in new bungalows or council houses. The St Ives of their youth at some point ceased to exist for this generation of women, and there is often a lot of shame in the voices of some as they recount selling their properties to outsiders for them to become holiday homes. As one interviewee laments the changes in the town, 'we did it to ourselves. We sold them the houses' (Chris Care, 2009).

As the locals moved out, incomers moved in. Many of the women who moved to St Ives construct their histories in interviews by beginning with where they first lived when they moved to the area. From there, their interviews follow a linear, chronological narrative, moving from home to home, from one stage or period in life to the next. By situating themselves in space, they place themselves in time. The interviews made for Memory Bay often took place in women's homes, creating an atmosphere of intimate domesticity. Moreover, women are at home, talking about the homes in which they have lived, and using this history of domestic spaces to construct a life-story narrative. The chronology of dwelling-places provides insights into not only the histories of individual women through narratives of poverty and struggle, for instance, but also their links to other women in the community. As such, these links demonstrate rhythms of domestic movements and harmonies, a refrain that shifts and changes. What women perceived as their successes, moreover, were regularly associated with their ability to improve their living situation, by being able to buy property, moving on and moving up. Their

descriptions of their living spaces could also serve as a device to describe the darker, more difficult aspects of their lives: insanitary living conditions, crushing poverty, loneliness and abandonment by husbands.

Women who moved to St Ives frequently use domestic space to situate their memories, and in doing so, create a linear chronological narrative that moves from one property to the next, and describes a physical movement of time with each movement from place to place. The transition between one home and the next often denotes a break from one phase of life to another. Each anecdote often relates quite specifically to that living space.

It is important to recognise the ways that women use objects and space, both past and present, as a way of structuring their narratives. Anecdotes often refer to material objects present in the space of the interview, as a way of referring to the past. A photograph, or object of furniture that has made the journey from space to space with its owner. Descriptions of things and the homes in which they have lived are vital to these stories, not only as a way of building and ordering memories, but often as a way of expressing emotions or identity. For example, Ann Kelley describes complex layers of memory and emotion in describing her children in the house where her daughter subsequently lived:

After a stint in London/Yes/And I can't remember what date we came back to Bowling Green/Ah/Well it must have been/Um/Nathan was four/And Caroline was four months old/Or he was five and she was four months/Because I have a photograph of them/Upstairs /I'll show you later/With carpet that didn't fit/So it was sort of rolled up in front of this horrible old fireplace/There's a telly in the window on the floor/And he's/Nathan's playing with his dinky toys/And Caroline was lying in her baby grow or/something/In her nightie/Lying on her tummy/On the floor/And I took a picture of my daughter Caroline's children in exactly the same pose/When they were exactly the same age

(Kelley, 2009)

Ann locates her memories of the house through her creative practice, using the two photographs to frame and reframe the space of the house. The badly fitting carpet and

the television on the floor represent her unhappiness, which is reframed by the picture of her grandchildren.

The women whose stories I explore here can be divided into categories, which at times overlap and intersect. Their chronologies are different, both in terms of when they came to St Ives, and at which points in their lives they experience significant life events. My intention is not to reduce women's identities by defining them only by their marital, maternal or sexual status, however, these definitions are significant in women establishing their own independent identities. The women's stories can be divided into groups, with most women having moved to St Ives independently in search of personal and creative freedom. The others, Ann Kelley and Stella Benjamin, moved with husbands who were artists, in the very early years of their marriages, and whose relationships subsequently broke down. Shirley Beck arrives in St Ives in the 1960s as a single mother, and Mamie Lewis becomes a single mother after leaving her husband and moving to St Ives in the 1940s, while Stella Benjamin becomes a single parent after coming to St Ives with her husband. Ann Kelley moves to St Ives with her artist husband in the early 1960s, and it is not until much later that she leaves him in the 1970s, becoming a single parent who is then able to develop her own creative work and social life. Sheila Oliner's move comes much later in life, when she feels able to leave her husband once her children have grown up in the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, her desire for St Ives' particular rural imaginary is one that is shared by the other women.

Only Susan Lethbridge moves to St Ives as a young single woman in the early 1950s to start her own business, and although she later becomes a single parent when her marriage breaks down, this is less significant to her story as she has already established her creative identity independently, and she also has the support of her mother, Mabel. Notably, all the women, except for Ann, have been to art school or had creative training of some kind prior to moving to St Ives.

Through these women's stories, a particular vision of a postwar rural imaginary emerges. Bohemian St Ives offered women freedoms not afforded to them in the city, with cheap housing and creative job opportunities enabling them to support themselves and be economically independent. St Ives, with its potteries, studios and craft galleries,

provided more opportunities for creative (self) employment than urban areas, and casual, unskilled, part-time employment in the tourist industry was easily found. Women had significantly more opportunities to pursue the kind of career they wanted in St Ives, outside of the constraints of the city. Moreover, being an artist represented more than just financial and creative freedom for women. Being an artist, for women, was associated less with the idea of career success than with the social freedom and autonomy that came with being able to have a career that represented independence through self-realisation. Bohemian St Ives provided the stage for this transformation, where women were able to form their own identities and create their own stories. The rural imaginary that St Ives represents for women after the Second World War has roots that can be traced to the period following the First World War. Women were looking for a community in which they could participate in and contribute to, and which would support them in turn and provide an environment in which they could achieve autonomy and independence. Literary theorist Stella Deen writes about the 'spinster in Eden', who features in modernist literature written by women in the interwar period. The spinster in Eden is the single woman who moves between urban and rural, seeking to establish an independent identity and way of living and being in the world, and uses her education and experience to contribute to rebuilding the postwar community (Deen, 2018:135). Much like the spinster in Eden, the artist in St Ives' 'exemption from the marriage bar in the professions and her freedom from the responsibilities of marriage lead her to realise her talents outside the domestic realm, among her neighbours and in the civic sphere' (Deen, 2018:147). While many of the women discussed were caring for children, they were free to explore their creative identities, not only through work, but through organising and participating in the social life of the community. The idea of an escape from the city to the simplicity of the rural is one that is essentially modern (Deen, 2018; Lübbren, 2003; Holt, 2001). Importantly, Deen emphasises that the spinster in Eden novels represent an idea of community 'as a process of recognising those on the margins, not in order to assimilate them into a mainstream, but so as to set in motion an exchange of perspectives that results in the mutual humanisation of citizens' (Deen, 2018:137). This 'process of revision or retelling that results in what could

be called "the mutual humanisation of misfits"" represents the kinds of socialisation that is seen in St Ives in the postwar period, where parties and social occasions bring people together for the exchange of ideas and a sense of community identity (Deen, 2018:137). This idea of the feminine rural imaginary of the interwar spinster in Eden still has resonance much later in the post-Second World War period in the stories of women in St Ives. Women move to St Ives with a desire to participate in a community that they also play a part in shaping, the shared ideals of which are performed and produced through social activities and the everyday.

Often, women moved to St Ives after initially visiting on holiday. They were attracted to St Ives because of its feeling of cosmopolitan, bohemian utopianism and the possibilities it presented to have the individual freedom to create their own independent creative identities. The bourgeois myth of the 'gypsy' persisted in modernist culture from the turn of the century and represented a particular idea of escape, freedom and mobility for women, and with much of the creation of the myth of the 'gypsy' in British modernism was located in Cornwall before the Second World War, and contributed significantly to the idea of the rural imaginary that existed in the years following it. While there has been discussion of the early-modernist male artist's construction of 'gypsy' identity, there has been little exploration of the influence of 'gypsophila' on the performance of women's creative identities (Holt, 2003; Lyon, 2006). The female 'gypsy'/artist is usually an object of male desire rather than her own autonomous subject, and I argue here that the prewar modernist conception of the gypsy myth provides the framework for creative women in the postwar period to reject urban modernity, economics, class and gender roles, and embrace freedom that allows exploration of their independent creative and sexual selves. St Ives, and its deeply rooted cultural association with modernist ideas of primitivism, along with the convenience of an existing social and economic artistic infrastructure make it the ideal setting for escape. The idea of escape that the gypsy myth represented for women was a way of getting away from the limited possibilities of dull, uncreative jobs, marriages and expectations of modern urban femininity. This kind of bohemian construct represented freedom, mobility, and escape from the controls of class and gender. Like

the spinster in Eden, the idea of the gypsy imaginary contributes to a particular idea of a feminine rural imaginary that represents freedom, autonomy, and creativity. After the Second World War, this shifts and changes, but central to women's desires is the reconstruction of an independent, modern, self through their domestic space. Women chose to live in homes that reflected the bohemian identities to which they aspired. The phrase 'little cottage' or 'little place' becomes a repeated refrain in the archive, and is a metonym for stability and independence, suggesting a sense of cosy, contented domesticity. The 'little cottage' describes a particular kind of dwelling, usually the fisherman's cottage or converted net loft in Downalong, the area around the harbour, roughly between Porthmeor Beach, the Island, and the parish church end of Fore Street. The other end of town, with its late Victorian or Edwardian bourgeois villas and unromantic terraces, sometimes known as Upalong, lacked the same appeal kind of appeal. The smallness of the fisherman's cottage, with its wonky bits, low ceilings, thick whitewashed walls and cosy corners fitted a bohemian domestic imaginary that was attractive precisely because of its pre-modern primitivism. The lack of modern utilities, particularly in housing in more rural areas outside the town, rendered the experience of living in some of these 'little cottages' unchanged since before the Second World War, and in some cases, very little changed in a hundred years. The desire to live in such dwellings, with their authenticity through links to notions of hardworking, honest peasants and fisherfolk is closely linked to the idea of the escape from urban modernity to the simplicity of the rural imaginary. The women whose stories are examined here come from broadly middle-class backgrounds; they are educated, most have some sort of art-school education or creative training, and they are defined by their move from urban to rural. It is not a coincidence that these middle-class women fetishise the idea of living in a working-class cottage. The simplicity of the 'little cottages' whitewashed interior stone walls provide the perfect backdrop for displaying artworks, and fits perfectly into contemporary ideas of an aesthetic domestic modernist ideal that women inhabit in the process of constructing, reconstructing and performing their creative selves. This particular kind of feminine modernity seeks the stability and reassurance of a rustic domesticity in order to provide a stage for the performance of a modern identity

that refuses to be confined by societal constructs of class and gender, and seeks to find alternative ways in which to work, form relationships and be a parent.

In interviews, women consistently use the homes in which they have lived to organise their memories and construct a narrative about their past, using specific spaces and places as a tool to build chronological life stories.

Descriptions of home or material things and spaces become a way of defining, revealing and performing the bohemian independent identities to which they aspired.

Descriptions of home or things are also used in place of describing feelings or emotions, particularly those that could be described as negative. Talking about homes in which they have lived is also a way of revealing significant difficulties and challenges that the women may have overcome.

Although many of the women have rejected an idea of traditional domesticity, ideas of home are still central to their narratives. The 'little cottage' in Downalong is particular to this sense of what home should be. For many women, home represents both a place of stability and refuge and a sense of pride and success. The happy home provided an anchor for feminine creative identities that were often unstable and shifting, and was the source of a deep sense of achievement for the women becoming both independent and a part of a community.

Women use descriptions of poor housing to express how difficult a particular part of life was, without having to express that explicitly, which also in turn articulates achievement in overcoming challenges. The significance of structuring memory through domestic space, according to historian Antoinette Burton, is a result of both the influence of the 'cult of domesticity' and of women's experience of 'structurally gendered locations' such as the 'patriarchal household'. Constructing memory in this way is not unique to white western women, suggesting that using home as a framework to build personal narratives and private histories is a storytelling device frequently used by women from different cultures (Burton, 2003:26). This is largely because women's experiences are so deeply rooted to the domestic, and, Burton argues, the reason that women's 'private' memories should be given more value as histories, equal to the archive, not other to or outside of it.

It is the 'small stories', not the grand narratives, that can reveal much about the lives of women. Mostly ignored by the grand narratives of St Ives' art history, it is the small stories in oral histories, the fragments of stories or those that are often ignored or dismissed as trivial or as gossip, that can tell the listener a great deal (Gates, 2013:59). In this case, the small stories in the archive often resonate with each other to create refrains that echo in the archives to make louder noises, sounding out experiences that together disrupt existing narratives.

Gossipy exchanges that are both situated in and talk about home reveal important details around the hardships of domestic life, and what it meant to be married to an artist, revealing that women's experiences were not individual, but collective. The intimacy of the interviews, often between friends with shared memories and experiences in private domestic spaces have the potential to be both confessional and therapeutic. The oral history interview is a three-way performance between two people with an imagined audience, which is both private and public. Interviewers are as much a part of constructing the narrative as the interviewee, and can control what is said by opening up or closing down a conversation, as explored in Chapter One. Anecdotes become everyday dramas that convey the challenges unique to women in their pursuit of modern, independent living in the bohemian rural imaginary of St Ives. Domestic gossip, and the anecdotes and stories that women tell about their home life, should not form either a separate, feminine history, or one that adds to the existing history of masculine modernism in St Ives, but should, as these stories reveal, undermine, subvert and challenge it (Rogoff, 1996: 60). These stories answer the question posed by the absences in existing histories of St Ives, 'and meanwhile, where were the women?'

Moving to St Ives: From Holiday to Everyday

Many of the women state that they had been on holiday to St Ives before making the decision to move to the town to live full-time. For many artists who moved to St Ives, the town was associated with nostalgia for childhood holidays (Stephens, 1996:35-36). The desire to continue the romantic pleasure and ideal time of the holiday is one reason

women were attracted to moving, although the reality was often different from the dream. Mamie Lewis describes a holiday romance in wartime Cornwall while her husband was posted in Singapore. Her story is not told in chronological order, but loops back dramatically to reveal important details. Towards the end of the interview she adds:

And I haven't told you this properly/The right way round/I met/When I first came down to Cornwall/I met up with my girlfriend that very same night/We went for a walk down to Mousehole harbour/And there was a man hanging on the railings looking out to sea/And he was very friendly/Sort of/Hello how are you/And all that stuff/And he was not a Cornishman/And I immediately thought he was most attractive/And I met him quite a lot after that/And it was through him that I had my baby

Mamie Lewis (2009)

Mamie Lewis's story is one of the earliest and most interesting that follows the pattern of leaving a relationship and moving to St Ives to pursue a bohemian dream of being an artist and independent woman. Following a holiday to St Ives during the war Mamie fell in love with St Ives and decided to move there permanently. Her husband had been posted to Singapore, when he expressed no desire to accompany her to Cornwall, Mamie left her husband and home in Malvern in Worcestershire and moved to a one-room flat in the town and got work at The Copper Kettle cafe. Having studied at Croydon Art College, she continued to paint, taking lessons with Leonard Fuller at the St Ives School of Art, which had opened in 1938. Everything about her story describes a young woman who is absolutely modern, determined to live life in the way that she chooses, despite those choices being quite unusual, and probably quite scandalous. However, it was in St Ives that she felt able to be free to live that life. It is after talking about her life in St Ives with her baby son as a single parent that she explains, towards the end of the interview, how she came to be a single parent (Lewis, 2009). Coming from rural market town, Mamie was not escaping the wartime city, but St Ives with its established creative community and art school, along with her Mousehole romance, must have seemed like an attractive prospect. Like Barbara Hepworth, many people chose to move to St Ives at the outbreak of the Second World War. As a local proprietor of a 17-room guesthouse wrote in letters to a cousin in Canada in 1940, 'there are quite

a number of classes of people here from London who got away from the air raids & no wish to go back' (Cogar Richards, 1940). He explains that although the price of food had risen, fish was plentiful, and that apart from the blackout, and the passing of military ships, there is little in St Ives to suggest that the country is at war (Cogar Richards, 1940). In 1941, he describes the beaches as busy, and the town full of evacuees. But St Ives does not escape completely:

We were bombed a few weeks ago, two dropped about two hundred yards away. Quite a lot of damage done, one killed and only a few injured. We were fortunate having only some glass broken with the blast. The planes also machine-gunned the town & beaches, but did not kill anyone, but there was some racket.

(Cogar Richards, 1941)

Ann Kelley describes coming to St Ives for the first time on her honeymoon at the age of eighteen, with her painter husband Derek.

I came here on my honeymoon/My first honeymoon/Um/When I was married to Derek Kelley/Nineteen sixty/I was eighteen/Just eighteen/And uh/He wanted to live here /And he brought me down here /In fact we had our honeymoon in the Queen's Hotel/In the High Street/And I spent most of the honeymoon/Cause it was a week/ And it was a fantastic week/Because it was the end of May/Um/Beginning of June/ And it was so hot and sunny /And we spent most of our time /In those sand dunes over there/On Porthkidney Beach/I don't think we did anything apart from lie in the sand dunes actually/It was gorgeous/We got very burnt

Ann Kelley (2011)

As Ann explains, it was her husband's choice to move to St Ives, which by 1960 was well established as a fashionable centre for art and artists, as an article by local writer Denis , in fashionable women's magazine *Honey* from December 1960 shows:

Imagine an artists' colony and you'll picture St Ives, Cornwall, complete with narrow, cobbled streets, fishermen's cottages and boats bobbing in the harbour. It seems almost too good to be true - especially the first impression of picture postcard beauty - when you round the last bend of the road and see St Ives Harbour stretched out below you. The atmosphere is Continental. And, walking through the steep

streets which line the hillside and spill over a small hump towards the seashore, you could imagine yourself in a little French fishing town. St Ives used to be a simple fishing port with a fleet of over a hundred boats. But during the past eight years or so - without any planning - it has become one of Britain's most important art centres. Fishing lofts have been converted into artists' houses, studios have sprung up everywhere, and there's even a new block of studios soaring.

(Val Baker, 1960:43)

This association of St Ives with a French pastoral is a theme that runs through many of the articles written about the town during this period. As Stephens notes, this image of St Ives is associated with a 'simple, domestic, feminised rusticity', that frames men artists' middle-class bohemian identities in articles about St Ives in glossy magazines (Stephens, 1996:77). It also defines a modern style that combines tradition and modernity, and contrasts with ideas of modernity imported from America. Whereas the dominant modern style of the 1950s was signified by shiny newness, the new decade of the 1960s was about conspicuous thrift, combining French peasant rusticity with abstract art and simple design (Highmore, 2016).

As Ann goes on to reveal later in her interview, the romance of her honeymoon is quite different from her experience of moving to St Ives to live with her husband and baby. Her husband, who already had friends and acquaintances in the town, is able to fulfil his romantic bohemian dreams as a painter, leaving the very young Ann in a cold, damp cottage with a sick child while he is at the studio or (mostly) the pub (Kelley, 2011). It was only many years later that Ann is able to gain her independence, and pursue her creative work as a photographer and writer. The miserable description of the first house in St Ives represents Ann's unhappy memories, and her later descriptions of her home after her divorce contrast completely, describing happy moments through descriptions that relate to her children and independent social life.

Like Stella, Ann's experience of the 'little cottage' is not a romantic idea of idealised poverty, but one of genuine hardship. Importantly, it is Ann and Stella, and their children, who are forced to experience this, not their artist-husbands. Stephens quotes painter Keith Vaughan, who 'observed that the countryside around St Ives was "full of young artists living in little stone huts with absolutely no money, artistic wives and a sort

of negative satisfaction at having escaped from somewhere” (Yorke, 1990:165 in Stephens, 1996:35). For Vaughan, the romantic ‘little cottage’ is the primitive ‘stone hut’, which reveals a less appealing image of the bohemian retreat from modernity.

Sheila Oliner describes coming to St Ives from London and deciding to buy a holiday home in the area. Like some of the other women represented in the archive, she came to St Ives initially to visit friends, in this case the artist Maurice Sumray.

I first came to St Ives with my family in about the late sixties/Where we were staying in another part of Cornwall/I can’t remember where/But we visited St Ives to come and see Maurice Sumray/Because he was a friend of both my husband and myself/And they had the cafe/So we went and had a rather/[grunts] meal/[laughs]/But it was lovely to see them

(Oliner, 2009)

She describes the decision to buy a holiday home in the area not long after this. Her use of the term bolt-hole is significant, representing a place to escape and hide. The cottage at Zennor does eventually become Sheila’s escape, from her marriage and London, and where she went on to pursue a successful career as an artist and printmaker.

We were down on holiday/And then I decided we needed a bolt-hole/And the estate agent kept on driving us around/And I kept saying no/Not yellow lines/Somewhere like Zennor/And I had stayed at places a couple of times in St Ives/So I knew the district a little bit

(Oliner, 2009)

Sheila’s firm ‘no, not yellow lines’ in response to the estate agent’s property suggestions is not just practical, but also signifies a rejection of the urban modernity that she is leaving behind. The yellow lines are a sign of the transformation of St Ives from the beginning the end of the 1960s. With around 7000 cars a day driving down St Ives’ narrow streets in the late 1950s, (Val Baker, 1959:94) the introduction of double-yellow lines in 1960 was necessary, but only moved issues of parking and overcrowding in the town elsewhere. This resulted in Barbara Hepworth taking the Town Council to the High

Court over parking issues on the Island in 1966 (of which more in Chapter Six). With this rapid increase in tourism in the town, it is not surprising that Sheila wanted her place to escape and hide outside of town. Over the subsequent ten years or so, Sheila continued to visit, spending more and more time in Cornwall:

I used to come all/Mostly with the children/But also with my husband/In the school holidays/For the whole holidays/And then as soon as they were a bit older/I would come all sorts of times/And um/And because I always felt rather guilty/About having this place empty in the winter

(Oliner, 2009)

This guilt at leaving the house empty indicates Sheila's understanding of the pressures that tourism was putting on local housing, and an awareness of issues affecting the local community. A successful artist by this time, Sheila made her final escape from London in the early 1980s with the breakdown of her marriage. With one of her married children living with her in their London flat, she saw an opportunity to leave. With her marriage over, and nothing to keep her in the city, she asked around for a studio in St Ives. Having expected a long wait, she was surprised when one came up almost straight away.

Oli and I separated/We're still married/And he's lived with somebody else for years/But um/We separated in the beginning of eighty one/My son and his first wife were living with me/It was a very big flat in Lyndhurst Gardens/And I was down here by myself one time/And I thought if I come down for six months/Then they can have the flat to themselves/And then I went back and I thought/No I won't /I'll move/Move to Cornwall/I think I must have been a bit unbalanced at the time

(Oliner, 2009)

Describing her decision as one that comes from being a 'bit unbalanced' articulates what a big decision it was for Sheila to move at this point in her life. After many years of marriage and family, the decision to leave permanently must have given Sheila a sense of freedom that she had previously only gained temporarily on visits to her 'bolt-hole'. With her children grown up, and separated from her husband, there is no reason why she should not be free to make the decision to move, but the way that she frames the

decision as a moment of instability suggests a disruption of her identity. By asserting her autonomy, she is reasserting her own sense of identity, switching priorities from that of wife and mother to that of an artist. In that sense, there is a literal unbalancing in her decision, taking a risk which destabilises her own sense of identity. Sheila is concerned that taking the risk of moving following the separation from her husband will attract judgement from others, and asserting her independence and autonomy will be seen as 'madness'. She goes on to list the people who she consults about the move, including her grown-up children and artists in her network in St Ives, indicating that her decision, which she stalls for six months by renovating the studio, is a very careful and considered decision indeed (Oliner, 2009).

Bohemian Living: Little Cottages and Domestic Modernisms

In their interviews, women often use the homes in which they have lived to order their memories and construct the narrative of their life stories. The idea of the 'little cottage' (or the gypsy caravan) is where women begin to construct their identities and build independent lives, and is a metonym for both the rural imaginary that they hoped to find in St Ives, and for a particular kind of modernity that advocates self-actualisation through consumption (Highmore, 2013:121-2). The 'little cottage' stands both for women's independence and autonomy, especially the pride and achievement of home ownership which defines career success, but also the comfort of the traditionally feminine space of the domestic, where they have constructed a space that is their own. Often, women have moved several times, and each home represents a particular stage in their lives. In these women's stories, 'the house is not experienced from day to day only, on the thread of a narrative, or in the telling of our own story', instead, 'the various dwelling-places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days' (Bachelard, 1958:5). In this way, the house is both an important site for the production and performance of women's identities, as well as a space that is constructed through the consumption of a particular set of goods and ideas. The house is an expression of the search for and the achievement of a particular kind of modern lifestyle that is defined through the consumption of the countercultural ideals on which

their moves to St Ives were founded, and the home represents having found and achieved those ideals. This is particularly important as most of the interviews took place in women's homes, so they are speaking and constructing histories and memories from a narrative that is created from, and created by, their domestic surroundings. Setting out the solid bricks and mortar of their histories and putting them in place enables women to dwell in, or travel between memories, using anecdotes to anchor memories to place. Remembered homes become a useful starting point from which to begin a story, and it is within their domestic spaces that women are able to construct and reconstruct themselves:

My flat was in Norway Square/Just a one-room flat with a little kitchen and bathroom/
And then I had a cottage in Trelowarren Street/And of course when summer came/
Spring came/They turned me out /They let it to summer visitors/And I then bought a
gypsy caravan/Well I wanted one

(Lewis, 2009)

Like Mamie Lewis, many of the women travel backwards and forwards in time and space as they speak, looping back to revisit an anecdote that has been left out. Mamie's list of the places in which she has lived is really just a preamble that leads to the story about the gypsy caravan, which is clearly her favourite or best anecdote. The gypsy caravan is significant in Mamie's story, and symbolises her modernity and bohemian-ness, along with being a painter and single parent in the late 1940s. She describes her desire to live in a gypsy caravan, after her eviction from the cottage in Trelowarren Street. The romantic trope of the gypsy had persisted in the British imagination in literature and the visual arts since the nineteenth century. As art historian Ysanne Holt explains, the 'cult of the gypsy is widespread after the turn of the century' (2003:51). She discusses a particular construction of artistic masculinity that emerges from the 'bourgeois myth' of the gypsy which can be seen in both the work of, and the performance of the artistic identities of early modernist male artists like Augustus John and Alfred Munnings. Furthermore, this construction of artistic masculinity can be seen in St Ives, cultivated by sculptor Sven Berlin in particular (for further discussion of masculinity, see Chapter Five).

In popular culture gypsies were represented as 'exotic, attractive, erotically charged free spirits whose travelling lifestyle was the subject of both envy and fear' (Bardi, 2006:33), and artists were attracted to their outsider status, perceived exoticism, sensuality and sexual permissiveness. Unlike the literature on the use of the gypsy myth in the construction of masculine artistic identities in early modernism, there is little discussion of the appropriation of the gypsy myth in the construction of feminine artistic identities in the twentieth century. The gypsy represents an escape from urban modernity which held particular appeal for women.

Gypsies were 'increasingly depicted in literature as noble savages whose travelling lifestyles were thought to be pastoral and enviable' (Bardi, 2006: 33), and for women like Mamie, whose mobility had increased during and after the Second World War, identifying with the gypsy myth represented an idea of nomadic freedom that symbolised an escape from the restrictions associated with her class and gender. This 'gypsophilia' is a construct influential to British modernism, and represented a rejection of urban modernity and a pursuit of an alternative mode of permissive modern living that transgressed cultural norms. It persists in the modernist 'cultivation of sociability modelled in part on an aesthetic of intransigence and anti-modern insularity', and is associated with "'freedom" of modern life find[ing] its correlatives in "free verse", "free dance", and "free love"' and despite being 'fictional in its origins, nevertheless anchored a divergent community of self-identified moderns' (Lyon, 2004:518). Most importantly, for women, the myth of the gypsy represents an 'aberrant' or 'heterodox femininity', that gives them the freedom to explore alternative ways of being modern (Nord in Bardi, 2006:33).

Performing a bourgeois 'gypsy' identity was common between the wars, and it is no coincidence that Cornwall was the site for many of those performances of bohemian identity. The construct of the gypsy in the British imagination is associated with the primitive, occult, pre-modern, an exotic wildness and freedom that also characterises the Cornish landscape in the popular imagination. 'Gypsies' are also the subject of paintings in the interwar paintings of Laura Knight, and, after running away from her

family, queer artist Glück dresses up as a gypsy and poses for painter Alfred Munnings during her escape to Cornwall from her bourgeois life in London (Souhami, 1988). The performance of the "gypsy" was intrinsically linked to the construction of Cornwall as exotic other, and the permissiveness that being in this "foreign", romantic and magical country allowed. This idea of romantic "Gypsy" wildness permeated the social lives of bohemian modernists, urban and rural, and is performed through dress, with 'Mabel Dodge in her turban, Augustus John in his high leather boots', and through their parties and social events, where guests at Ottoline Morel's salon were 'dancing wildly to Hungarian piano music' (Lyon, 2004:518). The "'Gypsy" restlessness of writers as diverse as Arthur Symons, D.H. Lawrence and John Reed' (Lyon, 2004:518) defines a nomadic lifestyle where writers and artists move from place to place in search of an idealised community of like-minded people, although their transience was often as much a result of financial necessity as bohemian aspiration (Westland, 2002).

At this time in the 1940s, finding somewhere to live, particularly as a single woman with a baby in conservative Cornwall, was difficult, although the impact of the war on relationships meant that to be a single parent was not extraordinary. Just as today, seasonal holiday lets made it difficult to find accommodation, and often women found unusual alternatives to the 'little cottage'. Mamie tells of how she found her caravan:

I was out for a walk one day and I happened to see the top of this caravan/In the garden/Oh/It's exactly what I want/I'm going in to ask who it belonged to /And so forth/Which I did /And they told me/No I want to sell it/And they told me how much/ And I thought /I'm going to have that at any price/So I went out/And I managed to borrow a bit of money from my brother I think/And I bought it/And I had it on/Above Porthgwidden Beach/The little beach/And it was lovely/Just woke up in the morning and dressed and/Slithered down the cliff on to the sand/And it was lonely and lovely and beautiful view right along the beach to Porthmeor Beach/Right along to the Island I could see from it

(Lewis, 2009)

Her description of living in the caravan is idyllic, as well as a pragmatic solution to her problem of having somewhere to live. She does not include any practical details of how she got water or went to the toilet, but the caravan stands for the rebellious young

woman that she was, and was an important part of her identity. It was exactly the kind of bohemian dwelling appropriate for a young woman who has rejected the norms of society and actively sought out a different way of living.

Mamie's idyllic bohemian existence was not to last. After a drunken man attempted to break into the caravan, she retreated to her mother's house in Bournemouth with her baby son. This did not last long either. Her mother did not want her there, and she returned to St Ives:

And I found a little flat which I rented/Which was in Norway Square/And it was only a one-room flat/With a little kitchenette/And so forth /Still there/Nice little place it was

(Lewis, 2009)

The little flat in Norway Square offered a place of safety for Mamie, a home in which she could feel safe again, yet still in the heart of bohemian Downalong.

Stella Benjamin moved to Cripplesease, a hamlet just outside St Ives, with her husband Anthony in 1956. They had both been studying art at Regent's Polytechnic in London, and Anthony wanted to move to Cornwall on the recommendation of tutor, artist, and St Ives resident Bill Redgrave. As her husband's mother had recently died, he had the money to buy a property rather than renting, and he found a cottage in Cripplesease, being sold by artist Sven Berlin. Perhaps attracted by romantic bohemian ideas of self-sufficient living, as well as buying a property from an established artist, Anthony bought the property without Stella seeing it. As Stella describes, the cottage was rather basic:

And it had no running water/No facilities whatsoever/Except electricity/And it had an earth floor/And/And that's it really/But it had outbuildings/Which Anthony looked at/And didn't look at the cottage/And he thought/Oh that would be good

(Benjamin, 2009)

With an only half-amused tone, Stella describes her husband prioritising potential studio and working space over living space. Then twenty-three years old, Stella describes her parents driving her down to look at the cottage opposite the pub in Cripplesease:

And I sat in the window/Wondering/If ever /You know/Winter/Winter's Cornish weather/Yeah/This little cottage/Wondering if I would ever live there/Where I did move to/It was called Little Penderleath/Uh/And that's where I had Yorick /My son/ With Anthony/And then Anthony got a scholarship to Paris/When Yorick was about ten months old/So that was a hard time

(Benjamin, 2009)

The absence of husbands is a theme in both Stella and Ann's stories. Both women had husbands who made the decision to move to St Ives. Both men then left their young wives and children in housing that had no heating or hot water, while they lived the life of a bohemian artist. Her descriptions of the cottage in Street an Pol are bleak. There is a kind of feminine heroism and stoicism in these women's stories that provides a counterpoint to the modernist image of the macho artist here: while the (male) artists spend their days in the studio and nights in the pub debating and drinking, their wives and children are left at home to suffer the consequences of their choice to live in romantic poverty.

The little house in Street an Pol/And it was incredibly damp/And in fact it was so damp/Nathan got pneumonia/In fact he got bronchitis

(Kelley, 2011)

Ann's heart-breaking description suggests how unfit the house was for anyone to live in, especially when bringing up a child. The desire to escape from urban modernity meant a retreat to less than modern living conditions. Cottages were picturesque, and the aesthetic of whitewashed stone walls that characterised the Cornish cottage fitted the aesthetic of the ideal modernist home that combined modern art and design, with conspicuous thrift and rusticism (Highmore, 2013). The little cottage of the rural imaginary was cheap, but lacked any modern utilities, and was often empty because local people did not want to live there and had chosen to move to the new council estate or a bungalow in Carbis Bay. The search for simplicity and authenticity of the fishwife's or farm worker's dwelling, and a sense of competitive poverty in the bohemian community led to postwar middle-class women enduring the less romantic conditions of

prewar working-class poverty. The doctor who came to give her sick baby son antibiotic injections every day was so concerned that he lent her a fire:

I think it was an old paraffin heater/To have downstairs/And he said /You mustn't go upstairs and sleep/Because it was so wet/All our clothes were mouldy/Covered in mould/In the cupboards

(Kelley, 2011)

Like Stella, Ann's husband was conspicuously absent, busy performing the role of the artist, and spending money in the pub that could have been spent on improving their domestic situation. Such stories disrupt the masculine narrative of the bohemian, heroic artist. Stella and Ann's husbands were able to pursue their artistic careers because of the domestic stability that their wives provided.

It was awful/Yes I think it was two pound fifty a week or something/No I didn't know anyone/[...]/And I spent most of my time /Washing nappies/In cold water/And hanging them up to dry/To freeze/It was a horribly cold /It was a really bad cold/We had snow here/It must have been sixty one or sixty two/Winter of/I'm not sure

(Kelley, 2011)

Ann's description of freezing nappies and the isolation of not knowing anyone in the town contrasts with that of her husband out at the pubs in town, with the warmth and conviviality that this implies. It is these descriptions of Ann and Stella's resilience in the face of horrifying rather than any kind of cosy domesticity that 'the very act of acknowledging [their] legitimacy begins to undo the lofty categories in which we have all been working' (Rogoff, 1996:60). These stories work to undermine the narrative of the macho, modernist male artist at the pub, the stories of drinking and fighting, the hard-working, hard-drinking, intellectual masculine culture that persists both in the informal 'histories' that circulate like gossip in gallery talks and tours at Tate, or on art tours.

These stories subvert the idea of heroic modernist masculinity by revealing it to be weak, selfish and cruel.

Stella's situation is little better when her marriage breaks down. Her husband continued to travel around Europe, and eventually sells the cottage:

Anthony went to France/And then he went to Italy/He got a scholarship in Italy/And the cottage was sold/And I moved into Hanter Chy/Into the stable block/[...] And I was in what was Anthony's studio at one point/And Yorick had a partition as his bedroom/Again/It just had a cold tap/And that was it/Lavatory in the yard

(Benjamin, 2009)

When Stella's husband left her and their son and she moved into St Ives, things got a little better. Like the other women in the archive, Stella lists the houses in which she has lived. The nomadic lifestyle that this suggests is common, and is both a function of instability, whether of relationships or of housing that is let only temporarily, with landlords preferring to make more money through renting property out for the summer. As in Ann's story, the only housing available to let long-term is often of too poor a quality to let to holidaymakers. This precariousness and constant movement also describes the importance of finding the 'right' place to live. Once Stella was able to buy her own property, she still continues to move. Like Lieka and Mamie, Stella goes on searching for stability and security after the insecurity of her earlier domestic situations:

In Bethesda Hill/That was after The Digey/I moved there/Well/That was after/After Twenty The Digey/The little cottage/The first small cottage/I moved across the alleyway/Six feet across/To eighteen/Where Rosetta used to be/And then from there/I moved to The Gap/And that was four storeys high

(Benjamin, 2009)

Interestingly, she describes the places that she has lived with partner Benny Sirota separately from the homes that she has lived in by herself with her son, categorising her independence separately. Stella's interview reveals further the conditions of housing during the 1960s and 1970s, with many places only having the most basic of facilities:

And lived at Sea View Place/On the end of Smeaton's Pier/With Benny and Yorick/And from there/Moved to Crippleseat again/To Gew House/With Benny/[...] Still didn't have running water though/Even though it was quite a big house/[...] It was

just rainwater/You had to bring in your drinking water/And then when I was on my own there/When Benny left there/Janet Leach used to come along in that Jeep thing she used to have/And bring me water/Cause she was on the way to Trevaylor/And then eventually I moved back into St Ives/In the Digey

(Benjamin, 2009)

Left again on her own in a house without adequate facilities, some distance out of town, it is the support of Janet Leach bringing her water that enables her to stay in the house. This demonstrates the support network of women to which both Janet Leach and Boots Redgrave were central, discussed in the next chapter. Thus, these descriptions function not as simple descriptions of the domestic and the home, but reveal much more about the connections between women, and the support women gave to each other within the creative community. It is also important to note that Stella does not recollect these difficult times with any sense of negativity. Reminiscing about this period, Stella goes on to describe the kinds of houses on offer:

Up on the moors/You could/You could rent cottages all over the place/You know /For little money/They were very primitive/But they were there/And you could/All sorts of people rented cottages/Alan Lowndes/He used to live in a barn at Tremedda/You know/That farmers did that sort of thing/And it was great

(Benjamin, 2009)

It was this sort of availability of housing in St Ives and the surrounding area, where properties could be rented cheaply, that of course contribute to the existence of the creative community, as Stella suggests when she mentions painter Alan Lowndes. Despite the awful conditions, the bohemian life was accessible and cheap, with properties available for little money, which attracted those who wanted to be part of St Ives' hip art scene. The cheap housing and studio space meant a steady influx of people who wanted to be a part of the bohemian community, as well as income for local landlords. However, this boom of letting to the artists/tourists in search of the perfect little cottage marked the beginning of a steady increase in homes being turned into the perfect 'little cottage' as holiday homes for tourists, leading to a steady decline in housing for local people who were priced out of the market. This nostalgia for the

bohemian past is ironic, given that it is the creative community that works to attract more tourism to the town, which is arguably responsible for the problems of housing in St Ives in the present:

No second homes/In the way it is now/They've all been sold and done up/And are holiday lets

(Benjamin, 2009)

Like the earlier period of the art colony from the end of the nineteenth century up until the start of the Second World War, it is only the availability of cheap studio space and living accommodation that provides the infrastructure that allows the creative community to thrive.

Shirley Beck left her marriage and home in Moretonhampstead in Devon at the age of twenty-four to come to St Ives with her young son in the mid-1960s. Shirley was born in 1939 and came to St Ives at the height of its popularity in 1964. She worked for the Mask Pottery, was an active political campaigner for CND and the Labour Party, and was involved with the Penwith Society. She was Mayor of St Ives when Tate St Ives opened in 1993. She describes arriving at St Ives for the first time:

I came to St Ives on May tenth/ (I remember the day very well)/1964/It was a Sunday/I came with my son/My two-year-old son/I came from Moretonhampstead/In Devon/ The result of a broken marriage/I've been here ever since/The best place in the world to be

(Beck, 2009)

She locates the beginning of her story in Downalong, the romantic heart of St Ives with tiny cobbled streets and old fishermen's cottages. This is the creative and artistic part of the town which St Ives is best known for. For Shirley, it was particularly important that she was able to move to Downalong, the bohemian heart of 1960s St Ives, as this is where she can begin her new creative life. Shirley paints the Penwith Gallery as a kind of creative and social hub, central to the artistic and social life of St Ives. She emphasises the importance of the gallery to the beginning of her new life, as if by living close to the

Penwith, she was not only living at the heart of the creative community, but was gaining access to the lifestyle she desired by being in proximity to the gallery:

Well I was very fortunate that I found somewhere to live in Downalong/And Downalong St Ives has a very important/Had a very important gallery/Still is a very important gallery/The only major gallery in St Ives/The Penwith Gallery/And because I had done pottery at um art school/And I was interested in doing pottery again/And meet some people/I went round to Penwith Gallery when they had an opening

(Beck, 2009)

Shirley threw herself into the activities that went on at the Penwith, making friends through volunteering and getting involved with social activities like the arts ball and jazz evenings, as well as increasingly political activities, like the anti-Vietnam War Shop and Labour Party activities that are explored in the following chapters.

Lieka Ritman also describes coming to St Ives in 1969 after escaping an unhappy relationship. After travelling around Europe in her early twenties, she returned to her home in Australia. Finding it lacking compared to Europe, she takes the opportunity to move to St Ives at the encouragement of friends that she had met in Ibiza, hoping to use her training as an interior designer to build a new creative career as an artist. She became a framer, and then a full-time artist in 1984. She later opened a vegetarian restaurant in St Ives with her partner Jenny Eyre.

Like Sheila, Mamie and Shirley, it is the end of a relationship that gave her the desire to take a risk to move to St Ives. Caroline, Douglas and Betty, the friends she had met in Ibiza, had given her an invitation not only to stay with them, but also offered a way into St Ives' creative community, therefore giving Lieka the security of not being entirely alone in a new country:

Caroline and Douglas were together/With Betty in Salubrious House in St Ives/And they said/Would I like to come and stay with them in St Ives/And he could sort of/ Introduce me into the artists community / [...]I had a sort of /I suppose it rather felt/ A little bit of a disastrous love affair with a bloke /And that broke up/So I thought right/I'm going to grab this opportunity/And go to England

(Ritman, 2009)

The 'disastrous love affair' describes not only the catalyst that she needs to move, but the transformation of identity that moving to St Ives brings. When she adds, 'with a bloke', what is both said and not said here articulates a queer narrative. The move to St Ives signals a personal transformation, as it does for many of the other women in the archive. Leaving Australia signifies leaving behind an old identity, to move to a place where Lieka can be free to be her authentic self. Again, the narrative follows Lieka in time as she travels from place to place in St Ives. Anecdotes and important events are framed by the homes in which she has lived. After staying at Salubrious House, she moved to a flat of her own:

Moved to Academy Steps/In a flat/Ah/Which the whole thing burnt down/Lost everything/And um/Janet Leach approached me/And said Bernard needs looking after/And would you like to look after him/For as long as it takes/You can have my flat/Which is above Bernard's flat/I used to /Um/Make his dinner for him/And make sure he was okay/That was in the seventies/Sixty-nine seventy I think

(Ritman, 2009)

The devastating fire of July 1970 began in the kitchen of one of the restaurants in Fore Street, and quickly burned through the lofts of the buildings with devastating effect. Although there was no loss of life, the damage was huge (Michael Hunt, 2009). Janet Leach's offer to help Lieka by asking her to look after the elderly Bernard is another example of women helping women, and the hidden support network that existed in the town. After another temporary move, where she lives with painter Peggy Frank for a time, and following a gift of money from her parents, Lieka is able to buy her own property. She divulges in a confidential tone that she was helped to get a mortgage by a man called Tom Trevorrow, which involved not only Lieka, but her 'employer' having to lie about her having a full-time, permanent job. At a time when women frequently needed the permission of a husband or father to get a bank account or mortgage, it would have been very difficult to for Lieka, particularly as she was also self-employed, to get a mortgage without the kind of fraudulent support she had from Tom Trevorrow and Anthony Richards. It is significant that she still, almost forty years later, questions if she should be revealing this information at all.

And for a single woman it was difficult to get a mortgage/And I don't know if I'm allowed to say this/But Tom Trevorow/Saw to it all/I was being employed then/As a potter by Anthony Richards

(Ritman, 2009)

This part of the conversation underlines the importance of listening to oral histories, and transcribing effectively. It is clear from Lieka's tone that she was not employed as a potter by Anthony Richards at all, for any other purpose than getting a mortgage. She describes not only the difficulty a single woman would have had in obtaining a mortgage at that time, especially one who was self-employed, but also the support from other members of the local community in helping her to buy a property by providing false evidence of a job that would enable her to get a mortgage. This is made plain also by the interviewer's implicit understanding of her mention of the story, suggesting that Lieka was not the only woman to benefit from the support of Tom Trevorow's help to lie about employment status in order to get a mortgage. It is information like this, seemingly trivial, that reveals so much about women's lives.

The connections that exist between women are also revealed in Lieka's interview, where she discusses 'following' Stella Benjamin around, moving into properties that Stella had previously lived in on several occasions, including buying the house in the Digey with the wonky cupboard from Stella. Ann's interview also mentions knowing Stella.

Ann's story is transformed as she discusses buying her house in Bowling Green Terrace from her husband when they separated. Just as her misery and isolation is expressed through the space in which she lives, her happiness is articulated through anecdotes from the home in which she achieved her independence:

Later on/When Kelley and I split up/And I eventually bought number five /Bowling Green/From him/Um/We had /There were lots of dinner parties in that little kitchen at the back/My kitchen was always full of people/And you know/I'd make a small meal/And then people would sort of arrive/At the back door/Gradually/And I said / Oh come in/That's all right we'll find something/I don't know how it all/We always managed to make something/Stretch/To/You know/However may people /Were there/Would bring things as well/It was just/It was lovely/And it was/Uh/Yeah/There

were good times had in that kitchen/It was I suppose/Yes/Yeah/Yes/Oh gosh/I can remember making very elaborate things like/Rabbit terrine and things/Can you/Oh good/Oh that's nice/How nice/And I had a great boyfriend who brought me lobsters/He was a diver/He brought me lobsters/And um/Although I remember one time/There was this lobster still alive/Obviously/We put it in the sink/While we were having a drink/And um/Before I cooked it/And um/And Nathan found it /And felt sorry for it/And put water in it/So it immediately came back to life/You know/It sort of woke up/And starting dashing around everywhere/So there was water everywhere/ And you just couldn't get anywhere near it to pick it up/[laughs]/Or to take the plug out

(Kelley, 2011)

From the loneliness and isolation of her life at the little house at Street an Pol, she describes the constant sociability of hosting and entertaining, and the joy of happy times. Ann's anecdotes that contain description of the homes in which she lived after her divorce from her husband represent a marked contrast to the narrative of her first home in St Ives. Her later stories are of homes that are full of people and funny stories set in the summer, full of friendship and happy social occasions, which sit in conflict with the description of the miserable and lonely experience of waiting for the doctor in a damp, frozen cottage. Although Ann's initial experience of St Ives was far from the honeymoon she had hoped for, her interview demonstrates the transformation that she was able to make in forging her own creative and social identity after she left her husband. St Ives was essential to this transformation, as her creative work initially centred on photographing and writing about local people, and led her to a successful career as a writer and photographer.

Conclusion

The 'little cottage' is a motif that runs through the stories of women in the archive. Like Virginia Woolf's 'room of ones own' (1929), the women discuss their need for a home that gives them the space to live and work. With interviews taking place in women's homes, the domestic setting provides a locus for memories about other homes. The imbrication of memories and domesticity means that often women frame their narratives through a chronology that moves from place to place, with each home defining a

particular period in their lives. Objects that exist in the present of the interview are often a way of connecting to the past, and provide a way of talking about memories of a particular time and place, highlighting the importance of particular moments as well as acting as an aid to memory.

The 'little cottage', with its whitewashed stone walls, wonky cupboards, and second-hand furniture symbolised a domestic pastoral retreat that rejects material goods and modern consumerism, and often luxuries like running water, to embrace an authentic and simple way of life that is both modern and modernist. This often competitively spartan domesticity represents a leftist, socially liberal politics that is historically connected to early modernism, but nonetheless has its own specific politics and aesthetic of anti-consumerist countercultural consumption, an aesthetic which reaches its urban pastoral peak with the opening of Habitat in London in 1964. The 'little cottage' also represents a particular kind of rural imaginary that can be traced back to the imagination of the modern and modernist woman of the period between the wars. Like the generation of women before her, she wants to be part of a community of like-minded people, where her participation in the community is not only valued, but helps to construct and shape that community.

Chapter Three: ‘But The Money Was Appalling’: Women’s Labour and the Labour Party

Introduction

Women came to St Ives not only looking for ‘the little cottage’, but a way of living that united work and art. Attracted by the bohemianism that the creative community in the town represented, it was the opportunities for creative training and work that enabled women to make a success of their new lives. Listening to gossip and anecdotes about women’s work reveals connections between their experiences, and a particular kind of alternative modernism and modernity that is produced and experienced through the ways in which they work. Where they might have few options in urban areas and would have had to give up work if they got married, St Ives offered opportunities for developing a creative career. This alternative modernity and modernism are defined by a search for an authentic way of living, making a living through craft and hand-making, and a kind of heroic independence that women would have had difficulty finding in a big city. Importantly, the networks created by women offered the chance to further develop a creative practice learnt at art school, with peer-to-peer learning and skills sharing common within the creative community.

These modernist practices are performed by women in different ways, meaning that they are not recognised as modernist. Modernism’s claims to universalism are validated only through the erasure of women’s work. Work is characterised in a very specific way in St Ives, with mostly middle-class artists aligning their creative work with working-class manual labour by keeping regular working hours and going to the pub after work in dusty or paint-spattered clothes, which often obscured men’s private incomes, or the fact that they were supported by their wives’ (often low-paid, part-time) labour (Stephens, 1997:55). This masculine work ethic does not consider the domestic labour performed mainly by women in order to support their husbands. Despite being

photographed in middle-class settings of 'feminised rusticity' for magazine articles, men artists were often absent and did nothing to help in the home, expecting their wives to bear the burden of childcare and domestic work, often in addition to paid work (Kelley, 2009 and Benjamin, 2009). It is not surprising, therefore, that frequently women chose to live independently, and took a great deal of pride in being able to support themselves financially through their creative practice.

This chapter discusses the work that women did in St Ives. Being able to earn a living was essential to establishing and maintaining independence and being paid for creative work was something to which most of the women who moved to St Ives aspired. Most of the women who moved to St Ives had already had some artistic training or experience, with many of them having attended art school. Many of the women interviewed developed their skills into successful careers. It was possible to develop existing skills and learn new ones from other artists, or to learn on the job.

However, the stories about the part-time and casual work that they took on to support themselves also reveal a great deal about women's everyday lives, pragmatism, ambition, and the opportunities for new ways of living that St Ives promised.

It is also possible to see how women's work and social lives are connected, and how particular political beliefs connected to ideas of the New Left, including feminism, gay rights, pacifism and nuclear disarmament, were linked with women's labour and the Labour Party. Stephens characterises St Ives as largely unpolitical, overlooking Heron and Hepworth's involvement with the Labour Party as well as causes like CND and the anti-war movement, which is contrary to the stories of women in the archive (Stephens, 1997:43). I argue that women are motivated by the politics that shape their desire for a particular kind of lifestyle that they find in St Ives, which shapes every aspect of their lives, including their work. Making things by hand links together the working creative practice of the women discussed in this chapter, as well as a particular ideal of the rural imaginary that fits in with the ideologies of the New Left and middle-class radicalism. Even though the counterculture was associated with a rejection of capitalism, the majority of those engaging with these ideas were doing so by consuming a set of

commodities that were bound up in self-expression (Donnelly, 2005:130). Just as the home was an expression of a particular kind of modernity, as well as an expression of women's identities, women's work fitted in with a particular set of ideas and desires. The women discussed here were both producers and consumers of a lifestyle that reflected this modern feeling, and women's working and social lives were shaped by politics that created a group feeling of cohesiveness, reinforced through professional and social networks. Moreover, the third category of women's work, in which I include charity work and political campaigning, occupied a particular space of labour that is social, political and professional. The shop opened by Shirley Beck and her friend Jill in protest against the Vietnam War is a space which is feminine, social, political and domestic, where the radical middle-class politics of the modernist creative community are articulated. Despite the historical and social shifts that occurred between the 1940s and the 1980s, the hopes and aspirations of the women arriving in St Ives throughout this period are very similar. In itself, this demonstrates an enduring idea of what St Ives is, and what it means as a place to live and work.

Women came to St Ives searching for a unity between life, art and work. There is a tangible connection between modernism and socialist cultural politics, closely connected to prewar early modernist politics and ideas of the postwar pastoral ideal. Earlier ideas of Neo-paganism and the spirituality of Cornwall's landscape persisted into the years following the Second World War, and connected politics to land through the performance of 'folk' or 'peasant' lifestyle by modernist artists in search of the purity of the simple life. Just as this is represented women's desire for the 'little cottage' at home, work too is concerned with activities that represent a craft revival, or a 're-unification of life and work, and the restoration of the means of production to the producers' (Middleton, 2014). Cornwall, with its 'lost' traditions, is the perfect place to develop craft skills as a form of resistance to postwar capitalism.

Stella Benjamin's anecdotes about her unsuccessful attempts at trying to live the self-sufficient rural life growing flowers and raising goats signify a both a nostalgic retreat from modernity and a desire for modernist ideals of authenticity and simplicity. In post-war Britain, this retreat to an idealised rural Cornwall represents a rebellion against the

ever-encroaching blandness of suburban modernity and a search for a counter-cultural way of living that celebrates a stripped-back purity and connection to land and community. The idea of the heroic peasant, so deeply rooted in the imagery and consciousness of the nineteenth-century artist colony and early modernism, is still a romantic ideal that persists in the aspirations of the artist in the mid-twentieth century. The brutal reality is somewhat different from the romantic image, however. The other women who came to St Ives, despite their aspirations for making a living from making things with their hands not demonstrating the same level of retreat from urban materialism to an imagined pastoral ideal, are still influenced by modernist simplicity and ideas of authenticity through creativity that are associated with the passive resistance to capitalist consumerism that is associated with the postwar period. It is notable that all the women discussed in this chapter make a living through hand-making, creative or craft practice. Again, this reflects the political ideology that motivates them as part of a broader resistance to mass consumerism, but it is also evidence of a wider trend in demand for high-quality, hand-made products. Studio pottery, bespoke picture frames, and traditional wooden toys fitted exactly into the consumer tastes of the 'feeling' of the 'new middle-classes' that emerged in the 1960s, a feeling that included 'olive oil, duvets, pasta, floor cushions, Pink Floyd, mineral water, salad, vegetarianism, CND, family planning, DIY, yoga, and yoghurt. And just as such lists accumulate, they force out other lists: bowler hats, Rembrandt, cottage pie, boiled sprouts and cabbage, cheap but sturdy reproduction Jacobean furniture, dark sherry, Terence Rattigan, Pools coupons' (Highmore, 2016:107). This middle-class radicalism was not only a lifestyle defined by consumption, but also of production. The women that produced these exclusive but accessible hand-made objects were as much defined by the new middle-class radical 'feeling' as the women that bought the products of their labour in high-end London shops and galleries. In this way, both the production and consumption of hand-made craft goods formed part of 'semiotic relays' that allowed the 'ruthlessness of capitalism to be disguised as self-actualisation and individualism', where middle-class radicalism was transformed into neoliberalism through domestic desires and home ownership (Highmore, 2016:121-2).

One of the other things of note that runs through many of the women's stories is a sense of their entrepreneurship. Women found innovative ways of making money, using skills that they already had, or developing new ones by identifying needs that they could fulfil. Stella's entrepreneurship in growing flowers to sell is an example of women's ability to innovate and adapt in order to earn a living (Benjamin, 2011). Mamie Lewis made cakes for the local café, as well as selling her paintings, both things that she could do as a single parent (Lewis, 2009). Susan Lethbridge moved to St Ives to start her own business making wooden toys and was so successful that when she eventually sold the business, the buyers had to employ three (male) directors to do her job of running the business (Lethbridge, 2011). It is notable that there are no stories in the archive of men working in supplementary employment.

Many women were able to find work for local studios or artists and learned and developed new skills according to both what was needed for employability, and needed for their desire to fulfil their creative ambitions. Lieka Ritman was able to use her interior design skills to set up shop as a picture framer, working for all the artists in St Ives before going on to concentrate on her painting, while also running a café with her partner (Ritman, 2009).

A number of women speak proudly of being able to buy their own homes through earning money independently. This prominent theme of the pride in being able to buy their own homes is absent from interviews with men.

What did St Ives have to offer that women could not have achieved in a city, or the places from which they came? I argue that the economic growth supported by casual tourism and creative arts of St Ives, while offering often only unstable, temporary employment, was more appealing to women who sought to carve out their own careers as independent, single women. Women's stories reveal how they developed and participated in professional and social networks, were ambitious and took on training opportunities, were entrepreneurial and worked flexibly, and owned their own businesses. These kinds of jobs had the kind of flexibility that women needed to fit with childcare as single parents, and they were not expected to give up work because they were married. The support network in St Ives was unique to its creative community, and

accessible because of the town's small size. The cost of living was cheaper than in a city, with inexpensive - if poor quality - housing, as discussed in the previous chapter. St Ives offered the opportunity for freedom and independence, where women could pursue their dreams of a creative career on their own.

'I Made Cakes and All That': Part-Time and Supplementary Work

Many women took on part-time work, and there was casual work available in the tourist industry. Often, women could find employment in creative work; Troika and Mask Potteries provided work decorating ceramics, and Susan Lethbridge employed artists and their 'artistic wives' to decorate her wooden toys (Stephens, 1996:53). Women married to artists in St Ives often became the primary earners, their income from waitressing or other low-paid work supporting themselves and their husbands (Stephens, 1996:49). Their husbands frequently characterised their own work as manual labour, aligning themselves with working-class miners and fishermen, keeping regular hours and going to the pub after an 'honest day's work' (Stephens, 1996:55). Women's work was therefore often essential to the family's survival, but was obscured by a masculine performance of an idea of work that was far from truthful.

Stella Benjamin's anecdotes about her work reveal a great deal about the kinds of lifestyle that artists in St Ives aspired to, and the reality of pursuing those romantic dreams. Her stories reveal both a sense of naive enthusiasm for this lifestyle of 'ostentatious poverty' and the miserable conditions that went with it (Stephens, 1996:45). This asceticism that often characterised women's lives in Cornwall in the years following the Second World War has been described in almost mystical terms, aligning bodily experience of hardship with spiritual experience (Stephens, 2018:70). This performance of modernist ideals defined the desires of women coming to St Ives, however, this way of living would have been impossible without the support of a community, particularly for women.

When living at Cripplesease, Stella and Anthony attempted to be self-sufficient, using the smallholding to try to earn money. Their attempts were not particularly successful, and these anecdotes share 'experiences which somehow go wrong' (Eggins & Slade,

1997:273). The attempt at growing flowers to sell in Covent Garden in London was entrepreneurial as well as romantic, if somewhat backbreaking and ultimately economically unviable. Anemones were first sold in the flower markets at Covent Garden in the late nineteenth century, and cultivation had spread from the Isles of Scilly to Cornwall by the 1920s to compete with growers from the French Riviera who provided cut flowers from December to March (Johnstone, 1972:25-6). However, growing ceased completely during the Second World War, and was followed by an anemone 'population explosion' in the late 1940s which may have been the motivation for Stella's foray into flower cultivation (Johnstone, 1972:27). This floral boom was followed in the early 1950s by a destructive incidence of fungal and viral disease affecting anemones, which, combined with flowers that were less hardy in winter, made cultivation difficult and uneconomical. Stella describes the hard physical labour that she endured picking flowers while carrying her son on her back:

And we tried to grow anemones/Unsuccessfully/Um/I had Yorick on my back/Picking them/And then at the cottage /The room downstairs/Was full of buckets of anemones/You had to bunch them up/In a shape/You know/To make a proper shape/And tie them up/Put them in the boxes

(Benjamin, 2009)

She describes how her husband would put the flowers on the bus and take them to Penzance to go on the train to Covent Garden. This was not sustainable, however:

But the money was /Appalling/And there were lots of weeds/[laughs]/So it didn't work

(Benjamin, 2009)

The idea of growing flowers and keeping animals fits a certain kind of romantic, creative bohemian ideal, which is nostalgic for the kinds of rural peasant idyll painted by artists of nineteenth-century art colonies, as well as being part of a larger rejection of urban modernity and mass consumerism associated with the postwar countercultural movement (Faulkner, 2018). Another artistic couple, W.S. Graham and Nessie Dunsmuir,

sold violets, according to Bryan Wynter, suggesting the possibility that floriculture was more widely adopted as a potential source of income by more in the creative community of West Penwith (Stephens, 2018:70) Stella's description of working with her baby on her back conjures up an idealised image of peasant women and children working in the fields, the subject of many artists of the rural art colonies of the late nineteenth century. She dispels the romantic image through her anecdote in her revelation of the project's failure. Stella also recalls their unsuccessful attempt at keeping goats:

We had goats/We were going to have a milking herd/I think one milked/The others were just/Um/Eating/And had to go up on the moor/We used to take them up on the moor

(Benjamin, 2009)

These attempts at living a life of nostalgic rural simplicity were not just a way of resisting modern life. In 1950s Britain, with rationing still ongoing and London still marked by bomb sites, the nostalgic desire for a pre-war existence in the countryside provided a powerful motivation to seek out a different way of living, away from the city. This rejection of mass consumerism and capitalist materialism, and the search for a more authentic way of living as a form of resistance, is thus both a retreat from and an essentially modern reaction to the complications of the perceived negatives of modernity, which aligns itself with modernism through desire for a utopian existence in harmony with the landscape (Holt, 2003).

A single parent, whose mostly absent husband had left her for good by 1960, Stella also had to support herself by working in town, at the Beachcomber Café. Still living at the cottage in Cripplesease, she usually worked during the day, when she could get the bus into town. Offering to swap shifts with a colleague, she agreed to work one evening. As the buses would not be running in the evening, she decided that the pony that she had acquired would make suitable alternative transport to travel the distance between Cripplesease and St Ives:

I rode my pony in/Freddie Curnow/He made me a bridle out of rope/It was all bareback/I didn't really know how to ride a horse/I sort of learnt /On the way/And

came in/Um/Jim took Ginger the pony up to the Clodgy /To tether him while I was working/About eleven o'clock at night I was washing the floor/And the police came/ And informed me that my horse had been running riot/In the town/And I was to go to the police station/[laughs]/And about one o'clock/They were going to charge me with all sorts of things/Because of the rampage/And she was tethered up in Ayr Field/The playing field up there/Playing field/And the police escorted me up there/ And I asked them to give me/A leg up/[laughs]

(Benjamin, 2009)

The return journey was no easier, and serves to emphasise the difference between the picturesque image of romantic Bohemia and its reality:

And I was riding back/And she was so tired/The pony/That um/We took ages to get home/And on the way/A jeep passed me/And it was a beautiful moonlight night/ And it was Roger Hilton/And he just screeched to a stop/And said/What a wonderful sight/And drove on/Which really upset me because I thought/I would really like a lift/ [Laughs]/So I didn't do that anymore

(Benjamin, 2009)

These anecdotes serve several purposes in Stella's narrative. They perform the function of setting out aspirations for a particular kind of bohemian living, describing the naive hopes and dreams that young Stella shared with her husband, his desire to leave London and dissatisfaction with modern life for a simple, creative life of producing instead of consuming, which fitted with notions of modernism that bohemian St Ives represented. Without the option of a bus, Stella's decision to ride the pony despite not really knowing how only serves to reinforce the enthusiastic naivety that runs through her stories of her younger self, the determination to have a go at something without really knowing how. The encounter with painter Roger Hilton perfectly demonstrates the contradiction of the romantic vision of a young woman riding a horse bareback on a beautiful moonlit night and the exhausting and pedestrian reality of attempting to live the bohemian life, as well as Hilton's complete inability for empathy or compassion. Mamie Lewis got work at the Copper Kettle, which was one of the cafés in St Ives. On the harbourfront, it was one of the best known and longest established cafés in the town, and continued to operate during and after the Second World War. After her disastrous

spell in the Women's Land Army, she spent a holiday in St Ives with a girlfriend. Eventually, she left her husband because he refused to move to St Ives with her, and struck out on her own, using the skills and experience she had to support herself:

When I separated from my husband/He stayed up in Malvern/I stayed down here/
And I made cakes and all that for the Copper Kettle

(Lewis, 2009)

The Copper Kettle is mentioned fairly frequently by interviewees in the archive. Occupying an upper floor above shops on the harbour front, the cafe is run by Pop Short, whose benevolence towards artists means that the café is an important supporter of St Ives' creative community. It is one of the few social spaces in the town at this time that is not a pub, and where women could socialise freely. Pop Short was known for finding part-time work for aspiring artists, as were many of the cafés and restaurants in town. One interviewee describes how a kitchen porter job might be shared between several people, depending on how much money each needed, or how hungover they were when due on shift (Birchall, 2012). Not only was this convenient for the young beatniks, but their employers also had a collectively reliable supply of labour.

'I Was a Potter, I Worked': Women's Creative Practice

One of the most important aspects of being in St Ives for women was being able to fulfil ambitions of having a creative career. Particularly for those women who were single parents, being able to work and support themselves and their children was of primary importance. I argue that St Ives provided unique opportunities for creative work and financial independence, and the chance to train and develop skills from peers that would have been difficult to achieve elsewhere. The creative community provided vital social and professional peer support networks that women could access, along with the economic benefits of cheap rents and flexible part-time work. Furthermore, St Ives provided space for the expression of political, gender, and sexual identities that was difficult to find elsewhere. That women wished to pursue alternative ways of living in creative communities in the immediate postwar period was not unique to St Ives. Jenni

Sorkin, in her history of women's craft practice in the United States in the 1950s, describes a ceramics practice that:

with its emphasis on self-sufficient rural living, offered women unprecedented social freedoms, with the opportunity to live and teach in nontraditional settings, such as cooperative, experimental, or self-initiated communities. Infinitely more private, these off-the-grid situations were more conducive to alternative lifestyles and sexualities, minimizing the social pressure, judgment, and community policing endemic to the sexist and repressive 1950s. Able to barter their unique wares and skill sets, women, too, found varying degrees of financial autonomy in the informal economies of exchange that existed through pottery's social and pedagogical networks.

(Sorkin, 2016:2)

This reflects the desires and experiences of women in St Ives, suggesting that rural craft practice offered both an escape from mainstream repressive norms of gender and sexuality in the 1950s on both sides of the Atlantic, and a degree of autonomy and freedom that was more difficult to find in urban centres. The ceramics community, with the Leach, Mask and Troika potteries, was central to the creative community, with the Mask pottery, set up by Jess Val Baker, and later run by Shirley, distinctive in being run by women.

Moreover, it is the desire for a particular kind of alternative lifestyle that Sorkin highlights, one where ceramics was the basis for social structures and was:

not tied to reward but to the embodiment of an ethical consciousness achieved only through the participation in community and, moreover, a community focused on the acquisition of skill.

The players and the details might change, but the terms of engagement remained largely the same: women artists who led the integration of social commitment with aesthetic intent.

(Sorkin, 2016:7)

Sorkin's histories of Wildenhain, Richards, and Peterson illustrate a 1950s bohemianism and feminine modernism that she argues 'anticipates the 1960s commune, the 1970s feminist cooperative, and the 1980s alternative space movement' (Sorkin, 2016:7). Her

analysis of women's experiences in the United States in the 1950s mirrors exactly that of women in St Ives at the same time. Women moved to St Ives to look for radical new ways of living and working, and it was the support networks that existed in the town providing jobs and training, as well as support for accommodation, childcare, healthcare and social and political lives. Sorkin's work is relevant here not only because it discusses women's craft practice and alternative feminist communities and feminine and queer modernisms, but also because of the possibility that the women in St Ives may have been aware of them and their practices, presenting the possibility of transatlantic connections through feminist craft ideologies. The American Crafts Council's magazine details Bernard Leach's trips to America, of which Janet Leach was a part, and of trips from US craft practitioners to St Ives. I suggest that even if there was no direct discussion of Sorkin's subjects, or direct interchange of ideas, among women in St Ives, there was certainly a shared ambition to create alternative, feminine communities of craft both in the US and UK. Janet Leach's presence on both sides of the Atlantic and her active participation in the women's community and networks in St Ives suggests that the interchange of ideas between communities was entirely possible. Certainly Marguerite Wildenhain's open letter to Bernard Leach in a June 1953 edition of *Craft Horizons*, the American Crafts Council's magazine, in which she criticises Leach's narrow approach to ceramics and instead insists that American pottery must necessarily draw on a much wider history of global craft practices, is evidence of exchange between creative communities (*Craft Horizons*, 1953:43-44). Sorkin's work is therefore important as both a record of alternative, feminist craft practitioners and communities, providing parallels to this thesis, but also as evidence of the potential for the exchange of ideas between these communities of women in the US and UK as early as the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Women who came to St Ives often already had craft training before arriving in the town, and came hoping to learn and develop their practice. Mamie Lewis had studied at Croydon Art School and developed her skills at Leonard Fuller's St Ives School of Art, becoming a successful painter and member of St Ives Society of artist painting. Shirley Beck used her training as a potter, and worked at the Mask Pottery, eventually taking the

business over from Jess Val Baker. Stella Benjamin's art-school education allowed her to work in a number of mediums, decorating ceramics at Troika Pottery, working as an assistant to sculptor Denis Mitchell, learning to make jewellery before eventually training as a weaver. Sheila Oliner went to the Slade School of Art at fifteen, and after training and working as a nurse, she developed her practice as a printmaker in London before moving to St Ives full time. Susan Lethbridge had more unusual training, having first learnt woodcarving as a child, then going to engineering school after working as a flight mechanic during the war.

Mamie Lewis describes how, after spending time studying with Leonard Fuller at the St Ives School of Painting, her hard work eventually paid off:

Eventually I got in to St Ives Society/Showing my pictures in the gallery there every year/I made a thousand pounds in one year

(Lewis, 2009)

Having her work recognised by being accepted into the St Ives Society of Artists was a huge achievement for Mamie, as was earning a thousand pounds in one year, which would have been a significant sum of money at the time. For many women in the archive, gaining financial independence was an important marker of success, especially when the incomes they earned were from their own creative work and allowed them to buy their own property. As discussed in the previous chapter, several of the women in the archive discuss buying their own homes with great pride, as being a homeowner as a single woman was unusual.

Working as an assistant to a more established artist was another way for women to earn money and use their creative skills. Just as sculptor Denis Mitchell worked as an assistant to Barbara Hepworth for many years, Stella Benjamin worked for Denis Mitchell:

Oh I worked for Denis Mitchell/Yes/The sculptor/And he had a studio in/Which is now/Noall's/Cyril Noall's Yard/Which it wasn't then/Yes/And it was one of the old lofts/And it was lovely at that time/Because Smith's/It was Smith's ironmongers shop on the corner/And their workshop was on the back of that courtyard/I carved all these wooden sculptures/And I worked on the bronzes/Plugging them/You know /If

they had holes in them/For casting /And cleaning them and that sort of thing/Just a useful assistant

(Benjamin, 2009)

Stella's work for Denis demonstrates her range of skills, in working with wood and preparing works for casting or finishing bronzes. Hoping to further diversify her skills and make some work of her own, she asks Brian Ilesley for a job in the workshop he shares with Brian Ilesley:

After that I asked Brian Ilesley/If I could have a job making jewellery/He said to ask Breon/By that time they were partners/Breon O'Casey and Brian Ilesley/And they talked to Dennis about me /And/So they took me on for a month probation

(Benjamin, 2009)

Ilesley and O'Casey both produced work in a variety of media, and perhaps influenced by this approach to creative work that embraces the idea of the artist working in different media, and also perhaps for more pragmatic reasons, Stella continued to work across a range of different crafts. Already decorating ceramics at St Ives pottery Troika, she worked at more than one job at a time, and, like other women in the archive, continued to learn new skills. She left her job at Troika to work with Ilesley and O'Casey at Porthmeor Studios:

Brian had his studio/His painting studio/There/If you went into/If you went through the door/There was a big Colombian printing press/First/In the first section/And then in the middle section there was a/Our jewellery workshop/And then it was/The last section was Brian Ilesley's/Painting studio

(Benjamin, 2009)

They moved to a new studio owing to issues with noise, as the neighbours were bothered by all the banging from jewellery making. They were successful, selling the jewellery made at the studio to high-profile buyers in London:

It was mostly sent away/I don't know if The Craftsman did jewellery then/Did they/
Yeah we probably did/But we sent a lot of it away/Oxford/London/Primavera/Um/
Crafts Council/V&A /Places like that/Electrum/And I /I was the one who often went up
to London with the stock/To see what shops wanted

(Benjamin, 2009)

Despite being a single parent and working in more than one job, Stella's desire to learn new skills and develop her creative practice continued. Ilsley and O'Casey continued to be mentors to Stella, and it was Brian's interest in learning how to weave on a Navaho loom that led Stella to the practice that she became most well-known for. Stella's weaving practice, and the rugs themselves, epitomise an idea of resistance to consumerism and mass culture. When Brian Ilsley taught himself to weave, building a loom from old beds, Stella was keen to work with him and learn another craft. When Breon O'Casey moved away from St Ives, she took over the studio with another artist who worked there, Vicky Rainsford. When Vicky left:

The studio was big and cold in the winter/And I thought that /Um/That if I had a loom at home then I would do more work/So I asked Brian if he's make me a loom/So we discussed it and decided on a loom/Similar to the Navaho/And/It was just branch wood/Like his sculptures/I didn't actually put it in the cottage /Because by that time I'd sold The Gap/And came up here/And/With Yorick and my nephew/Tim/He was living with me by then/So we came up here/And my loom/So I erected the loom that Brian made me/And it was in what is now the dining room/But eventually/In eighty two I went up into the roof space/My workshop now

(Benjamin, 2009)

Here, the separation between work and home crumbles and labour occupies Stella's domestic space. Stella's weaving has modernist, geometric patterns, and the complex and slow process of weaving on a hand-made loom made from branches has echoes of the return to a way of making a living through work that is both modernist and that simultaneously resists modernity through its mode of making. Reminiscent of notions of peasant weavers working in domestic spaces, the loom in the home signifies a renewed authenticity and simplicity to her weaving. The space between domestic production and consumption is barely perceptible, and reflects the ideas of middle-class radicalism and

a feminine modernism that both rejects mass consumerism and embraces the idea of the hand-made. The loom itself illustrates this perfectly: it was simple and natural, being made from 'branch wood', which suggests an ancient simplicity in its making, yet Stella also compares it to Ilesley's sculptures, making the loom not only a tool for creating art works, but a work of art in its own right, perfectly suited to domestic display in the home. The loom becomes a signifier of Stella's modernism through its decorative but useful domestic display, indicating both her rejection of mass consumerism, her consumption of the loom as part of a commitment to a modernist idea of production that functions as part of a wider idea of a countercultural consumption, and of a consumerism that appeals to a particular kind of consumer who shares the same kind of middle-class radicalism and ideal of the urban pastoral. There is significance too, in the move of the loom into the attic workshop, where it dwells in the realm of rationality and its sculptural qualities echo the roof's 'solid geometry', and it is elevated in the house's verticality to inhabit the 'rational zone of intellectual projects' (Bachelard, 1958:18).

Shirley Beck had learnt pottery in as a young woman in Devon before divorcing and coming to St Ives, and part of her decision to move to the town was based on the hope that she might be able to work in one of the local potteries. She met Jess Val Baker, who was married to the writer Denys Val Baker and who had set up Mask Pottery in 1958:

I was a potter/I worked/I went to work with Jess Val Baker/In the Mask Pottery/And eventually when Jess gave it up I took over/And/I used to go to Jess's/And we had parties at Jess's/Because/Um/We were all/Of the same political feel/At the time/And um/When she/She did a bit of pottery/Down at/Um/Porthmeor Studios/Uh uh/St Christopher's/It was called/Um/But then she moved to Penzance/It was the Mask Pottery and I moved/And I started working there full time with her/Um/But also of course in St Ives at the time we had Troika/Benny/And Lesley/All the Troika people/Who were great friends/We all/Again/We used to go to parties/Because that's what we all did

(Beck, 2009)

Shirley's repetition of parties here emphasises just how deeply intertwined professional and social networks were in St Ives, and equally, how much they were defined by politics. Her social group were linked not only by their shared work, as she illustrates

through her mention of potters from both Penzance-based Mask and St Ives' Troika potteries mixing together socially. The closeness of the community is evident. When she says, 'that's what we all did', she emphasises the cohesiveness of the group and with it, a coherent identity defined by politics (Beck, 2009). The phrase 'We were all of the same political feel' defines Shirley's group of potters not by their shared craft, or through a shared social group, but primarily through their shared politics. It is shared politics that shapes the community, and working together and socialising together reinforces a sense of group identity and shared political feel. Shirley's hope of using her art-school training to become a potter was fulfilled, and her experience underlines the importance of social networks to women in St Ives. Having met Jess Val Baker through her political activism and commitment to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, her comments demonstrate the closeness of the creative community at that time, linking together the potters as a cohesive social group. She also describes how politics defined relationships and social groups in St Ives, and the importance of shared views to making and retaining friendships, as well as shared interest and professional relationships. Not only do the community work and socialise together, but most importantly, as Shirley notes, they share the same politics. This sense of group identity around 'political feel' is emphasised and reflected both through a sense of shared purpose and interest in working together in pottery, and through socialising together. Going to parties together supports both the group's ideology and sense of togetherness, but also reinforces the identity of the individual within the community: 'we used to go to parties/because that's what we all did' (Beck, 2009). Shirley remained active in politics, eventually becoming mayor of St Ives. Her commitment to the pacifist cause and the politics of the New Left are further demonstrated by her decision to open an anti-Vietnam War protest shop in Fore Street in St Ives in the mid-1960s.

This interest in CND is another important signifier in the creative community in St Ives during this period. Founded in 1958 in response to the threat from Soviet Russia and the Suez Crisis of 1956, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament attracted a young and mainly middle-class membership, and appealed particularly to young artists like Shirley. The rise of CND was indicative of the countercultural resistance that was to come, and

expressed a rejection of mainstream politics and resistance to consumer capitalism (Kynaston, 2015:126). Those dissatisfied with both Labour and the Communist Party were loosely aligned with British New Left, who were mostly represented by a small, elite group associated with universities and cultural institutions who were cynical about traditional politics but focused on pushing forward changes in civil and political rights, and it was CND that brought them together (Sandbrook, 2005: 262). The extent of this mobilisation of young, middle-class left-thinking people led to the creation of over 270 different local branches of CND by 1959. St Ives' high-profile supporters included Barbara Hepworth and Patrick Heron. As CND became not only a cause for young people, but a frame for social activities, CND became intertwined with jazz music, duffel coats and jeans, with one coming to signify the other, and all signifiers of beatnik culture (Sandbrook, 2005: 262). As such, CND was both a cultural intervention in politics and a political intervention in culture. Later, the counterculture and leftist politics coalesced in their opposition to the Vietnam War, which attracted and united the bohemian middle classes. This broad set of countercultural beliefs defined what women were searching for in St Ives. They were looking for a place in which they could pursue creative independence, and along with like-minded others, attempt to change the world. Women moving to St Ives were both producers and consumers of this political culture and cultural politics, as the parties and jazz evenings in the next chapter demonstrate. This is not to trivialise the political through its association with the cultural, but to show just how much the social in St Ives was an expression of the political, and the importance of this to bringing together the community to create a shared group identity. Going on CND marches, or wearing a CND badge, is part of a 'feeling', defined by an aesthetic of middle-class radicalism that has sympathy for the politics of the New Left, seeks to reject mass consumerism and Americanisms, likes jazz and folk, modernist arts and crafts, and aspires to the urban pastoral espoused by Habitat (Sandbrook, 2005: 262 and Highmore, 2016). Or, like the women discussed here, this 'feeling' is revealed in a search for the rural imaginary as discussed in the previous chapter. Lieka Ritman was also able to use her specialist training to find work when she arrived in St Ives. Having trained as an interior designer for seven years in her native Australia, she

had practical skills that helped her to develop a career in St Ives, ultimately enabling her to pursue her dream of being a painter.

So I thought right/I'm going to grab this opportunity/And go to England/And so I stayed in Salubrious House for quite a long time/And worked for Robin Nance all summer/You know/In the shop there/There was Mrs Popple and myself

(Ritman, 2009)

After spending her first summer working for Robin Nance in his shop on the harbour, which sold furniture, weaving and ceramics, she used her woodwork skills to become a picture framer. Bryan Pearce was her first client, and over the years she also worked for Patrick Heron and Tony O'Malley. What she lacked in practice in frame making, she made up for with confidence and ambition:

I wasn't frightened of it/It was a bit iffy/It was wonderful

(Ritman, 2009)

Although Lieka is describing her decision to start making frames, she could equally be describing her decision to start a new life in St Ives. The creative community offered a space where shared countercultural politics and bohemian sensibilities enabled a sense of belonging, as well as a level of permissiveness that took pride in its open-mindedness. St Ives provided her with an opportunity to pursue a new life and enabled her to realise her queer identity. When Stella Benjamin, with Breon O'Casey and Brian Illsley, moved out of their studio at the Penwith, Lieka was able to move in, becoming a member of the Penwith Society and having more space both to make frames and work on her own paintings. Her framing was in high demand, and she made frames for artists including Wilhelmina Barns-Graham. Her work was lucrative enough to allow her to buy a house in the 1970s, with the help of a deposit from her parents and some creative work on her mortgage application. In the mid-eighties, she met her partner Jenny Eyre, and they opened the Sunflower vegetarian restaurant on Chapel Street. When the

couple eventually sold the restaurant, Lieka made the decision to concentrate on her painting.

Susan Lethbridge moved from London to St Ives after the Second World War. Her mother had a house in Albert Terrace in St Ives, and she worked on carving her wooden children's toys in the coffin-maker's workshop in The Digey. She opened a shop called The Toy Trumpet, and later, another shop in the Warren, run by her mother, Mabel Lethbridge. (Mabel had a successful business, as well as being a divorced single parent to Susan) (Lethbridge, 2011). Susan Wynter Toys, as the business was called after her marriage to painter Bryan Wynter, was a success, and she sold toys to London department stores such as Fortnum and Mason. She later moved her toy factory to Brightlingsea. When she later sold the factory to Galt Toys, she laughs that they had to take on three men to do her job. Unlike some of the other women, Susan did not attend art school, but instead had a more unusual route to her creative career:

I had made toys when I was a very small child, I think since about eight/My mother had an estate office in Cheyne Walk, and next door there was um, billiard table makers/You see I was at school boarding school/I went down to the billiard table makers because there was no one to play with you see/Mabel was working in her office the billiard table makers was next door/Thurstons/And I used to go down there and make things/Mostly railway engines and railway carriages/And uh/And then the foreman saw me under one of the benches /With my bits of offcuts/And he said you know this isn't really for girls/I'm very sorry dear/He was a very nice young man/So cut a long story short/(I had my hair cut as well as a long story)/And I put on a pair of shorts the following Summer and I went back and I said that I was my brother that I was Patrick/And he let me

(Lethbridge, 2011)

And it went on for two or three years/And then on the 49 bus/My mother Mabel met the foreman/And he said /Your son's getting on very well with his woodwork/Mrs Lethbridge/And she said but George I haven't got a son/You see/But he never let on that he knew/And she didn't say anything to me/And I stayed for not much longer/ And that's when I really started making toys

(Lethbridge, 2011)

Susan's queering of gender norms is evident throughout her story. Starting with her determination to learn woodworking and dressing in 'boys' clothes, she continued to

transgress gender norms, entering into traditionally male spaces in order to achieve her goals.

During the war, she again subverted traditional gender roles to serve as a flight mechanic, and then went to engineering college. Returning to her love of making toys, she moved to St Ives to open a toy shop:

It was a very different environment from anything I had experienced before/I had a crate of tools, very primitive tools, and ideas of what I wanted to do/I had made toys when I was a very small child, I think since about eight/Mabel had a cottage down here/She still had it when she died/Albert Terrace/We were broke, my then boyfriend and I/And so we came and moved it to it then/And that's when I opened Toy Trumpet

(Lethbridge, 2011)

The importance of the social space as to professional networking in a small town in St Ives is highlighted again by Susan's description of meeting a man in the Castle pub to find business premises to rent.

I got in touch with a man I was advised to get in touch with/I think it was in the Castle Hotel actually/And asked him if he'd got any premises/And he said no he didn't/But I could share with his/(he was an undertaker)/I could share with his undertaker

(Lethbridge, 2011)

Yet again, as a woman, she entered into a predominantly male space in order to further her goals. This contrasts with Stephen's argument, that women were largely excluded from the masculine professional networks that operated in the space of the pub, and therefore were at a significant disadvantage professionally (Stephens, 1996:47). As I discuss in Chapter Four, this raises two issues. Firstly, it ignores the fact that the pub is not the only space for networking, and that women have their own professional and social networks that operate in spaces outside of the pub. Secondly, women could and did participate in social activity at the pub, as women discuss in their interviews, although it was often not the central locus for their social activity. In addition, Mass Observation note that more women are present in pubs in more cosmopolitan London

and note the occasional presence of 'bohemian' women in men-only spaces of the pub in Worktown. The working women of Worktown, who would never have been found in male-only spaces at home, would happily transgress these gender rules whilst on holiday in Blackpool, suggesting that in cosmopolitan, seaside St Ives, women, as Susan's interview demonstrates, were more able to participate in the professional social networks enacted at the pub than Stephens suggests. Susan's experience of working in predominantly male environments arguably makes it easier for her to move more comfortably between gendered spaces.

The man she met in the pub was an undertaker, and as he did not have any free premises, suggests that she might share his. Susan shared the unusual space of the coffin-making workshop, another exclusively male space, where she began to make her toys using the offcuts from coffins, using the waste generated from the end of life to make things for the beginning of life, and then sold them in her shop, The Toy Trumpet. Susan's description of meeting a man in the pub through a word-of-mouth recommendation who offered her a place to work also typifies the workings of a small community like St Ives, where in a small community someone will know someone who can fulfil a particular need. Again, the low cost and availability of workspace was important for women, and in Susan's case, her entrepreneurial skills and ambitions enabled her to build and develop the Toy Trumpet into a successful business, with two shops in St Ives and selling to upmarket department stores in London. She also had enough business to have several employees, in addition to giving casual work to artists who decorated toys:

For a short time I had my then boyfriend/And, yes!/I had a woman working for me/
And I used to send her out to buy /Buy things at the shops that I needed/And she
used to /She used to go and buy/[laughs]/You couldn't buy wrapping paper/To pack
things/I used to send her out to buy toilet paper/And/[Laughing]/And she was a very
refined woman/And she came back one day/Having lugged these great parcels/And
she said/Would you mind if I go to another shop/It's very embarrassing/I never
forgot that /It was very funny

(Lethbridge, 2011)

Susan has many amusing anecdotes around the business, and unlike the other women in the archive, whose stories are structured by their home lives, Susan's memories are constructed around her business. Like the other women, her stories are located more or less chronologically, and anchored in place, but the places that Susan uses to build her narrative are business rather than domestic premises. The business was perhaps more constant in her life, compared to her domestic situation, where her marriage to Bryan Wynter ended owing to his affair with a student (Stephens, 1996:49). It was certainly a success; the toys were sold in Fortnum and Mason, Burlington Arcade, and other shops that were 'much posher than Heal's', as well as in the shop at St Ives, although Susan says in her interview that as everything was handmade, the company did not really make very much money (Lethbridge, 2011).

When printmaker Sheila Oliner moved permanently to St Ives in the 1980s, her reputation as a 'proper artist' helped her to develop relationships with other artists in the town. It was Cathy Watkins, the curator of the Penwith Gallery, who ensured that Sheila had a studio, as Cathy wanted the studio to go to a 'professional artist':

I spoke to Roy Walker/And I spoke to Cathy/And I spoke to my children/And said look/It'll take two years to get a studio/So no rush/But five weeks later Cathy rang me up and said/We've given you our biggest studio/We want a professional artist in it/ So panic stations/I took it in the April/Moved down here in October/October eighty five/I knew Maurice/John Emanuel/Roy Walker/Roy Ray/I had a network of people that I knew/So I had work /Like I had these walls insulated/And floor and everything put down/Before I moved in/So I got as much maximum/Because it was a bit of a tip really/And um/Then/What happened next?/Oh I know/I hadn't been here long/And there was this bang at the door/And this little man stood there and said/I'm Karl Weschke/I hear you're a proper artist/So actually/Karl was one of my closest friends here/We were very good friends

(Oliner, 2009)

Although Sheila moved to St Ives much later than the other women, she belonged to the same generation, and as discussed in the previous chapter, shared the same desire to pursue her creative career as well as her independence, and the same rural imaginary as the other women. Her hesitation in moving is clear, as she articulates here. Having spoken to Roy Walker, Cathy Watkins, and her children about her decision to move, she

reassured herself by assuming that the availability of a studio would defer the need to follow through with such a big decision, and then when a studio becomes available immediately instead of the expected two-year wait, she defers the move further by having renovation works done in it. Giving a list of the artists that she knew before she moved down demonstrates that she had an existing creative and professional network, making the move slightly less daunting. Her interaction with artist Karl Weschke shows that she was both welcomed into the creative community and respected as a professional. Shelia remained friends with Weschke until his death.

Charity Work, Labour, Parties and The Labour Party

The creative community in St Ives was clearly shaped by radical countercultural politics, even if that was simply a political 'feeling', rather than party politics. Work, politics and social life was deeply intertwined in St Ives, and for women in particular, the evidence of mutual support networks supports an idea of socialist politics in practice on a local, everyday level. Politics was at the heart of Shirley Beck's working and social life, and it was a shared 'political feel' that shaped the sense of the creative community in St Ives. A member of the Labour Party, Shirley was heavily involved in activist politics and fundraising, particularly for pacifist causes such as CND, and later protests against the war in Vietnam. Both causes served to unite the disparate left, disillusioned with traditional party politics and concerned about the influence of America and the Cold War (Sandbrook, 2005: 262). The New Left and the counterculture were brought together by opposition to the actions of the United States in Vietnam and were supported by a large proportion of Labour voters (Sandbrook, 2006:532). The Labour Party gained 44.1% of votes at the 1964 General Election, to the Conservatives' 43.4%, with a 77.1% turnout, which suggests a significant number of the British public opposed the war in Vietnam (Donnelly, 2005:76). This countercultural middle-class radicalism shaped the creative community in St Ives and framed modernist practices in making and socialising. Parties were almost indistinguishable from the political party, as Shirley's interview shows.

She describes the political landscape of St Ives through her description of her activism, and the social groupings that are made through shared political views. Barbara Hepworth became one of CND's sponsors early on in 1958, and made a commitment to pacifism, and Patrick Heron and Peter Lanyon were also involved in both local and national left wing politics (Burstow, 2014:8-9). Hepworth's commitment to pacifism is demonstrated by her support for Shirley's local campaigning:

Yes well I was a member of the Labour Party/And in those days we used to have jumble sales/There were not charity shops in those days/And/Um/Well Barbara particularly/She just used to ring up and say/Oh I've got some jumble/So I used to go up around to Barbara's/And pick up jumble/And/Um/Then when we had/Um/Elections and things/We used to have car rallies/Around the town/And Patrick Heron/He used to say/Right I'll come in the lead car/He was on the microphone/Shouting/There down the microphone/No problem at all/He just adored it

(Beck, 2009)

This demonstrates that both Hepworth and Heron were active in politics. They were committed to making an active contribution through campaigning and support for causes that were very visible in the community. This shows how politics provided a foundation for social lives in St Ives, and how a shared politics linked people and modernism together. Shirley's involvement with the Labour Party involved organising social events, particularly fundraising for particular causes (as discussed in next chapter), but also other events such as jumble sales, political campaigning during elections, and most significantly, opening the anti-Vietnam War shop.

In the mid-sixties, both Heron and Hepworth lent their moral and financial support to Shirley's activism:

My friend and I decided in the middle sixties/To have an anti-Vietnam shop/Very naughty I suppose/In Fore Street/We were so fed up with the terrible things that were going on/And there was a shop in Fore Street that was coming up/And of course people thought/Who were these two girls/Well who are they/And I was talking to Patrick about it/And he said/Oh tell them I'll stand guarantor if there's any problem/And Barbara said the same/So Barbara and Patrick/Stood guarantor for Jill and I/While we ran our anti-Vietnam War shop/In the mid-sixties/In Fore Street

(Beck, 2009)

There are two threads of Shirley's story that I will highlight here. The opening of a shop as a form of countercultural resistance is the apex of modern anti-capitalist consumption. People expressed their rejection of materialism and mass consumerism, and therefore their identities, through consumption. Using a retail space as the frame for countercultural protest is the perfect expression of resistance to capitalism through consumption of political ideologies. As Shirley notes, charity shops were unusual at this time, and her action of bringing radical global politics to the high street was somewhat revolutionary. In addition, by opening the shop on Fore Street, she was situating radical pacifist issues in the heart of the town, where they were impossible to ignore. By bringing the protest to the high street, she was also situating it in the mainstream. As well as selling jumble, the shop was a space for the discussion of politics, ideas, and probably gossip. Shirley's shop created a space for the production and consumption of ideas, where the space of the shop is rearticulated to produce a space in which the creative community's modernist agendas can be consumed. It is a social space that is particularly feminine, inhabited by Shirley, her friend Jill, and a 'space/time that amalgamates the domestic, the social and the intellectual' (Winning, 2013:142). As such, the shop articulates the modernism of the creative community in St Ives. The shop is supported by both Heron and Hepworth, and as such is a visible expression of their politics, as well as Shirley's, and the rest of the creative community who Shirley has already described as being part of. She describes the activities in the shop:

Well we just gave out leaflets/And we had lots of photographs/Terrible/Some of the terrible photographs/Of little children who'd been napalmed/People who'd been killed/And said/Please write to the American Embassy/And we had forms there to write to the American Embassy/Put pressure on people to stop this dreadful war/And we had my friend Jill's little boy/Baby was called Sebastian/And he was one and a half/So we had him sitting in with us/And he was a beautiful little round-faced baby/And we had a photograph/Would you like your child to be like this/Which was a napalmed child/Or like this/And my son/Who was five years old/Was running about all over the place/And so we were just making the comparisons/That when there's a terrible war going on/It's the innocent that get so injured/And that's why we were asking people to write to the American Embassy/And put pressure on anyone we

could to stop this dreadful war/It's right opposite Court Cocking/That's where it was/
And it was a lovely shop with big windows/And it was just empty for part of the
season/And I think we had it for most of the winter

(Beck, 2009)

By inhabiting the space of the shop with their small children, and stocking it with jumble, not only were they creating a space of radical feminine modernity, but they were also framing the devastation of the war by reframing the shop as a domestic social space. By drawing comparisons between their children and pictures of those in Vietnam, they challenged visitors to reframe international conflict through a domestic lens. Their emotionally manipulative tactics and graphic images of the war were not universally welcomed, and the experience in the shop was not altogether positive, despite the high-profile support that they received, as Shirley goes on to describe:

Mind you it wasn't very nice being in there/Some people came in and spat at us and called us dirty reds/And other people came in and said well done and we'll sign the forms/But you know, that's politica...that's politics/You know/Sort of/But/Patrick came in a couple of times/And said how are you getting on/Barbara/Actually she didn't come in/I think she wasn't terribly well at that time/Um/She didn't come down/But Brian did/Her secretary/Came down to see if we were alright/I mean/Very very caring people

(Beck, 2009)

Again, this demonstrates not only Shirley and Jill's commitment to their cause in their resilience to the abuse that they encountered, but also the practical and emotional aspects of the support that they received from the creative community. It also defines the important social relationships that Shirley was able to develop, and the networks that existed in St Ives that were defined by politics, creativity and sociability. Despite not having been in the town for long, Shirley's willingness to get involved in social organising and political and charity work helped her to build and develop supportive relationships and professional networks that enabled her to eventually own her own business and do things that she would not have been able to achieve had she not come to St Ives.

Conclusion

St Ives offered unique opportunities to women for training and employment in creative careers. The postwar craft revival and the desire for the 'urban pastoral' made the studio potteries in particular a success, which were an important space for women to develop creative careers. Women were able to develop their art school training or build on existing experience to work in local potteries like Mask and Troika, or use their skills to start their own successful businesses. Women did not have to be able to throw pots, evidenced by the kinds of slab pots and tablets sold by Troika, and work decorating pottery was available too. Susan Wynter provided women (and some men) with piece-work painting wooden toys at home.

Creative work was flexible, however, women often had to take on casual work in the tourist industry in pubs and restaurants to support themselves, their husbands and children. The professional networks that women developed in the town often provided opportunities to learn from peers, an echo of the radical pedagogy that was also happening on the other side of the Atlantic. These networks did not just provide women with professional support, but were also social networks based around shared socialist politics. Moving to Cornwall for a simple lifestyle that eschewed modern conveniences was an important draw for many women, and working on the land, in the landscape was part of that dream of self-sufficiency. Whilst not always successful, women were tenacious and used the skills they had to make successful careers and financial independence, often as single parents.

Feminine modernism is defined by the socialist cultural politics that shaped these communities of creative women, whose ideals extend beyond individual creative practice, and beyond an art object. The community itself is being made and remade by women who choose to be active participants in its construction, contributing to and benefitting from its support networks.

Chapter Four: ‘You’d Think The Tonic Was More Expensive Than The Gin’: Women’s Social Lives

Introduction

Much like women’s professional networks, women’s social networks in St Ives were defined by a set of practices that created a coherent, self-identifying group with shared values, that set itself apart from mainstream cultural formations. Gossip is one form of creating group cohesion, where the information in circulation is less important than the act of sharing it, which develops a sense of group identity both by reinforcing shared values and a sense of intimacy (Spacks, 1987 in Rogoff, 1996:63). Social practice in the town was essential to creating and maintaining the sense of community that attracted women to move to St Ives. In this chapter, I argue that there is a social aesthetic that is central to the construction of the community, where women are responsible for shaping and controlling the agenda, something which is particularly important to a feminine construction of modernity. It is often women who are responsible for creating and hosting parties, and if the party is conceived of as a work of art, then the party can be seen as a ‘living sculpture’ (McLoughlin, 2013:4), where shaping the community becomes a creative act in the feminine production of modernism. Excluded from modernism by its narrow definition as a ‘particular and gendered set of practices’, I argue that parties are a site of social practice that allow women to produce an alternative modernism by creating the community as a work of art through a temporal and spatial frame (Pollock, 1988:50, Winning, 2013:137).

Women moved to St Ives both because of their desire to participate in a community that produced a set of shared values that was associated with an aspirational lifestyle of New Left countercultural bohemianism and modernist aesthetics. Women upheld and

reinforced these values by participating in their practice, as part of a community that facilitated their pursuit of independent, creative ways of living. Social lives both reflected and reinforced the ideas of what the creative community should be, politically, ideologically, emotionally and professionally. Certain places were hubs for women to meet, make friends, find and give support to each other. Social networks were professional networks, and women were able to make connections that enabled them to pursue creative careers in ways that they might not have been able to in a city. For example, women could meet at the Penwith gallery, or at the beach, spaces where they could socialise and form networks in ways that would be difficult in traditionally masculine networking spaces such as the pub, and these were also more democratic spaces where women could bring their children. The social activities that they participated in reflected the ideals that they were looking for in the creative community, like charity fundraising, evenings of shared cultural activities/music, parties with like-minded people who shared the same political views. As Shirley describes, parties were a regular function of the social scene in St Ives:

And we all just got together/And had parties/That was/That's a whole different story/
But/I mean/Yes/And I s'pose/We used to have regular parties/There were parties/
Always/Every week somebody had a party/And you just went along/And it wasn't
hard drinking or anything/Sometimes you'd just sit there/And talk all night/Sit on the
settee and talk to somebody/Because you hadn't seen them for ages/But it was/Just
a/They were social get-togethers rather than parties

(Beck, 2011)

She distances the parties of her social circle from the idea of wild, drunken, bohemian parties that Stephens describes, instead recasting them as 'social get togethers' where she could 'talk all night'.

The sexual permissiveness and ideas of free love that attracted people to St Ives meant that there was also an alternative, queer, party scene. Painter John Emanuel mentions sculptor John Milne in the context of the party, which is significant. While heterosexual men artists were drinking in the pub and cheating on their wives, the queer social set

were having parties at John Milne's house. Milne owned Trewyn House, of which Hepworth's Trewyn Studio was originally a part, and had been bought for him by his partner. Milne's parties were renowned in St Ives, and were the locus for its alternative party scene. Heather Jameson, a supporter and patron of artists in St Ives, and her partner Eddie Craze lived in part of the house, which was a 'notorious house for parties' (Benjamin, 2009). This social scene was also part of a queer/feminine alternative network operating outside of the masculine network of the pub and the studio. It was Hepworth who was asked to help find somewhere for Francis Bacon to live, demonstrating that the existing narratives of heteronormative masculinity in St Ives creative community failed to acknowledge the powerful feminine and queer networks that also operated in the town (Stephens, 1997).

There were many social activities within the town's creative community. Other than the pub, openings at the Penwith were a centre for socialising, and the Penwith Society was as much a social club as a community of professional practice. From jazz evenings to the arts ball, the society was central to the social lives of many in St Ives. Visiting each other's houses for a party was also common, as was going back to someone's house after the pub.

Women who were parents were sometimes limited in their choices to socialise. Women like Ann Kelley, who was left at in a damp home alone with a sick baby while her husband did all the socialising and who did not get the opportunity to go out to parties until she was divorced, and Mamie Lewis, who was a single parent and needed a babysitter to be able to go out and socialise. It is children, however, that also bring women together, and socialising with children at the beach was an activity that was accessible for women who were parents. The beach was a liminal space that offered the opportunity for casual socialising, and as such, a greater amount of social mixing for women with children, allowing them to create and maintain social networks perhaps, at times, more easily than men.

Despite not having the same sort of professional networks as men, which emerged through art schools and were based around the studio and the pub, the support networks that existed in St Ives were essential to women living in St Ives in the postwar

period. Women supported other women within the creative community to quite some extent, from help with somewhere to live to helping during childbirth. In particular, Mary 'Boots' Redgrave and Janet Leach were two women whose names appear frequently in stories of helping other women, and who play a matriarchal role in ensuring that women who came to the town were looked after. For example, Boots and Sheila Lanyon helped artist Elena Gaputyte after she arrived in St Ives unmarried and pregnant, having come originally as a Lithuanian refugee from Soviet Russia.

Of course, not all relations in the community were cordial. Friendships were often drawn along class or political lines, and not everyone got on. There are frequent mentions in the archive of elements or events of discord in the community, arguments and disagreements, fallings out, insults and misunderstandings.

The Modern Party

Joanne Winning, writing about the modernist lesbian literary party before the Second World War, argues that modernism, 'with its protean attempts at innovation, its experimental emphasis on form and its reliance on network and coterie culture for dissemination', resonates with Bordieu's 'field of restricted cultural production', in which art objects 'rely upon an audience - a peer group - capable, intellectually and critically, of their consumption' (2013: 127-128). According to Winning, 'given its demarcation of time and space, we can see the ways in which the modernist party might function as a generative site in which intellectual [...] authority is defined and disseminated and in which cultural influence and intervention take place' (2013: 128). Like Pollock's notion of the construction of the avant-garde, where a group with shared values and practices that circulate within it emphasises its collective sense of self, both internally and to outsiders, therefore emphasises its separateness from the masses, 'the reason why submission to the collective rhythms is so rigorously demanded is that the temporal forms or the spatial structures structure not only the group's representation of the world but the group itself, which orders itself in accordance with this representation' (Bordieu in Winning, 2013: 128.)

As such, the party is an important locus for the performance of women's creative identities and alternative rural modernities. As Winning argues, 'for a party to take place, there has to be the creation of a spatial and temporal frame', and she suggests that 'historically, control of either of these coordinates has not been in the gift of women' (2013:128). However, the stories from the archive are from women talking about parties thrown by other women. If the pub is the domain of masculine modernism, then in the feminine rural imaginary, the party is the preserve of an alternative, feminine, and predominantly female modernism.

The stories from the archive of the most renowned or even notorious parties, or at least the most memorable, centre on parties thrown by Barbara Hepworth, Janet Leach, or John Milne and Heather Jameson. For women, these provided social occasions that were organised by women, and although these were not specifically for women, they operated within spaces that were more neutrally gendered and less masculine than the pub. The Penwith Gallery hosted parties for exhibition openings, as well as coffee mornings and jazz evenings. Shirley Beck discusses the gallery as a venue for social occasions frequently, emphasising its importance as a social hub for the creative community. The gallery operated as a space where social interventions happened in a place where cultural authority is already defined and disseminated, where women could participate in creative networks that were social and professional. Exhibition openings and similar events were key to this kind of modern sociability, where women knew that they were likely to meet both friends and colleagues, or other like-minded people, for an evening of shared cultural interest. St Ives modernist cultural institutions were mostly run by women. Cathy Watkins was the curator of the Penwith, who organised events there; similar events happened at the Leach Pottery, organised by Janet Leach. Barbara Hepworth's parties were big, decadent occasions for the creative community, and happened at the Palais de Danse. Events that happened outside the Penwith but which were organised by the Penwith Society, like the Arts Ball, were also organised mostly by women. The responsibility for organising and hosting social events could be seen as gendered, and typically fell to women; however, this did give women control over how and where they socialised (notwithstanding John Milne's parties, which have previously

been touched upon). The success of an event is often measured by its excesses and is memorable for the amounts of food or drink consumed, or the levels of drunkenness of the guests. Janet Leach's parties were often held at the pottery to celebrate an exhibition, and according to her assistant Margaret Daniel:

you'd think the tonic was more expensive than the gin/Um/Yes/I s'pose/A dozen/
Twenty people/I've forgotten who they all were now/I mean there was food/And
mostly drink really/[laughs]/[...] /Occasions/You know/Certain occasions

(Daniel, 2009)

The rural imaginary of pastoral urbanism discussed in Chapter Two defines a way of living that extends beyond the domestic to work and social lives. It is a lifestyle, or in Highmore's terms, 'a worlding' rather than just an aesthetic, that can be described as being 'produced through accumulated items and itineraries, moods and attitudes gathered and dispersed across furnishings and fashions, foods and foibles [...] that produces some sort of temporary alignment by the way that some other cultural itineraries no longer seem viable, or no longer seem to be quite in-tune anymore. (Highmore, 2016:107) It is exactly this being 'in-tune' with people that women were looking for, and they could identify each other through their urban pastoral interiors, middle-class radicalism, single-parenting, trad jazz and afternoon teas with socialist politics and CND:

Oh yes/Oh yes indeed/In fact Peggy Walker and myself/And a couple of others/We
organised afternoon teas/With Cathy/Who was the curator there/And then we had
Jazz evenings/Trad jazz evenings/Which were great fun/And we used to have lots of
fun/And everybody used to come /Because that was the place to go/And in those
days/There wasn't so much outside/The town/As there is now

(Beck, 2009)

None of the women who moved to St Ives mention the same kind of pre-existing networks or creative contacts influencing their decision, or being there to support their move to the town in their interviews. The social aspect of life in the town was, however,

crucial to their experience. Social groups were formed within the creative community, which was itself a community of interest where people came together with shared views and ideas, and St Ives was the site for the performance of those ideas and those relationships. Griselda Pollock defines that an avant-garde emerges:

at the historical point when a specific kind of self-consciousness within a distinctive group emerges to foster identification between members of a self-selecting group or a collection of mutually-referencing groups. These internal identifications serve, in turn, to establish difference and distance from the official cultural formations.

(Pollock, 2010:800)

The creative community in St Ives was certainly a 'distinctive group' or a 'collection of mutually-referencing groups' that identified with a set of values, aspirations and intellectual ideals that were also specific to place. St Ives' size meant that it was also much easier to meet like-minded people, compared to a city.

Making Friends

Shirley Beck left her marriage and her hometown in Devon with her two-year-old son, in search of a new life for them both. In her interview, she describes how for her, the Penwith Gallery was really the central point for everything she was looking for in St Ives. The centre for modernist painting and sculpture was also, for Shirley, the centre of cultural and social life. The home of the Penwith Society and run by curator Cathy Watkins, it also offered studio space. The Penwith, as Shirley describes, is absolutely central to helping her achieve her aims in her new life. Not knowing anyone previously, she is able to make friends and build a social life through the Penwith, becoming heavily involved in the Society's social activities, raising funds and volunteering on events like the annual Arts Ball. The Penwith also provides her with the opportunity to make pottery again, which leads to her working as a potter.

Well I was very fortunate that I found somewhere to live in Downalong/And
Downalong St Ives has a very important/Had a very important gallery/Still is a very
important gallery/The only major gallery in St Ives/The Penwith Gallery/And because

I had done pottery at um art school/And I was interested in doing pottery again/And meet some people/I went round to Penwith Gallery when they had an opening

(Beck, 2009)

Exhibition openings were the ideal opportunity to experience the work produced by artists in St Ives. Open to the general public, it would have been easier, particularly for a woman on her own, to have a drink and talk to new people in the gallery space rather than a more intimidating and more obviously gendered space, such as the pub, for example. For Shirley, the Penwith, both as a place and an organisation, was symbolic of opportunities to meet like-minded people with similar left-leaning politics, who liked similar modernist art, and liked the same social activities, and who would recognise those qualities in each other.

And this was great fun actually/But um/Now I don't know how it is/I mean there are different people/In the Penwith Gallery/To what you find in the galleries around/ There are so many people that I've never heard of/They've just come and they're there

(Beck, 2009)

Shirley singles out the Penwith as different from the other galleries in the town. Other galleries were more commercial, and not underpinned by the Society itself. She sets the Penwith apart as somewhere cosmopolitan, that attracted a wider range of different people from other places. Again, this defines the Penwith and the people who frequent it as somehow more special, and unique. It is not like other places, which are more commercial, and lack the Penwith's vibrant community. That the community that emanates from the Penwith recognises itself in its shared self-consciousness and from this gains its sense of self is perhaps also partly the reason for the nostalgia articulated by the archive. Each interviewee speaks of the loss of community in the town. As the town's population aged, and it became less and less affordable, with more and more second homes, this is certainly true. However, the lost community also speaks of the loss of recognition, of the loss of self-consciousness that enables group self-identification.

It's not a community anymore/I don't think/No/They're all fighting against one another/Which is damning/Isn't it

(Hunt, 2009)

The sense of loss of community and nostalgia for a St Ives that no longer exists runs through Shirley's account of her experience of the social life of St Ives. Speaking of the other social spaces in St Ives that provided a place for people to come together, Shirley describes the beach as an egalitarian space, where everyone can come together. Shirley's description conjures up a picture of an ideal space, where the beach is a leveller of difference, of class, of creative hierarchies, artists and locals.

You always said hello to people/Um/And now/St Ives in two thousand and nine/Is very different/Than it was in the sixties and seventies/Even the eighties/I mean in those days on a Sunday/If it was a fine Sunday/We all used to go Porthmeor Beach/ There was a place where all the locals used to congregate/And sort of sit/And Willie Barns Graham she used to come down on Porthmeor Beach/And sit and talk/Oh yeah/Yes/Um/It was just/Just/You know/Come and sit for half an hour/Have a talk/ And go back in the studio/Or go off again/And um/It was just all sorts of people around/All sorts of people/Who did all sorts of things/So you didn't necessarily know them close to/But you knew them to say hello to/And/How are things going/Have you had a good week/Whatever/This general/Thing

(Beck, 2009)

The idea of these kinds of loose friendship is repeated in other interviews, where women knew someone to 'say hello to', and have a chat to, but to whom they were not close. The idea that there was a different kind of community, with a different kind of people in St Ives is repeated:

Again/They were all people/That they came down integrated into what was/The old St/I call it/St Ives as it was originally/Before/Before we became open on a Sunday/I'm not anti opening on a Sunday/But there was a very different feel about the town/Um now it's a very changed town/We're open all the year round/There's people in and out/I'm sure there's very famous people/And very lovely people around/Um/But we don't/Get to grips with each other/Anymore/Like we used to

(Beck, 2009)

The idea that the people that came to St Ives used to 'integrate' is an interesting one. I argue that the community that Shirley is nostalgic for, where people got to 'grips' with each other, was formed by exactly those concerns to build or to be part of a community that recognised itself in a shared self-consciousness. Shirley's conception of the community is a group of people who not only came together socially, professionally and politically, but also shared an idea of what the creative community was and what it should be, and who were prepared to take individual responsibility in shaping that idea of community. This group identity and shared notion of what a community should be was embodied through social practice, where notions of community were reiterated and reinforced to give a sense of both individual and group identity. The creative community in St Ives was also separated from the world by a desire to live differently, a kind of creative utopia that attracted like-minded people, who wanted to live in a community with shared values, and which was separated geographically from the rest of Britain. The increasing tourism in the town, driven in part by the bohemian ideal that it created and promoted, created a place that opened all year round, with no break from the holidaymakers.

Well/We used to walk up to the Scala Cinema/Which is now Boots the Chemist/We used to buy our papers/Because that's where you bought your papers/[laughs]/And then we used to go home/Get our flasks and out sandwiches/And go on the/Go on the harbour beach/With the/We had the children/They used to be on the harbour beach/Or else we used to take them round to Porthmeor/And it was always the corner of Porthmeor where the Island is/We all/Where we all used to congregate/Lots of people/Were very interested to see/If you wanted to see if anybody was around/That's where you went and looked over/To see/Oh there's my friend/I'll go and join them/And that's what we used to do/Other than that/We used to go for walks/But we didn't actually go/I don't think we used to go to each other's houses on a Sunday/I don't remember that as such/Um/But we used to/If it was nice day/We used to go out/Everybody/A lot of people used to spend their time/Out/You know/Enjoying themselves out/That's how I felt anyhow

(Beck, 2009)

Children were important to social interactions, with many people meeting informally on the beach. As there was only one school in the town, women would inevitably meet other mothers through the school, although there is no discussion of this in the archive, and the emphasis is on children meeting at the beach. The beach was a unique, a democratic space where people could come together and meet, forming the kinds of loose, casual friendships that Shirley mentions, and that was fundamental to the kind of feeling of utopian, equitable community that she describes. The beach is not defined by the same kinds of class or gender distinctions that govern other social spaces. For women in particular, the beach is a meeting place where they can take their children and through their children, meet other women. It is not a space dominated by alcohol consumption, sex, and masculinity, unlike the pubs in the town. A canine companion was also a useful social lubricant, and Shirley describes her experience of meeting and making friends with painter Bryan Pearce and his mother Mary:

Like Mary Pearce/I met Mary and Bryan/I was going to Porthmeor Beach with/I had my dog actually, and my little son/Well I was just walking along/And there was this lady/And this person/Other/Man/And um/She said/Oh what a lovely dog/And where/And I said oh yes/And where are you going/And she said/Ooh, we're going to Bumbles/Which was the tea room/And I said/Oh yes I've been in a couple of times/She said/Want to come and join me/Bring your lovely little boy/And she said/This is my son Bryan/Oh hello Bryan/And I said/Oh well I've got the dog/But I tied the dog up outside/And just had tea with Mary/And that's how I met Mary and Bryan

(Beck, 2009)

The advantages of living in a smaller town like St Ives was that it was easier to see people on a regular basis and develop the kind of friendships that create a sense of community. However, these are the kinds of loose ties that lack intimacy. Shirley reflects on the limitation of friendships:

Whenever I used to see Mary/We used to stop/She was often/Well every day she used to walk with Bryan/Um we used to stop and chat/And she used to talk to the dog/And she'd talk to my son/When you've got children and animals people do talk to you/You know/If I'd just been walking on my own she might not have spoken to me/But it/But it was the start of a long-term friendship/[...]That was sort of the extent

of the friendship/Was/Again/I suppose it's sort of periphery friendship/You'd call it/
But it's people you'd get to know/I you see somebody and you say/How are you/Sit
and chat to them/And say/At the end of a two-hour concert/Bryan was tired/I'd say/
Do you want a lift home Bryan/I'll give you a lift home/And I did

(Beck, 2009)

The town attracted its share of 'famous people', and the kinds of famous people that fitted into Shirley's idea of people 'you could get to grips with', including:

Patrick Hughes/Who's quite a famous artist/And Molly Parkin/Who had the hats/They
were here in the late seventies/When they had/Um/The early September Festivals
on/And um/They were around/They lived at the bottom of Fore Street/Um/Again/
They were just people that we'd meet and talk to/Pass the time/And I'm sure if I was
in London and/They were around/And I went to see them/I could just say/You know/
Hallo/Do you remember me I'm Shirley from St Ives/And they'd say oh yes of course
we do/That's how it was/We were/It wasn't in-depth friendships/But it was/You know/
Casual friendships

(Beck, 2009)

Here, Shirley draws attention to the transient nature of friendships in the community. Friendships are not characterised by a sense of intimacy or depth, but in a wider sense of being part of a larger group. One of the criteria for people fitting in is certainly their willingness to contribute to the community, to come and join in with and contribute to the kinds of activities that made the community in St Ives special. For Shirley, St Ives "specialness" came from a shared consciousness within the community of what the community should be, with each individual being committed to the project of making the town a kind of bohemian utopia. Ultimately, the reason that people were attracted to moving to St Ives was the kind of place-myth that had emerged in postwar St Ives, that drew those looking for a like-minded community with shared values, a serious creative work ethic, and an attractive social life.

Going Out/Parties

Well I thought it was awfully exciting/There were very interesting people around/But there was a lot of drinking going on/if I'm going to be critical now I wasn't critical then/There was a lot of partying and things like that/It was a very different environment from anything I had experienced before

(Lethbridge, 2011)

St Ives offered exciting opportunities for a vibrant social life. A repeated refrain runs through the archive that expresses the rhythm of St Ives: parties, drinking, interesting people. With the party then comes the hangover, and as Susan and other interviewees mention, there was a lot of drinking going on. St Ives had fewer options for entertainment than the city, so the options for entertainment were much more limited. Artists often did not have a great deal of money, so the pub was not always an option, and going round to someone's house for a party was cheaper, especially if it was a more formal party like the kinds thrown by Barbara Hepworth or Janet Leach where booze (and often food) was provided.

As a small, remote coastal town, there were few opportunities for socialising outside the pub, the arts club, or exhibition openings, and many members of the creative community had little money to be able to afford to go out. Therefore, people hosted parties at home, where drink was cheaper and there was no-one to call time on the fun. By having parties at home, the host could invite the people they chose:

They used to have wonderful wonderful parties down here/Um/Just about everybody/Gave parties in those days/Usually they were quite small/Intimate parties/With about ten or twelve people at the most/Um/And usually quite cheap booze/You used to be able to get a/A litre bottle of wine for something like one ninety nine/But it was all granules in the bottom I think/But um/I mean Janet gave some lovely parties/Janet Leach/For more than twelve/Sometimes more than forty people/And she really was a superb hostess/Lots and lots of lovely food/And as much drinks as you could manage/[chuckles]/And great fun was had by all

(Hunt, 2009)

When asked if parties were an opportunity for the exchange of ideas, Michael says:

Absolutely/Well some ideas I think/But everybody enjoyed themselves/That was the main thing

(Hunt, 2009)

Parties were not just a forum of the discussion of intellectual ideas, and to limit the sense of sharing ideas to a sense of high-minded exchange fails to recognise that the experience of the party itself is a construction of a particular set of modern ideas. Just as with a theatrical performance, where the actors, costumes and set define the perception of a show, at the party, the host has carefully selected the guest list, the food and drink, and the venue in the hope of creating the party as a work of art. The guest list itself creates a party. Listing people is also a way of creating a party, and this listing happens throughout women's interviews in archive. (McLoughlin, 2013:9) Shirley Beck creates a guest list:

But there was the Tony O'Malleys of this world/Mary Pearce/Bryan Pearce's mum/Patrick Hughes/Who came down from London/With Molly Parkin/They were very outrageous people we all thought/Terry Frost/Clare White/Roy Walker/And interestingly enough/Roger Slack/Dr Slack/Used to come round and take photos of us all the time

(Beck, 2009)

Mamie Lewis attempts to list some of the guests at the parties she went to:

Oh yes/Lots of parties/Lots/Well the artists themselves/I mean there were/Everybody turned up and brought something/Brought a bottle I s'pose/And that's how it all grew/But um/There were a lot of parties/I didn't go to them all by any means/[laughs]/Because I had to get someone to look after my baby/Yes I did/I met a lot of people/I shall have to look in my diaries for the names of some of them/And um/Of course Sven Berlin was down here then/He didn't come to the school/He was an artist on his own/And Guido Morris/There were loads of artists/Yes it was absolutely delightful/Yes lots going on/The artists were very important/In St Ives/They were looked up to and respected

(Lewis, 2009)

In some cases, women list people in order to define a social group. In this case, Susan defines the people who were outside her pub-going social circle:

Well we had some up at the Barn/Um/Where were the others/In the pubs in the town/I s'pose/And people would go back after drinking in the pub/to the cottage or whatever or wherever they lived/But you would never catch David Lewis or Willie at one of those/Or Peter Lanyon/Or even Dennis Mitchell/But they were all such nice people/I can't say I knew them well

(Lethbridge, 2011)

This defines another kind of guest list, with those who were invited to the after party, perhaps a more select and exclusive group invited back after the pub. Susan again underlines the social divisions in the town between groups of people, listing groups and in doing so reinforcing their separateness.

Shirley lists all the places that socialising happened in St Ives:

Yes well we used to go to Porthmeor Beach sometimes/Sit on the harbour front/And then/Um/We used to go to the Arts Club/And Penwith Gallery/We used to say we're going round to Penwith/Ten o'clock in the morning/And have a coffee round there with Cathy/Or just be around there/It wasn't/Um/Wasn't thinking/Like/We'll go to the Hub/That exists now/Well it didn't exist at the time/And there were hardly any places/There was Pop Short's place/Which was the Copper Kettle on the harbour front/Which is now closed/That's if/If anyone was going to meet anywhere/They used to meet at Pop Short's/Occasionally if he was in the mood/You could go there in the evening/But Pop Short was a man of his own devices/And then I suppose there was the Harbour Restaurant/Which was/Um/It's just/On the other side/Which is now the/Um Pub/There was no pub on the harbour from until sixty four/And uh/The Harbour Restaurant was upstairs/And is now a fish and chip restaurant/And um/We used to meet there sometimes/But there wasn't many/There weren't many places/Where you could go/And meet/I mean we used to go to the pub/We'd go round the pub/And/Um/Have a drink/Um/Just to pass the time/Not necessarily drinking alcohol/We sometimes'd have orange juice/But we'd sit there and talk/The Sloop/The Union/And The Castle/We used to use mostly/And uh/For some reason we didn't go in the Western/The Western was sort of like a hotel place/We didn't used to go up to the Western/And um/The um/The Golden Lion we used to go in occasionally/When I was first down/My friend and I/Jill and I/Were young/On our own/We used to go in there/We became part of the darts team

(Beck, 2009)

This demonstrates just how active Shirley's social life was, despite being a single parent. She stresses that social activity did not just revolve around alcohol and drinking. Ann talks about her memories through the memory of a photograph:

Diamond anniversary/Silver jubilee possibly/That was it/Were you there/In our front garden/Right/It was incredibly windy/Coming from the west/And people being sort of blown apart/Out in the streets/And on the beach/But come to our little front garden/At Bowling Green/And it was absolutely still/And hot/And so people who'd been to other parties/Gradually ended up in our front garden/And there was/There's a picture of a huge group of people/Including um/Molly Parkin/And um/Patrick Hughes

(Kelley, 2011)

Artists Patrick Hughes and Molly Parkin are mentioned as celebrities, as is playwright John Antrobus, and feature on the guest lists of both Shirley, Ann and Stella.

The Public House

Most of the social life of St Ives centres around the pub, and here you'll find artists of all shapes and sizes in rough fishermen's jumpers taking a quiet drink - except in July and August, when St Ives is noisy with tourists and a sprinkling of art dealers who collect works for their next year's exhibition.

(Val Baker, 1960)

As this quote in a hip fashion magazine suggests, a lot of the social life of St Ives centred around its pubs. The public house in St Ives is a space in which artists, tourists and locals meet, and as a site for the performance of identities and the production of gendered modernities and modernism. As such, I argue that the pub is an important space for the construction of place-myths and for the production of masculine modernisms. As a place where people come together, it is also a site of conflict between artists, locals and tourists.

In the postwar period, the public house in England is in decline and needed to diversify and modernise in order to survive and make money. The 'traditional' pub was still very

much the preserve of men only; modernising and welcoming more women through their doors was a pragmatic and economic imperative, particularly as the female consumer was potentially more lucrative.

The pub was a space in which specific kinds of gendered modernities were performed. Still very much a masculine space, I argue that the three pubs here, The Queen's Hotel, The Sloop, and The Castle, exhibited certain distinctive features that reflected and represented in their design and decor the gendered modernities of their clientele. The Queen's Hotel was refitted to be sophisticated and modern, transforming exclusively male spaces into a sleek cocktail bar designed to appeal to women; The Sloop became both a symbol for St Ives' fishing heritage, and 'the artists pub', a place where artists and locals meet; and The Castle became a site for artists to meet and talk and display their work, less disturbed by tourists. As such, pubs had, from the 1930s onwards, either modernised, or became more 'codified', (Kynaston, 2009:179), meaning that decor became more self-consciously 'traditional English pub', with wood panelling and ornaments representing declining or lost rural or maritime traditions, depending on the locality. In George Orwell's 1946 essay on the ideal inn, he condemns the 'sham roof-beams, ingle-nooks or plastic panels masquerading as oak,' that seek to recreate a modern idea of the 'traditional English pub' that hovers somewhere around an idea of a tavern from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and are already ubiquitous symbols of the traditional pub by the immediate postwar years. Instead he favours the more authentic 'solid, comfortable ugliness of the nineteenth century'. (Orwell, 1946) Furthermore, this chapter explores the myth of the fisherman and the importance of its relationship to both the performance of modern masculinities in the pub, and the persistence of place myth in St Ives. This develops Lübbren's work on the importance of the myth of fisherfolk to the creation of tourism and perpetuation of this place-myth by artists, which explores the period from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, with reference specifically to St Ives.

By the 1950s, drinking had been in decline in Britain since before the First World War. (Kynaston, 2009:176; Sandbrook, 2005:127) In 1961, nearly a pub a day was closing, and beer consumption was down to 24 million barrels a year, six million fewer than

before the Second World War. (Kynaston, 2015: 527) Thirty thousand pubs closed between 1939 and 1962, and with no more than 15% of adults visiting the pub on a Saturday night, pubs needed to change and modernise in order to attract a different kind of customer. (Sandbrook, 2005:127-8) In 1951, the pub was an unappealing place for the young, and for women. (Kynaston, 2009:178) However, pubs were slowly changing from being resolutely male and working class spaces. In the late 1930s, only 16% of all pub goers are women, with the number rising to 36% in London. (MO, 2009:106) By 1947-8, only 49% of women say that they go to the pub, compared to 79% of men. (Kynaston, 2009:178)

The British pub could not compete with fashionable milk bars and coffee shops with their jukeboxes and shiny chrome Americanised modernity and Italian chic that appealed to the young. In 1951, a reader writes to the Daily Mirror to complain that publicans had 'paid so much attention to making their places fit for women - pretty lampshades, rows of bottles with lights behind them - that they're not fit for men. There are too many women in pubs anyway.' (Kynaston, 2009:179) Women were still only accepted in the lounge or parlour rooms of the pub, although women sometimes did break the 'tabu' with Mass Observation reporting that they had observed a woman who was a middle-class Londoner from a touring theatre, and some 'gypsy type' women in the men-only parts of Worktown pubs. Worktown women, however, did not break this 'tabu', except when on holiday in Blackpool. (MO, 1943 (2009):144) This demonstrates the ability or desire of women who might be considered more 'bohemian' to challenge and transgress gender norms and be 'modern' in traditional and traditionally male spaces, but also the carnivalesque sense in which women can transgress and resist expected gender norms when on holiday. The seaside holiday resort is a liminal space, where, much like in Lübbren's's discussion of the experience of middle-class women in the art colony in St Ives in the late nineteenth century, where the usual rigidly constructed rules of gender do not apply. In St Ives, although women frequently mention both the pub and the drinking culture that surrounds it, it is parties and other social spaces, often those created by other women, that they discuss with most enthusiasm.

The desire of pubs to modernise in order to attract a different kind of consumer is exemplified in *One Hundred Doors are Open*, a guide to Cornwall's pubs written by Arthur Caddick. Caddick was a renowned local St Ives poet and alcoholic, and was the lead plaintiff in the libel case brought against Sven Berlin's roman a clef, *The Dark Monarch*. His description of The Queens Hotel of 1956 fits general pattern of the public house as described by Mass Observation's large-scale survey of the public house in England published in 1943, with a taproom or vault that is 'tabu' for women, and a lounge bar that creates 'the impression of a rather dingy but luxuriant atmosphere of late Victorian "respectability"' and usually houses at least one aspidistra, a signifier of Victorian middle-class respectability. (MO, 1943 (2009):98)

Entry into the back bar at the Queen's is denied to ladies and women. So it is a refuge for the more knowledgeable burgesses of the town, who just want to get a bit of peace and look at rows of barrels.

If you have your wife with you you'll naturally go into the lounge-bar on the right. It's been recently replanned and it's very pleasant. You can get snacks and sandwiches and pasties here. Mr and Mrs Dunstan have adopted the civilized habit of offering customers pickles, crisps and the like, with their drinks, and if some of the St Ives Rugby Club moderate their insatiable appetites, Mr and Mrs Dunstan may keep the habit up.

(Caddick, 1956)

The decor is traditional, and like a majority of pubs at this time, has gendered spaces where women are not welcome. It reflects the design of George Orwell's imaginary ideal pub, *The Moon Under Water*, where:

its whole architecture and fittings are uncompromisingly Victorian. It has no glass-topped tables or other modern miseries, and, on the other hand, no sham roof-beams, ingle-nooks or plastic panels masquerading as oak. The grained woodwork, the ornamental mirrors behind the bar, the cast-iron fireplaces, the florid ceiling stained dark yellow by tobacco-smoke, the stuffed bull's head over the mantelpiece – everything has the solid, comfortable ugliness of the nineteenth century.

(Orwell, 1946)

Despite his desire to keep out any 'modern miseries', Orwell is explicit in his requirement for the pub to be family friendly, he sees it as 'puritanical nonsense' to exclude 'children –and therefore, to some extent, women'. (1946) Despite the nod to modernisation of the lounge bar in *The Queen's*, the pub is still segregated by gender. Although, according to Mass Observation's 1937 survey, only 16% of pub goers were women, around 45% of the clientele in the lounge are female, and in pubs where there is more than one lounge, that figure may reach 90%. (MO, 2009:106) As this suggests, the production of space in the public house is very much gendered before the war, and Mass Observation goes as far as to imply that men are also feminised simply by their presence in this emasculating domain of house plants, pictures and ornaments. In the pub:

the woman's part is one of cleanness, ashtrays, no random saliva, few or no spittoons. The vault is the place where men are men. In the lounge they are women's men, with collar studs. For that, as usual, they must pay another penny.

(MO, 2009:106)

The lounge bar requires men to dress up, wear a collar, be respectable, and to pay for the privilege, as a pint was a penny more if drunk in the comfort of the lounge or parlour, where drinks are drunk seated at upholstered seats rather than standing at the bar. The implications for landlords are clear; if they attract more women they will make more money. The entry in the guide for *The Queen's Hotel* is dramatically different by the following summer:

One of the new raptures of going into *The Queen's Hotel* at St Ives is that you will not feel like coming out again until the cruel hand of time strikes your glass from your hand. Inside, you will find one of the pleasantest and most comfortable interiors of any tavern in Cornwall. Mr Malcolm Haylett, who designed the Ideal Home Exhibition, recently, has now designed the Ideal Inn Interior. The old Victorian inside, solid, stuffy, unimaginative and drab, redeemed in former days by the well-kept beer, has gone. Good beer still remains, but you will get a sense of space and light and colour, now. You will notice Mr Haylett's skillful use of Hessian, and the granite round the fire place will strike you. What used to be the old smoke-room is now an open annexe to the cocktail bar, with high windows and tables round, and somehow it

reminds me of being on board ship. Mr and Mrs Dunstan continue to build up the hotel's reputation for excellent snacks and sandwiches, and good, solid meals. As befits a romantic decor for his background, Mr Edward Rogers is a light romantic baritone, who sang for years with the St Ives Operatic Society. He sometimes looks as if he is about to break into something from "The Geisha", or "the Maid of the Mountains", and a breathless hush falls on the cocktail-bar. We all hope that he will sing something about love finding a way. We wait. He sighs. He sighs again, and that's that.
(Caddick, 1957)

This notable difference in the description of the interior of The Queen's demonstrates a self-conscious desire to be modern, through its interior, designed by Ideal Home exhibition designer and artist Malcolm Haylett. This transformation from the Victorian respectability of the previous year is conspicuously modern, modernist and feminine. The design reflects modernist ideals in its 'sense of space and light and colour', and also changes the way in which the space is used. Gone are the dark spaces where women are not permitted, and the 'romantic decor' includes a cocktail bar is reminiscent of a cruise liner. The 'sense of space and light and colour' combined with the use of granite and hessian has a modernist feel, although the opening up of the space to create a cocktail bar that feels like 'being on board ship' is suggestive of the moderne of pre-war Art Deco. However, it is the sense of the feminine that pervades the interior, the comparison between the 'Ideal Home' and the 'Ideal Inn' is a reminder that the pub is a domestic space that provides a home away from home for both men and women. The literal demolition of walls to transform an exclusively masculine traditional social space into a modern cocktail bar signifies a breaking down of gendered social space, to create a more welcoming space for women and couples, with hopes of attracting a lucrative tourist trade. Women drink more expensive drinks, and everyone's drinks are more expensive when drunk in more pleasant feminised spaces. (MO, 2009:106) Caddick too, hints at the effect that the interior has on men, notably the feminising experience of the romantic decor, and the romantic hope of listening to romantic songs by the romantic baritone. (Caddick, 1957) Embracing 1950s modern ideals of interior design, there was also, as well as a cocktail bar, a fireplace built with tiles from the Leach Pottery to go perfectly with the hessian and granite, reflecting a modernist, sculptural idea of St Ives

through its materials. (Val Baker, 1959) The interior of the pub is transformed dramatically by Canadian Haylett, who came to St Ives after the Second World War. Haylett was responsible for the design of the Ideal Home Exhibition twice, in 1957 and 1959. A painter, he also redesigned the interior of a café in St Ives before redesigning the interior of The Queen's, as well as building his own modernist home in the town. The Licensing Act of 1961 relaxed opening hours to discourage binge drinking, and perhaps also encourage pubs to modernise. (Hennessy, 2006:513)

Susan Lethbridge undermines the idea that women were excluded from social networking activity in the masculine spaces of the pub (Stephens, 2018) and describes spending time outside the pub drinking:

We used to spend time in the summer outside/I remember there was a men's loo outside/And there was this famous quotation/Which is not/Seems to me/Is not quoted anywhere/From Sydney Graham/In the loo/In the men's loo/The painted white haired kingdoms of the sea/That brings tears to my eyes/That quotation/ Another quotation you'll read about/But you won't read about that one I don't know why/Perhaps it was wiped

(Lethbridge, 2011)

As a woman who was not afraid to transgress into exclusively male spaces, not only is Susan not excluded from the masculine space of the pub, she seems not to have felt excluded from the men's toilets either. Contradictions and cognitive dissonance in oral interviews are common in the local/artist relations discussion. Lieka Ritman, an Australian artist who arrived in St Ives via Ibiza in the early 1980s and worked as a picture framer, describes going to the Sloop with artists and friends Stella Benjamin, Leonard Ilsley, and Lesley Ingham. In jolly tones, with hints of an Australian accent remaining, she explains that pubs were a meeting place for artists and locals, and there was often singing in both the Union on Fore Street and in the Sloop. 'Friday night was booze night', and an opportunity to 'let your hair down.' (Ritman, 2008) She goes on to explain that the fishermen would be on one side of the pub (the public bar), and they would be on the other (the lounge bar).

As far as /Um/Getting to know the locals/So to speak/The actual Cornish/Like I said to you earlier/And we um/We used to gather in The Sloop/Um/Stella Benjamin and myself/And Bryan Ingham/And Leslie Ilsley/In the early days/And Friday night was booze up night/You know/Let your hair down/Very much so/And all the fish/All the old/All the fishermen used to be there/On one side of the pub/They probably thought we were awful/But amusing as well/I suppose/They sort of/We used to be/They used to be/A bit of argy bargy /We'd take the mickey out of each other quite a lot/But also quite a lot of/Talking to the fishermen/Especially a bloke called Willie somebody/Who had a/A sweet man/Who had a little dog/I think at one stage/His little dog fell off/Fell off of Haines Walk there/And I think he had to/Sort of/Go and rescue it/Anyway/That's aside/But yes/That's where we sort of communicated

(Ritman, 2009)

The space of the pub was physically divided, with artists on one side and fishermen on the other, and the relationships between artists and locals defined by chaffing and bantering exchanges. As in other interviews, Ritman conflates 'local' with fisherman. Whilst many were fishermen, the term is used in an indiscriminate way, suggesting that all locals are also fishermen. Despite these encounters often including what Ritman describes as 'a bit of argy bargy', and 'taking the mickey', she contrasts this with 'but also quite a lot of talking to the fishermen', which suggests a certain sympathetic exchange of ideas, rather than just communication based around friction. The pub, she says, is where the artists communicated with the locals. These encounters between local community and creative community, frequently underline the separation between locals and artists, rather than emphasising any closeness or unity. Ritman often encountered her neighbour in the Digey, St Ives local Liza Trevorrow, who would often remark on late night goings on, and ask if they'd had a party. Ritman said that they always spoke, but that there was 'always a distance'. So, locals and artists might encounter each other in the third space of the public house, but not in the intimate space of a private house (Ritman, 2009)

Twenty years earlier, in the 1940s and 1950s, artist Mamie Lewis was also undermining the idea of the pub as an exclusively masculine space. Not only is she at the pub most evenings, unlike Lieka, she describes sitting together with the fishermen. She also talks

about the 'yarns' of the fishermen, and her experience sounds much like a tourist's behind the scenes experience of St Ives:

Yes we did/Well I had a boyfriend by then/I was separated from my husband because he wouldn't come and live down here/And um/I met this man/And he was a tremendous pub goer too/[laughs]/And um/I used go to The Sloop a lot in the evenings and meet all the old fishermen/They used to tell yarns about boats sinking/ And one thing and another to do with the sea/And fishing/And I used to go there most evenings/Just for an hour/I didn't stop all the time/I can't think/Oh no/They were/They all drank/We sat round tables/And all drank together/And the fishermen used to tell great yarns about their sea trips/And one thing and another/I don't know that the artists really talked about themselves/[laughs]/They just roared with laughter and they loved talking to them/[laughs]/[makes arrrrrrwrrrrrrrrrr noise in impression of fishermen talking]

(Lewis, 2009)

Mamie's experience of being an artist in St Ives reinforces a sense of place-myth performed in the pub between artists and fishermen, that perpetuates the idea of St Ives as a quaint fishing village.

These encounters between local community and creative community, when described in reminiscence, frequently underline the separation between locals and artists, rather than emphasising any closeness or unity. Lieka describes her encounters with her neighbour in the Digey, Liza Trevorrow:

Liza Opposite/That was Liza Trevorrow/She used to be always/[Puts on Cornish accent]/Alright my dear/Alright Lieka/Saw you had a bit of a do last night/[laughter]/ So she was/She was very sweet actually/She put up with us all/I mean it was extraordinary/I think/She was alone/So it was sort of a bit of life for her/Interesting/ Mm

JE: and it was brilliant as well because all the houses were lived in/There were no holiday houses then/It was a total community

That was lovely/And you got to know them/But there was always a distance between you/You'd never really go into their houses/But you'd be/Hello/And/[Puts on Cornish accent]/Alright my dear

(Ritman and Eyre, 2009)

Lieka often encountered her neighbour in the Digey, St Ives local Liza Trevorrow, who would remark on late-night goings-on, and ask if they'd had a party. Ritman says that they always spoke, but that there was 'always a distance'. So, whilst locals and artists might encounter each other in the third space of the public house, the intimate domestic space of the home remains private. Putting on a Cornish accent emphasises Liza's otherness, but also the humour in the exchange. It is interesting that Lieka suggests that in putting up with her noisy neighbours, not only was Liza being kind, but that Lieka's socialising was in some way providing entertainment for her neighbour, because she lived alone.

Lieka goes on to say that, because of Crusoe's nightclub, the Digey became increasingly noisy as the main route back into town, but concedes:

I probably made some of the noise myself at weekends/But I decided it was time to move somewhere quieter

(Ritman, 2009)

This is somewhat revealing and begins to describe some of the demographic changes that happened in the Downalong area. Slum clearances in the 1930s moved residents from Downalong to the newly built council homes at Penbeagle and Carbis Bay, and the exodus continued as local residents could sell properties to incomers looking for second homes, and buy a new home that had better, modern amenities. Another repeated refrain within the archive is regret from local people who felt that their willingness to sell contributed to a decline in St Ives' community, with so many homes in Downalong used as holiday homes. Fisherman Chris Care laments that 'we sold the houses to them...we've only got ourselves to blame' (2009). This sentiment is echoed across the archive, repeated by all St Ives residents, whether local or incomer.

LR: The Cornish are sort of/Um/Accepting us now/So to speak/Th-they/They're much more communicative

JE: Yes/After we've lived here/Well I moved here in eighty-four

LR: So forty years now

(Ritman and Eyre, 2009)

This divide is reinforced by Jenny and Lieka's concession that the 'Cornish' people are more accepting of them now, after living in St Ives for over forty years. This 'acceptance' is more complex, as they are two women who have lived together, as well as running a restaurant together. Are the locals more accepting of their status as incomers, or as a queer couple?

Many of the interviews with 'locals' reinforce the same divisions as those with 'artists'.

The reasons for the native St Ives' women's positive or negative responses to 'artists' can also be defined by class and generational difference, with many of the women interviewed growing up in St Ives before the Second World War. A refrain that echoes across the archive is the difference between artists in St Ives before and after the war. The artists mentioned before the war, such as Commander Bradshaw and Isobel Heath, were themselves of a different generation, and also generally from wealthier backgrounds than the more middle-class and working-class artists that came to St Ives in the 1950s and 1960s. There is an idea of 'manners' and morality associated with the older generation of artists, and the new generation of artists associated with abstract art. It is notable that most interviewees associate abstract artists as 'different', even suggesting they lack morals, compared to their respect for artists that produced 'proper paintings'.

Course we did/A lot of them were people that/Ah well/Anyhow people's morals and people's lives and what they feel they'd like to live/And I'm afraid/You know/I haven't got no time for that/Well they/There was/None of those abstract people didn't/No/People rejected the rejected the world I mean/And people didn't/You know/The old people from St Ives/And even myself/I mean I wouldn't want be/Oh they weren't/They weren't my way of living or nothing I'm afraid/They lived a different kind of life/I mean this Barnes Graham woman/Who was supposed to be/ She lived up Teetotal Street/Whatever she is/Well I got no time for them my love/I don't know of them/I knew a lot of/I knew a lot of these

(Craze, 2009)

Having expressed that she had no time for 'abstract people', Wilhelmina Barnes Graham in particular, she goes on to describe her husband, David Lewis:

Yes/Say opposite Pauline's ma there/She lived where? Lived years ago/You wouldn't remember that see you're younger/Yeah sure they lived in there/And she had a husband a tall fella/Wore grey and had coloured glasses/And another person came down called Molly something or other/Molly/See those people lived out Piazza and those kinds of places/Well then they weren't/They didn't/They didn't fit in/With St Ives/At all/And then/Next to my auntie there in Back Roads/Um/Where mister? Had a sweet shop years ago/Island Square corner/Corner of Island Road/Then these people come down/From/They're young/Rather a young couple come down/And they were/Now what is it they call them/Bohemian/Type of people/And um/They painted the whole of it all like all different colours/Called Revelation it was/Right next to my auntie/Anyway/And then the St Ives Council/They had them out/Oh/Then they went up to Bowling Green and started all their shenanigans up there/These aren't people that really fitted in/When you go a place to live Fred/You haven't got to conform to people's way of thinking don't you/But you can respect the area that you're in/You know when I was coming up and all these artist people an' all were there/Nobody ever had any/Everybody seemed to have/I am't going to say that everything was wonderful or anything cause life is life wherever you go isn't it/But I mean being born and raised with the people/That you're people were born and raised with/Um/People have respect/And people/Um/Appreciated neighbours and everything then/Because they depended on them didn't they/It was a real community then/Oh my gosh/It was handsome

(Craze, 2009)

Here, Rebecca Craze discusses her disdain for this younger generation, the 'abstract people' who didn't 'fit in'. Specifically, she mentions Wilhelmina Barnes Graham with some vehement dislike, and her husband David Lewis, the 'tall fella' who 'wore grey and had coloured glasses'. Many of the interviews talk of the 'bohemian' nature of this generation of artists, alternatively describing them as being 'flamboyantly' dressed, their appearance making them stand out, as strange or 'foreign'. Rebecca Craze does go on to discuss her dislike of 'surfing people' and their beach parties, and it emerges that she lived on Porthmeor Beach before selling up and moving to Carbis Bay. Her curmudgeonly dislike of beach parties is perhaps then more understandable, living in such close proximity to St Ives' necessarily home-made nightlife. She insists on her lack

of regret at selling her house, and that she hasn't missed living on the beach, despite the house becoming a second home. She sounds in the interview as if she is reassuring herself that she has made the right decision, as the St Ives that she knew as 'handsome' was already gone before she left.

Mary Dobbin moved to St Ives as a child in 1936, and trained as a hairdresser in London before moving back to St Ives. Her voice has the hairdresser's intimacy of gossip-sharing from behind the salon chair, particularly later on in the interview when discussing the relationship between Janet Leach and Boots Redgrave. She insists that 'nobody bothered' about the artists, even though they weren't 'any old people':

The artists used to be down on the front with their easels painting/Nobody bothered/You know and they weren't any old people/And they were all painting pictures/Not squares lumps and blobs
You know we've always had artists here and they were nothing unusual/Painting/Oh yes/Because of the paintings were/When I say they were all paintings/They weren't/You know/Like they are now/They were a scene/They were a scene of/And any of them you see'd in those days/Back a bit/But you knew what you were looking at/But no they were very good paintings
When I say you didn't take any notice/Not that you could care less/It wasn't that attitude/Just that they were an artist/And that man's a butcher/You know what I mean/It just didn't uh/It was just part of the scene/Really

(Dobbin, 2009)

The artists in St Ives were not only painting scenes, they were 'just part of the scene'. She stresses that having artists in the town was 'nothing unusual', but clarified her meaning several times as she doesn't want to appear to not care, just that there is a kind of casual indifference to the creative community.

Mary Coad is more circumspect. Born in 1932, she is slightly younger than Rebecca and Mary Dobbin, and was married to Peter, who worked in Bennett's Delicatessen on Fore Street. She recalls her memories of the people in St Ives:

Donovan lived on the beach in Porthminster/Well/He was a hippy/Well they weren't hippies then they were/Er um/Flower power/And the flower power/This was the sixties/Yes quiet enough/Done his singing round his fire/That's how he lived/Then

there was John Milliner /Beautiful landscape artist/He was very nice/Um Peter Lanyon/Another lovely artist/Very nice gentleman [...]
Sometimes/I think a bit separate/Because they were a bit/Their clothes were a bit/ Flamboyant/You know/And of course/We were all straight-laced/You know/And I wouldn't have known them if it wasn't for Peter/But they were always very nice/Well I always found them very nice and so did he
Well no they were just there/They were doing a job/You know/Um/And they always had money/They always lived well/You know/Um/Or they appeared to be/You know/ Well I think they might have done that John/That I don't know/But Peter always used to say that they always had money they always bought the best of everything/You know

(Coad, 2008)

Mary's experience of the artists is not divided between the 'old' St Ives artists and the new, or along the lines of division of the Penwith/St Ives Society split. She mentions John Miller, an architect and painter who lived with his male partner in St Ives, and Peter Lanyon, who painted abstract landscapes. She doesn't make judgement on the artists in the same way that other respondents do, mentioning that the artists were a 'bit separate' and that they dressed flamboyantly, but only because she was 'straight-laced'. Considering the level of 'competitive poverty' that went on in the town, it is also notable that she mentions that the artists always appeared to have money.

Not Going Out/Staying In

There were a lot of parties/I didn't go to them all by any means/[laughs]/Because I had to get someone to look after my baby/[laughs]

(Lewis, 2009)

The kinds of social activities that went on in St Ives were not available to everyone. For women who were single parents with small babies, like Mamie Lewis, or Ann Kelley with a son who was ill, the social aspect of the community were less a part of everyday life. As Ann explains:

Well you know what they say about the sixties/If you remember it you weren't there/ Well I don't remember it because I didn't take part in any of that/I wasn't any part of the party scene/The drugs scene/The sleeping around scene/I was married/Very

married/And uh /I had a very sick baby/And um/My whole life was spent looking after him really/In the seventies/The late seventies/When did I split up with Kelley/We were married for thirteen years/And then got divorced about three years after that/ So can't work it out/About late seventies I suppose/Um/Life began for me/And I started to have some fun

(Kelley, 2009)

In the early days of her marriage, Ann had some support in a friendship with another woman who was also the wife of an artist. Chris was married to Tony Shiels and, according to Ann, neither man took any interest in his family:

Yes they were/I used to go round with my screaming baby and/Talk/Talk to Chris/ Who took no notice whatsoever of her screaming babies/She had twins/Baby twins/ And she'd be feeding one of them in her arms/And the other one would be lying on the table with a bottle propped up somewhere/Tony never had anything to do with any of them/As men didn't in those days/Especially my husband/Clearly my husband/And she would try and listen to the Archers/No Mrs Dale's Diary on the radio/She had one ear glued to the radio/You know/While she was trying not to listen to all the other children who were screaming/In various parts of the house/ [laughs]/Having said that she was wonderful/She was a wonderful mother/[laughs]/ She was just very relaxed/She had five children

(Kelley, 2009)

Ann paints a picture of a chaotic family life where both women are barely coping with no support from their partners. The fecklessness of husbands is a recurring theme, along with the suggestion of parental irresponsibility:

Yes I think the little one/One of the little ones/Could it be Gareth/They used to send him round /There used to be a little shop in St Andrews Street/A tobacconist/We used to send him round there for his dad's cigarettes/And they just refused to serve him in the end/Not because he was three/Or whatever/But because Tony hadn't paid the bill for such a long time/[laughs]/They were great characters

(Kelley, 2009)

Not only were they sending a small child to the shop to get cigarettes, which were only for her husband, but he was not any good at paying the bill. The 'artistic wives' are just about managing with children and no money and husbands that come home drunk.

In answer to the interviewer's question about the reputation of the town for parties, Ann answers:

I didn't go any parties/But Kelley did/[laughs]/Perhaps you should be interviewing Kelley not me/But he might not remember/He probably doesn't remember anything about it/But was/Later on/When Kelley and I split up/And I eventually bought number five/Bowling Green/From him/Um/We had/There were lots of dinner parties in that little kitchen at the back/My kitchen was always full of people/And you know/I'd make a small meal/And then people would sort of arrive/At the back door/Gradually/And I said/Oh come in/That's all right we'll find something/I don't know how it all/We always managed to make something/Stretch/To/You know/However many people/Were there/Would bring things as well/It was just/It was lovely/And it was/Uh/Yeah/There were good times had in that kitchen/It was I suppose/Yes/Yeah/Yes/Oh gosh

(Kelley, 2009)

Following the break up of her marriage, Ann describes the transformation of her life with a kitchen always full of people, an image that could not be in starker contrast to the image from the beginning of her interview, of a lonely young woman alone in a damp unheated house with a sick baby.

Support Networks And Queer Modernities

Like the spinster in Eden, the role of the artist in St Ives 'transcends that of spectator, visitor or urban exile' (Deen, 2018: 147). Her role is not simply about realisation of her own identity, transformation through assimilation into the bohemian creative community, it is also defined by what she can contribute to the community. As a woman who has rejected or refused to be defined by her marital or maternal status, relationship to a man, or societal expectations, she is an outsider in a community of those who have chosen to be outsiders, a marginal figure in a place on the periphery, where she can articulate 'the principles by which misfits become integral and respected citizens, laying the groundwork for her cultivation of a new Eden' (Deen, 2018: 147). This active participation in the community which aims to cultivate a 'new Eden' is expressed through not only organising and hosting social events, but also by gathering up the misfits that arrive in St Ives and finding ways of helping them to fit in. There are two women in particular who are mentioned frequently in the archive and who formed an

important part of the creative community in St Ives. Both significant figures, whose ghostly presences haunt the archive, they feature in many interviews. Janet Leach was Bernard Leach's third wife, an American potter, who is credited with reviving the Leach Pottery, and who owned the New Craftsman Gallery in Fore Street. Mary 'Boots' Redgrave ran the St Peter's Loft art school with her husband Bill Redgrave, and often acted as a kind of fixer, sorting out young artists with jobs or somewhere to live. It is the role both women played in supporting other women that I want to highlight here, as it is for this reason that they are mostly mentioned in interviews. The exception is mention of both women by hairdresser Mary Dobbin, who hints heavily about the relationship between Boots and Janet being more than a platonic friendship, as Janet left money to Boots in her will. In looking at these snippets of gossip and stories, it would be easy to:

overlook lesbian possibilities that are more subtle, obscure, or awkward. Most of us still see the past in heteronormative terms, closeting our thinking by failing to consider that the dead women we study might have been other than heterosexuals, other than wives, mothers, and lovers of men.

(Bennett, 2006:109)

There are enough subtly queer cues within the archive that are repeated in one way or another throughout for a listener to be unable to ignore that there was a community of queer women in St Ives. Stella Benjamin also mentions Boots, estranged from her husband, living with Nancy Wynne Jones:

Later on she moved to Trevaylor/With Nancy Wynne Jones/And Nancy used to live on the Battery/In the Battery/On the Island

(Benjamin, 2009)

Trevaylor was a large house on the outskirts of Penzance that was the home to several artists (Stephens, 1996:113). This presents further ethical issues that would usually be addressed in discussion of a third person in an interview, However, to ignore the possibility of queerness in the archive is to create an absence in the narrative, and to

exclude queer stories from the history of the creative community in St Ives. Rogoff asks, can 'gossip function *simultaneously* as a policing action for the reinstatement of contained and controllable genres *and* as the site for our most cherished fantasies about transgression and unruly excess?' (Rogoff, 1996:64).

Michael Hunt, a close friend of Boots, explicitly mentions that she and Janet were 'partners' (Hunt, 2009). However, in the context of this conversation this is also deeply ambiguous as they were also partners in business, and the statement is not contextualised enough to draw meaningful significance either way. In order to address this issue, Nan Alamilla Boyd recommends that:

narrators' voices must, therefore, be read as open texts, open to interpretation, and their disclosures should be understood as part of a larger process of reiteration, where identities are constantly reconstructed around very limited sets of meanings.

(Boyd, 2008:187-189)

Janet and Boots do not have their own voices in the archive, and their identities are only ever articulated through other people. This is problematic in many ways. It is important to discuss the messiness of oral history in this way, as at the heart of this thesis is the intention to explore gossip and hearsay, and to choose to amplify the complex and difficult in the oral history archive, rather than silence it. By choosing to ignore these parts of speech, this creates a silence which means that these women's voices are ignored, which in turn creates an absence, where they are left out of history.

Boyd describes Howard's method, where he avoided any idea of sexual identity, and instead focused on same-sex behaviour in order to find stories. He asserts that 'the age-old squelching of our words and desire can be replicated over time when we adhere to ill-suited and unbending standards of historical methodology' (Howard in Boyd, 2008:185). As such, he 'challenges the historian to "read the silence" in the history of same sex desire', because 'whose stories get told and how they get told are a function of power' and 'historical projects, by their very methodology, tend to access and privilege the spoken (or written) over the unspoken (or unwritten)' (Howard in Boyd, 2008:186-187). He embraced the messiness of oral histories by using 'twice told stories'

that might be also called gossip or hearsay as a radical way of uncovering stories that do not fit existing queer history narratives, that focus only on the stories of people who are 'visibly' gay, lesbian or queer (Howard in Boyd, 2008:186). As Boyd goes on to explain:

Queer historians must assume the presence of queer desire despite the silence. Howard's method enables previously silent voices to emerge by privileging the same-sex experiences of those who do not fall within the confines of modern sexual identities. It is not that their voices are silent, but that their experiences are often vilified as cowardly or unintelligible within the limits of comprehensible speech. By using a different method, Howard uncovers new actors and new social worlds that are shaped by sexuality, but he also identifies the limits of a method that privileges the historical agency of those who claim a gay or lesbian identity.

(Boyd, 2008:186)

Stella mentions other people's sexuality quite casually on several occasions, in a way that indicates the attitudes of bohemian permissiveness of St Ives during this time, prior to the decriminalisation of homosexuality of the Sexual Offences Act of 1967, when being gay was also illegal. She talks about working with 'a couple of gays', and Stella's casual mention of same-sex relationships suggests both a relaxed attitude within the creative community to people's sexuality, while also signalling that she herself is also open-minded and bohemian in her attitudes, by the way different sexual identities are dropped into the conversation (Benjamin, 2009). This normalisation of queer identities is, I argue, an important part of the identity of St Ives' creative community that has not been discussed owing to the dominance of masculine, modernist heteronormative history. It is this relaxed attitude to queerness, or perhaps an expectation of queer identities, that forms part of the creative community's appeal. As discussed previously, exaggerated stereotypes of gender and sexual transgression are already bound up in the idea of bohemianism: this conspicuous queerness is important to the identity of the community as a whole. The middle-class radicalism and left-wing politics that formed part of St Ives' countercultural agenda was socially liberal and inclusive, and gay rights were important to its creative community. This is not to say that St Ives was a queer utopia by any means, as can be seen in attitudes of local women in Mary Dobbin's interview about Janet and Boots, or in Rebecca Craze's about Isobel Heath, but it was

arguably more progressive than other places. In St Ives the creative community could be said to provide a kind of insulation from prejudices or opposing views from outside, by socialising in the same groups who shared the same views. St Ives is therefore arguably a liminal space, where it is perceived to be safer for women to explore queer and transgressive identities, than it might be in an urban space. This is also key to the idea of the feminine rural imaginary as an alternative modernity. The idea of the spinster and the lesbian, both seen as aberrant or transgressive forms of femininity, find in the alternative rural modernity a place in which to belong and be part of a community that urban modernity did not offer. As such, just as the town offered a refuge for women where they were able to reject gender norms, so it offered the possibility of a safer space in which to reject heteronormative identities and be able to perform an authentic sexual self.

Local woman Rebecca Craze's comments on the 'masculine' Isobel Heath suggest that whilst St Ives was certainly a place in which women felt comfortable performing alternative identities that rebelled against contemporary gender norms, it certainly was not deemed acceptable to locals. It also demonstrates that artists chose St Ives as a place where they could explore lesbian identities before the Second World War, and that St Ives therefore has a queer history that can be traced back through to its original art colony. Mary Coad's barbed comments on Janet Leach and Boots Redgrave's relationship show that there was little more welcome from a younger generation of local women when it came to sexuality, and queerness certainly did not go unnoticed.

The stories of both women are examples of why the community in St Ives was particularly attractive to women. They were central to the support network that existed to help women, particularly those on their own. Moreover, this kind of support network demonstrates a specific kind of utopian, socialist idealism in practice. Women provided support for others in need, which was often very practical, as the women who had moved to St Ives were far from home and had no other support to rely on. I argue that this kind of gendered community is central to women's experience of St Ives, and the kind of support provided to women is evidence of an alternative feminine modernity, or modernism, that runs counter to the masculine, macho modernism that dominates the

story of St Ives. Moreover, this kind of mutual support reinforces the idea of a separate and distinct group of creative women, dependent on each other for help with often specifically female concerns such as childbirth, childcare etc. For many women, St Ives was a place where they were isolated, far from home, without family or friends, often with little money or financial independence, and this was recognised by women like Boots, Sheila Lanyon and Janet Leach. The stories of Boots' and Janet's everyday generosity are frequent. Boots is mentioned frequently for a variety of reasons, and was a central figure in the community, 'Boots was Mary Redgrave/ And she had the New Craftsman Shop with Janet Leach' (Benjamin, 2009). Boots' husband Bill ran an art school at St Peter's Loft, near Porthmeor Beach, along with Peter Lanyon. While Bill taught art, Boots was responsible for looking after the students, many of whom came as a result of recommendations from friends of Bill's who taught in London. While Bill's creativity was expressed through painting and teaching, Boots was responsible for hosting students and creating a bohemian experience of St Ives:

They used to have students/Boots used to put them up and do the cooking/And Bill had a studio/A Porthmeor Studio/And/Um/Sheila Lanyon used to come in with all the produce from her garden/Which was wonderful/Yeah/And that house was a catalyst for all sorts of people/Island Road

(Benjamin, 2009)

Sheila Lanyon bringing vegetables from her garden completes a particular idea of an ideal bohemian domestic outlined in Chapter Two, one that reflects an authentically modern rejection of urban materialism. And, as Stella says, the art school at St Peter's was a 'catalyst', where people came together in a particular kind of environment that enabled them to meet and get to know others in the creative community, sharing knowledge and ideas. Boots was certainly an entrepreneur, and used her talents as a cook, that she developed at St Peter's, to open a restaurant, 'she opened a restaurant there at one time/Daubers/It was called/Um/Yeah/She was a very good cook' (Benjamin, 2009). With the restaurant, Boots had the opportunity to develop her creativity, both through cooking and through hosting:

Um well Boots had originally been married to Bill Redgrave/Bill Redgrave and Peter Lanyon had a painting school/And Boots was perhaps the first lady/In the whole country/To have her own little bistro/Which was in Island Square/It's now where the Picture House is/And that was called Daubers/And she used to do all the cooking/And the waiters were painters/Who wanted to earn a bit of money/A mean a lot of these painters are now internationally famous/But in those days they were just students/And wanted to earn a bit of money/And the food was delicious/By the way

(Hunt, 2009)

The tiny restaurant, with Boots doing all of the cooking, and the waiting staff all being artists, makes the restaurant itself a work of art. It functions as a performance of bohemianism, that would have delighted the tourists in St Ives and others in the creative community alike. This demonstrates again women's alternative performance of modernity and modernism in St Ives. Boots production of the social is an artwork in itself, a living sculpture that in turn shapes the community. Boots was a generous host and looking after visiting students and others in the creative community often included helping them to find a job and somewhere to live. Michael Hunt describes her as St Ives' fixer:

Oh no before that/I mean she was sort of the doyenne of all the ladies here/Um/If you wanted anything/Go to Boots/Boots would/I mean that was Boots Redgrave/Not Boots the Chemist

(Hunt, 2009)

Not only was Boots a 'doyenne' in St Ives, but her role as a fixer extended beyond a kind of maternal approach to looking after young artists. Her ability to organise things for others extended to helping other women during childbirth:

Lots of people would find themselves giving birth to babies/Artists' wives/I won't mention any names/They'd no towels/A lot of artists were poor in those days/So Boots would gather loads of towels and rush round for the birth/And things like that/Which wouldn't happen nowadays/It just wouldn't happen

(Hunt, 2009)

Boots therefore acts as a midwife to the creative community, both literally and metaphorically, enabling the birth of real babies as well as the birthing of creative works through her practical support of young artists. Her role as midwife has echoes of the original meaning of the word 'gossip', as godparent, from the talk exchanged by attendants at childbirth. As such, she acts as facilitator to the community, and it is the community itself that is Boots' greatest creative production. By enabling artists to live and work, she is able to ensure the community as a creative process in her own image. That this feminine role is not both not uncommon and frequently overlooked is discussed by literary theorist Katherine Mullins, where she lists the women who in literary modernism appear 'disproportionately appear as editors, publishers, patrons and the hostesses of literary salons' (Mullins, 2006:139). Boots, like Janet Leach, Barbara Hepworth, Cathy Watkins, and Heather Craze, played an important role by hosting social events that brought people together and shaped the identity of the creative community. The party is an 'art-form, that of the living sculpture or installation', which for the hostess-curator is 'inspired by her sense of people's separateness and her wish to bring them together' (McLoughlin, 2013:4). However, as Mullins comments, 'that such women are termed the "midwives of modernism" speaks volubly of the sexual politics of the amanuensis role' (Mullins, 2006:139). Whilst acknowledging the problematic gendering of this role, where women are side-lined because of their sex, I argue that women have found, through the production of the social, alternative forms of creativity. Being a 'midwife of modernism' could be seen as the ultimate feminine modernist creative act: the act of producing the modernist community itself as 'living sculpture'.

The notions of romantic poverty of the bohemian artist, or the idea of living a life of simple modernist authenticity, is more appealing than the reality of genuine need, something recognised by Boots. Artists who moved to St Ives often left any support networks far behind and were isolated both physically and psychically from urban modernity. Boots' support for the community represents notions of a role in producing

the kind of idealised community that made St Ives such an appealing place to be. Like the 'spinster in Eden', the practice of making the community appears in St Ives as a:

process of recognising those [who] are on the margins, not in order to assimilate them into a mainstream, but so as to set in motion an exchange of perspectives that results in the mutual humanisation of citizens.

(Deen, 2018: 137)

This can certainly be seen in the work that Boots, Janet and other women did in using their skills and experience to make a useful contribution to her community, what Deen describes as the 'the mutual humanisation of misfits' (2018:137). Boots scoops up the artists who move to St Ives and who do not fit in to the local community, and this process of 'humanisation' is the 'product of human encounters in modern rural spaces and structures', and highlights the contrast between 'urban anonymity and rural knowableness' (Deen, 2018: 137). Boots performs this role, acting as a mediator between urban misfits and rural modernity. This highlights the importance of women's roles in producing a desirable community that aspired to an ideal of pastoral modernity. Michael's nostalgic reflection indicates a sense of loss for the kind of community that existed based on mutual participation, and the kind of communal support that existed in the St Ives of his younger years.

Michael moved to St Ives in the early 1960s, and initially turned down a job working for Janet Leach in the New Craftsman:

They were partners here/But I knew Boots before/No/I tell a lie actually/When I moved down here/Which was about forty-seven years ago/Janet wanted me to work here/But she thought to work here/Um/I should work for next to nothing/For the glory of working here/Unfortunately people have got to pay mortgages/So I refused the kind offer/And then I became friendly with Boots/I used to work in the Abbey Hotel in Penzance/She used to be there quite a lot/And Janet invited her to become a partner here/And she would only come/If I came with her/So I came with Boots/We took over/So to speak/Boots' mate/I never worked for her/I always worked with her

(Hunt, 2009)

Michael also discusses Janet Leach's generosity towards other people:

I mean Janet invented a glaze called a hamstone glaze/And whereas most people when they invent a glaze/They tend to keep it to themselves/Whereas she published it in the Ceramics Review/So anyone can use that glaze now/Which is quite something/Most people don't/And she helped so many people/She was American/Slightly brash/But really she was quite a shy lady/And because/Of her shyness/She tended to overcompensate/And become this/Almost aggressive person/I used to hear dreadful stories about her/And I used to think/But she's really just a pussycat/Really/But because she was sort of frightened of people/She would be quite abrasive to them/You know

(Hunt, 2009)

Acknowledging the reasons that people often found Janet difficult, and for which reasons she was not well-liked, he describes hearing terrible 'stories' about her. Her generosity in sharing her glaze is a much more public gesture than the sort of everyday kindness of delivering water to Stella Benjamin in her four-by-four vehicle, or finding a job and somewhere to live for Lieka Ritman after she was left homeless by the fire of 1970 (Benjamin, 2009 and Ritman, 2009). Like Hepworth, Janet was a woman who held an important public role, and as a result would have been a target for misogynistic gossip regardless of her personality.

An example of the kind of support that women gave to other women in St Ives is the story of Lithuanian artist Elena Gaputyte. Having escaped Soviet-occupied Lithuania in 1944, she spent time in Germany and Montreal before studying with Brancusi in Paris at the Academy Colarossi. She arrived in St Ives in 1958, unmarried and pregnant, and was given support by Boots Redgrave, Sheila Lanyon and actress Linden Holman, as she was unable to find accommodation, being both a foreign refugee and a single mother-to-be (Lanyon, 2013). In 1962, she opened the Sail Loft Gallery in Back Road West, exhibiting her own work alongside that of other artists. She showed St Ives painter Bryan Pearce's paintings, supporting him early in his career, and was helpful in facilitating the work of many young artists (Emanuel, 2013). She moved to London in 1966, went on to teach at Roehampton, and produced performance and installation work reflecting on memory, peace and reconciliation that was shown globally, including an exhibition at London's

Imperial War Museum in 1985. Sheila Lanyon often offered support to those in need, and Stella went to visit Sheila once a week for a bath with her son (Benjamin, 2009).

Connections between women emerge in the archive in unexpected ways:

Kelley had another studio/Before he went there/I think that used to be one of Tony's/
The Sail Loft/The Sail Loft Studio/No/It was down um/Down/Back Road East/And
down to the right there towards the harbour/And who had that before him/It was
some woman/I remember we had to clear away all these whisky bottles/Before he
could move in/I've forgotten her name/Luckily/But the whole place was just/Just/Full
of discarded whisky bottles

(Kelley, 2011)

Ann's disapproval at the whisky bottles both reveals the fine line between the heavy-drinking culture and problematic drinking, which is also implied in interviews with Susan Lethbridge, who says that 'there was a lot of drinking going on, if I'm going to be critical now I wasn't critical then' (Lethbridge, 2011). It is quite likely that 'some woman' who Ann refers to is Elena Gaputye, who would have been moving out of her studio at the Sail Lofts before moving to London.

Ann acknowledges the judgement in the telling of the gossip, by suggesting it is lucky that she cannot remember the artist's name. The contrast between the idea of the hard-drinking man artist and the woman artist who is a problem drinker is quite clear.

'I'll tell you a little story, which isn't very kind': Cliques and Enmity

Unsurprisingly, not everyone in the community always got on. Susan Lethbridge describes how she 'met a lot of people, apart from Bryan' (Wynter, her first husband who left her for one of his students), in St Ives. Her friendship with Wilhelmina Barns Graham, like many of the relationships in the wider social scene in St Ives, was complex. Divisions were often formed really along class and political lines, rather than any fundamental disagreements on creative philosophies. However, the 'Nicholson faction' also comprised arguably the more successful or established 'serious' artists of St Ives. This division is highlighted by Susan's discussion of her friend Wilhelmina Barns Graham's wedding to David Lewis:

I'll tell you a little story/Which isn't very kind/Um/Willie was getting married to David/
And that was the Nicholson faction/And um/She had been/she was about to be
godmother to my son/And I called around/To tell her the order of the service/And
where and all that/And she opened the door about this wide/And she said/You know
we're having to have two separate parties/And I said no I didn't/And she said/Well
this is the other one/And she shut the door/There was a lot of that sort of thing/
These things were really accepted, you know/They were just accepted

(Lethbridge, 2011)

This mirrors the divisions that Susan highlights in the previous chapter, where she creates a separation between the group of people who would go to the pub, and the group who would not. The same divisions apply, with Barns Graham and her husband David Lewis defined as separate from the rest of the creative community. However, as Michael suggests, Barns Graham was evidently not a woman who indulged in social pretensions:

Willie Barns Graham very much so/Very feisty lady/Loved her/Yes that's it/From St
Andrews/She would spend so much of the time down here/And so much of the time
in St Andrews/But Willie was lovely/I don't if she much cared for women/[coughs]/
But when Barbara and Sarah were in here/Willie would come in/And they'd say/Oh
hello Willie/And she'd more or less push them aside/To get to me/And I loved this/
This was super/Um

(Hunt, 2009)

Conclusion

Women like Shirley moved to St Ives with a definite idea of how to make friends and find like-minded people. Her involvement with the Penwith Gallery, local politics and volunteering helped her to make friends, in extension to the connections she made through pottery. Her interview describes the set of distinctions that define her social group, with 'internal identifications' such as socialist politics, modernist art and craft, jazz, and St Ives as the place in which these activities could be performed.

Although women were generally welcome in the bohemian pubs in St Ives, and they discuss visiting regularly in their interviews, mixing with locals and conducting business

as well as socialising, they also chose to produce their own networks of sociability.

Women created and defined their own social spaces, throwing parties and exhibition openings, organised the annual arts ball, jazz evenings and afternoon teas, which opened up spaces in which they could discuss art, politics and ideas with like minded people. As such, not only were they making and defining their own community, but contributing to social networks that were also mutually beneficial support networks that attracted women to move to St Ives, and to stay.

The oral history archive contains people who are often spoken about, but do not speak. By “reading the silence” in oral histories, it is possible to reveal queer narratives that reveal a more complex and nuanced history of the creative community in St Ives, as well as women’s networks and social lives in St Ives.

Chapter Five: ‘You Should Have Taken Another Ham With You’: Gossip, Parties, and Barbara Hepworth

Introduction

How does this research change our understanding of gendered modernism?

Modernism is performative, and that performance of modernism is gendered. While the performance of modernism has many characteristics that I have noted that are shared, I have discussed the ways in which masculine modernism is performed in postwar St Ives, as individualistic, heroic, and often competitive. Feminine modernism, in contrast, is performed through the shaping and defining of community.

This final chapter revisits the ideas discussed in this thesis by examining gossip around Barbara Hepworth, and her legacy as an artist who shaped the community of St Ives. As I argued in the first chapter, listening to gossip in the oral history archive not only reveals new feminist narratives of modernism in St Ives, but undermines patriarchal historiographies that ignore women’s contributions to modernist art histories. Gossip creates powerful narratives, which are passed on even in the context of museums and institutions, and regardless of Hepworth’s attempts to carefully control her public image, these patriarchal narratives continue to diminish her legacy in ways that would never affect a male artist. Gossip has the power to reveal marginalised or hidden stories of women in St Ives, including Hepworth, who not only participated in its creative community, but who carefully shaped and defined it through social, professional and pedagogical networks. This chapter uses previously unexplored archival material to discuss Hepworth’s legacy as part of the creative community in St Ives.

Importantly, gossip in the archive provides an insight into Hepworth's relationship to the community, and highlights her commitment to social responsibility, as well as her kindness, generosity and humour. Although Hepworth herself talks extensively about the importance of community and place, and her friendships with women have been discussed previously (e.g. Curtis, 2006, Smith, 2013), that she was devoted to not just to St Ives and its community, but supportive to other women in particular, is not especially well known. Perhaps less celebrated because, as small, often local gestures, they do not fit easily into a narrative of Hepworth as an internationally important modernist artist. Hepworth had a number of things in common with Shirley, Ann, Stella, Sheila, Mamie. She was a woman living alone, and a single parent. She lived at Trewyn, her 'little cottage' that was part studio, part exhibition space, as well as a domestic space. She had a strong sense of an artists' responsibility towards their community, was a pacifist and supported socialist causes. Her social group reflected this sense of community responsibility, as she was friends with both Janet Leach and Boots Redgrave, who, as I have previously discussed, were vital to the support network that existed for women in St Ives. As Michael discusses visiting Hepworth in her garden, he reinforces the sense of Hepworth as a very social person:

In that group there were people like Boots Redgrave/Janet Leach/Um/Probably Tony O'Malley/Or somebody like that/So there was quite a gathering of people there/And they all had lovely tales to tell/Of times before I was here/When I was a little boy or something like that/Uh/So it was fascinating/It's a shame in a way it's changed

(Hunt, 2009)

Describing this social group that included Janet Leach and Boots Redgrave strengthens the argument that Hepworth shared similar views as the other two women, and provides further evidence for her active participation in a modern and modernist community of women that shaped and defined St Ives. That this was a group of women who believed in the social responsibility of the artist, and who were generous but often misunderstood, is reinforced by Michael's discussion of Janet Leach and the gossip that circulated about her:

I mean Janet invented a glaze called a hamstone glaze/And whereas most people when they invent a glaze/They tend to keep it to themselves/Whereas she published it in the Ceramics Review/So anyone can use that glaze now/Which is quite something/Most people don't/And she helped so many people/She was American/Slightly brash/But really she was quite a shy lady/And because/Of her shyness/She tended to overcompensate/And become this /Almost aggressive person/I used to hear dreadful stories about her/And I used to think/But she's really just a pussycat/Really/But because she was sort of frightened of people/She would be quite abrasive to them/You know

(Hunt, 2009)

Over the last four chapters, I have argued that women's experience of modernity and production of modernism in St Ives after the Second World War has been overlooked. Furthermore, in the historiography of St Ives, modernism has been defined as a particular set of gendered practices, which has more or less excluded women from its narrative, other than Hepworth and Wilhelmina Barns Graham, or as 'artistic wives'. Feminine modernism in the years after the Second World War embraces a wide range of tangible and intangible practices, but the ones that I have focused on here and believe to be of particular importance are often those that are performative, collective, or pedagogical. Chapter Two discussed the construction of feminine modernism as social and pedagogical performance. As Sorkin (2016) suggests, these deliberative women's community networks, based around ceramics production, prefigure later ideas of feminist collectivism of the 1970s, women developed support networks, pedagogical frameworks, and social spaces that made St Ives somewhere that women could have a creative career and live independently. The party, whether for an exhibition opening or annual celebration, was often a carefully curated event that brought people together and defined and strengthened a sense of community and place. (This can be defined as a form of community sculpture etc.) The party was a form of making and advancing a sense of community. St Ives' reputation for 'wild parties' was already established by the late nineteen-fifties (Val Baker, 1959:96), and continued well into the sixties and beyond (Emanuel, 2001), and drinking and drug-taking were commonplace (Stephens, 1997 & 2018; Lethbridge, 2013). This sense of wildness added to Cornwall's image as a wild and

remote magical landscape, and enabled women to imagine themselves living freer, and more autonomous lives than in the rest of England. The idea of the 'wild woman' constructs an idea of modern and (sexually) liberated femininity, and the particular conception of Cornwall's wildness meant that it was the perfect setting for the development of a postwar bohemianism influenced by urban modernity and contemporary concerns as much as early modernism and the 'Gypsy' myth, which for women meant sexual liberation, as well as creative autonomy. This 'wildness' was a form of feminine modernity that rebelled against contemporary gender norms.

Women had their own support network that operated independently of men, and this support network was not only one of the reasons that women were attracted to St Ives, but also enabled women to support each other through community participation.

Women could be 'useful' (a pre-war idea of the single woman as 'spinster in Eden' appearing frequently in modernist literature), and could help each other to survive as single parents or living alone. These networks helped women to make friends, find work or somewhere to live, or to develop their craft skills further. Most importantly, women came to St Ives because they could be free to live independent lives and support themselves in creative careers, which would have been more difficult in other places.

Despite women's stories spanning forty years, from the years just after the Second World War, right up until the nineteen eighties, women's desires change very little. St Ives was perceived to be more socially liberal and permissive because of its reputation for bohemianism, and allowed women (and men) more freedom to be queer or gender non-conforming. It was even possible for women to get a mortgage to buy their own homes.

There is a coherent sense in women's interviews of a pastoral ideal unique to the postwar period. Defined by the 'little cottage', a particular idea of home common to women across the archive was desirable. St Ives could provide this 'little cottage', with its wonky cupboards, dampness and lack of running water, which women embraced in a spirit of modernist simplicity and neo-peasantry that embraced the authenticity of wild and rural Cornwall. This particular idea of modernism in Cornwall in the postwar period has been under examined, where artists chose to live in austere but aesthetic poverty in

a desire for authenticity, growing their own food or flowers to sell, or raising goats while living without electricity. This artistic asceticism came not only from genuine poverty, and a nostalgia for a mythical pre-industrial England that could only exist in Cornwall, but a conception of modernism that connected authenticity, simplicity and rural living with anti-consumerist piety, as well as the influence of ideas of spiritualism and Eastern mysticism, as Stephens (2018) suggests. Women decorated their little cottages with whitewashed walls and studio ceramics, rustic furniture and French kitchenware. This aesthetic was a rejection of mass consumerism, particularly American style imports, and reflected a loose, socially liberal and socialist politics, a counterculture that quickly became a lifestyle aesthetic co-opted by companies like Habitat by the mid-1960s. Women could support themselves through casual work in retail, pubs and restaurants supported by the tourist trade, or even piece-work like the kind provided by decorating Susan Wynter's toys. They often found work that fulfilled a need locally, like making cakes for cafés, or one further afield, growing flowers to be sent to London. Between jobs working to pay the rent, they developed the skills that they had learned at art school, improving their painting to make a living, learning on the job at one of the potteries, or by picking up new skills from other artists and makers. St Ives made women's ambitions for a creative career possible, and offered them the chance to be independent and self-sufficient.

Barbara Hepworth and Gossip

Spread through unauthorised biographies, gallery talks, magazine articles and exhibition tours misogynistic gossip is perpetuated that undermines Hepworth's legacy. These stories have created myths that continue to circulate through informal channels, in a way that would never happen with a successful man artist. As feminist art historian Katy Deepwell has discussed in her essay *Hepworth and Her Critics* (1998), Hepworth attempted to promote her ideas through her writing in order to present her thinking around her art and life in a way that meant that she could be understood, and yet (men) critics persisted in undermining her by using her own words against her, misunderstanding her. 'The production of *A Pictorial Autobiography* was part of a set of

strategies which I believe Barbara Hepworth adopted to speak positively about her ideas and artistic practice while at the same time negotiating and mediating the effects of the (then) familiar critical stereotypes about women artists.' (Deepwell, 1998:97-98) Hepworth attempted to control the narratives around her and her work to silence the sexism and to right the wrongs of the critics who compared her unfavourably with Henry Moore. (Deepwell, 1998:99) As curator Penelope Curtis writes, the comparison with Moore that persisted throughout her career meant that Hepworth became competitive, and had to be concerned with not only 'finding the right dealer, the right clients, being in the right shows, and making bequests to major museums, but also setting the record straight' (Curtis, 1994:197). As art historian Sherry Buckberrough notes, critics such as Lawrence Alloway, David Lewis, Adrian Stokes and Herbert Read, even when writing positively about Hepworth's work, wrote in explicitly gendered terms that framed her sculpture and practices as essentially feminised and feminine. (1998:49). Hepworth's work, and her personality, were considered 'cold', in comparison to Moore's extrovert personality, and Hepworth received less support from the British Council as a result. (Buckberrough, 1998:48). Hepworth's own descriptions of her practice and her work are far from cold, and yet this idea of her as detached, cold and aloof has persisted. Even though much work has been done to counter misogynistic myths, gossip continues to circulate about Hepworth. Men attempt to undermine Hepworth because of her gender, while simultaneously blaming other women for not paying enough attention to her work for not being feminist enough for feminists:

Of course, it is tempting to read Hepworth's process and her choice of materials and forms through the lens of gender, and many have. Gendered considerations also apply to the reception history of her work, namely the contradictions of her lifetime fame and posthumous occlusion. She was cited as a protofeminist by early feminists in the United States, though this claim was ironically based on her art's formal relationship to central-core imagery, rather than on Hepworth's refusal to adhere to gendered notions of who makes formalist art. In any case, she fiercely resisted any connection to feminism. The fact is that, like Helen Frankenthaler and Louise Nevelson, among others, she wanted to play in the company of men, not cultivate solidarity with other women. Perhaps it is for this reason that her work has been largely absent from exhibitions that, over the past three decades, have offered feminist reevaluations of recent art history,

(Kleebutt, 2015:297)

Writing at the time of Barbara Hepworth's major exhibition at Tate Britain in 2015, Kleebutt is suggesting that it is Hepworth who is to blame for the comparative lack of attention given to her work. It is her fault for wanting her work to be considered on an equal footing with men artists, and he explicitly says that her work has been overlooked because Hepworth did not cultivate solidarity with other women, another myth perpetuated without evidence. In fact, her relationships with women were important; as Curtis notes, following the breakdown of her marriage, 'Hepworth's friendships with women became increasingly important and creative: the composer Priaux Rainier planted her garden for her; E.H. Ramsden was writing about her work and helping her to title it; and she was drawing from the female nude' (Curtis, 2006:842).

The right-wing tabloid Daily Mail is well-known for its racist, homophobic and misogynistic writing, but an article entitled *'The Witch of St Ives: She is our greatest ever female artist but did Barbara Hepworth REALLY 'bewitch' fellow artists and discard husbands and children in relentless pursuit of perfection?'* published to coincide with the 2015 exhibition is both shocking and ridiculous, and such an article would never be written about a male artist (Hudson, 2015). It speculates on an interview with David Lewis about Hepworth to fill pages with gossip, and barely mentions Hepworth's work. An 'anonymous' former assistant describes her as a witch, and the article covers all of the usual gossip that is repeated any time that Hepworth is discussed, as well as some more bizarre speculation, including that Hepworth had had an affair with 'Pete' Lanyon, and that she hoped Ben Nicholson would leave Switzerland and they would get back together. The writer goes on to say that:

listening to some people in the Cornish seaside town you'd think they were talking about a cross between Lady Macbeth and a black widow, a cold manipulative figure, rather than the serene godmother of British modern art. 'Barbara sucked the life out of people,' one of Hepworth's most prominent assistants has said.

(Hudson, 2015)

This kind of rumour and speculation is read widely enough to find itself articulated in questions after gallery talks, or whispered between visitors on exhibition tours, and becomes an art historical myth. Another, perhaps more surprising site for misogynistic gossip about Hepworth is Tate's own magazine. In an article entitled *The Real St Ives Story*, like a cheap celebrity magazine exposé, the children of Peter Lanyon and Terry Frost gossip about Hepworth, repeating hand-me-down gossip passed down from father to son. In both men's stories, Hepworth is an imperious maternal figure, and her assistants are child-like:

Anthony Frost: The other story is about Barbara Hepworth. At the time Denis [Mitchell] and dad were her assistants. When journalists or photographers came round, she didn't want them to see that she had these people working away on her sculptures. So she would shut the workers in the greenhouse, where they had their morning breaks. Then Barbara would start polishing the sculpture, as if she'd been at it all day. One time my father was bursting for a pee, but she wouldn't let them out, and the only thing he could find was a pot with a geranium with very dry earth in it -- but the pee went straight through and trickled across the greenhouse floor, and out under the door, between the legs of the visitors. Barbara banned him from having biscuits for the rest of the week.

Andrew Lanyon: Dicon Nance [potter and cabinetmaker] used to work for her. He told me about the little bell Barbara rang, which meant all her assistants were to remove themselves. It was quite a ritual. These are the kind of myths that people latch on to -- if artists just had tea together and got on rather well, it wouldn't make good copy.

(Frost & Lanyon, 2006:91)

Unable to pee without permission, controlled by bells or banned from eating biscuits, her assistants are characterised as naughty man-children unable to behave like adults, causing deliberate mischief to undermine their employer, to be chided and chastised by Hepworth. Lanyon himself says, 'if artists just had tea together and got on rather well, it wouldn't make good copy'. (Lanyon, 2006:95)

A refrain from across the archive is the contradictions to the image of Hepworth as aloof and cold. For example, Susan Lethbridge says, 'she was very refined/How are you Mrs Wynter/And um/A friend/A friend of mine/Used to go up and help with the sculpture/

She was a really nice lady' (Lethbridge, 2011). Michael Hunt discusses visiting her after work with the alternative social crowd, and notes her sense of humour:

She was a lovely lady/After work quite often/Particularly on a day like today/When it's quite sunny/And bright skies/We used to go there after work for a drink/She lived in the room above the/Uh/Kitchen/It was then/And as we went up she would pour us a glass of whiskey/We would all file out in to the garden/And one by one find a little chair/And all sitting and talking/So it was really really pleasant in those days/And I think/I've never heard of these people/She was quite a wicked lady/She had a wicked sense of humour

(Hunt, 2009)

That so many of the interviewees in the archive had been to her house or had positive encounters with Hepworth refutes the idea that she was cold and aloof.

Hepworth's support for charity, politics and other women is notable. Her focus on the importance of the artist in society, and the idea of 'responsible community' are clearly in evidence in the stories from the oral history archive (Buckberrough, 1998:48). Also a member of the St Ives branch of the CND, Hepworth was an active in her support for issues in both local and international politics. As well as supporting Shirley in her anti-Vietnam War shop, Hepworth also showed her support for causes, and for Shirley, by donating jumble:

Yes well I was a member of the Labour Party/And in those days we used to have jumble sales/There were not charity shops in those days/And/Um/Well Barbara particularly/She just used to ring up and say/Oh I've got some jumble/So I used to go up around to Barbara's/And pick up jumble/

(Beck, 2009)

Hepworth's participation in local fundraising demonstrates her commitment to 'responsible community', even on such a small level, and does not suggest someone who is detached and aloof from the town.

Hepworth and Feminine Modernism

In this thesis I have argued that listening to women's voices in the oral history archive reveals a narrative of feminine modernism and modernity that has been absent from the historiography of St Ives, and not only tells a different story, but undermines the existing patriarchal histories of the creative community. Moreover, listening to gossip in the oral history archive undermines and subverts the existing narratives of masculine modernism, as well as disclosing the importance of listening to silences to expose the possibility of queer narratives in the archive.

It may be that the sensation of being a woman presents yet another facet of the sculptural idea.

(Hepworth, 1952)

It may be that the sensation of being a woman presents another emphasis in art
And particularly in terms of sculpture
For there is a whole range of perception belonging to feminine experience

(Hepworth, 1961)

It is clear from Hepworth's carefully chosen words, that it is possible to conceive of an idea of feminine modernism. 'The sensation of being a woman' is a refrain that Hepworth repeats throughout her life in discussions of her work. These quotes emphasise Hepworth's interest in her own gendered experience in terms of her work as a sculptor. As discussed in Chapter One, modernism is gendered, and it is this modernist 'feminine experience' that has been ignored. The narrative of masculine modernism dominates the historiography of St Ives, and has prevented the exploration of feminine modernism as the experience of women as 'other than what is other to this masculine order' (Pollock, 1996:71). Buckberrough notes that Hepworth has been misunderstood by feminist writers as having an essentialist view of gender, a misinterpretation of her interest in modernist ideas of essence and universalism unconnected to gender (Buckberrough, 1998). Hepworth's commitment to shaping and supporting her community could certainly be interpreted as a forerunner to the women's feminist collectivism and socially engaged art that Sorokin suggests (2016).

Feminine modernism encompasses a wide range of modernist practices that have not previously been recognised as such. These practices are often intangible, and performative, making and remaking the community in St Ives through the modernist party as the work of art. These parties gave women a sense of a community united by political ideologies and aesthetic sensibilities and defined and strengthened a sense of community identity and feeling, much the same way that gossip infers a sense of common identity, belonging and community morality. Just as an object made of clay can be a work of art or an everyday domestic object, or both at once, the modernist party.

Women came to St Ives in search of a community that enabled them to live independently and have a creative career. The community of women was one to which women could contribute to as well as benefit from, and existed as a vital support network. This support was professional, political and social. Women (and sometimes men) helped women to learn creative skills to develop careers, particularly in ceramics. Women shared politics and were interested in similar issues and causes, Feminine modernism exposes the sexual politics of St Ives. While women were not excluded from the masculine space of the pub, and in fact, both the bohemian nature of St Ives and of its women, meant that women were much more likely to go to the pub than they might have been in other parts of the country, particularly in the years immediately following the Second World War, women created their own social spaces with parties and gatherings that centred around the gallery, the beach and the home. I have argued that the party is in and of itself modernist, producing and reproducing particular ideas and ideologies around politics and aesthetics which define and hold together communities of women in St Ives. These parties produce rhythms which define and reinforce social groupings. The party is a work of art which is a performance of community, and therefore, the community is a work of art, made and remade but the women who participate in it. The 'modernist party might function as a generative site in which intellectual and literary authority is defined and disseminated and in which cultural influence and intervention take place', and it is this (Winning, 2013:128).

The modernist party is a cultural intervention or a work of art where different elements are brought together within a particular frame of space and time to produce a particular set of ideas or sensations. Hepworth, like Janet Leach and other women in St Ives, threw parties and arranged social events just as they threw pots or sculpted and carved. The party was a creative act that brought people together to produce a particular kind of community, which women chose to move to St Ives to be part of. This kind of participatory social sculpture perhaps, like Sorkin suggests, prefigures later feminist collectivism and participatory art. (Sorkin, 2016)

Hepworth, Rhythm and Community

Barbara Hepworth's comments in the 1967 BBC documentary, demonstrate her passion for St Ives' community:

It's not only the marvellous light and the fact that I've got more warmth so that I can carve out in the winter ,[...] but there is a comprehensible community, not just artists, but all people, writers and musicians, and all the local people, who have such a natural perception that they're warm neighbours and friends and one can understand how communities have to integrate.

(Hepworth, 1967)

Hepworth's feeling for community and place are clearly revealed through stories in the archive. Hepworth bought the Palais de Danse opposite Trewyn in 1961 as a space to store sculptures. Famed for her annual champagne parties, Hepworth used the Palais as a venue to host her parties, with sculptures in situ (HUunt, 2009). The Palais was transformed from a social space for dancing people to a static space for Hepworth's sculptures, but then is transformed again temporarily in the spatial-temporal frame of the party, when art works become party guests and party guests become sculptures. As well as seeing the party as a work of art, the work of art might also be a party. Hepworth constantly articulated her feelings around movement and sculpture:

First of all, to all of us, comes touch as infants, then touch becomes depth, and we find out that an arm is round, and a table square, then we find the texture of things, and what they mean, warm and live and rough and smooth, then we find out the importance of stance and rhythm, dancing, and if you really think about it, there must

be a thousand phrases in our English language explaining our responses to these things, keeping in touch, out of touch, bowed with grief, dancing with joy, all express movement and poise. And this is the very basis of sculpture in itself.

(Hepworth, 1967)

Her love of dancing and movement expressed in the 1967 documentary made by Westward TV and directed by Derek Fairhead, that shows her moving, almost dancing, around the sculptures in the dark in her garden, wearing a magnificent black and white harlequin cloak, on which changing coloured lights shine (Westward TV, 1967). It is joyous, and Hepworth has thought carefully of every aspect of the aesthetic experience. The work of art becomes another guest at a party with which to interact, to move around, to enter into a dialogue with. There is no better way to summarise the way in which women used the party and the community as a medium with which to express their creativity. A such, the party can be seen as a rhythmic form, a living sculpture or art work, where guests move in and out, exchanging ideas, conversations, dancing together. She was scathing about critics who failed to move around her sculptures and therefore failed to understand them, and repeatedly discusses the importance of rhythm and movement in relating to her work (Fraser, 2015:82). These important ideas around bodily experience of the world are developed further by art historian Rachel Rose Smith, who makes a convincing argument for Hepworth's understanding of ideas of phenomenology in discussions of her work with E.H. Ramsden (Smith, 2013). Hepworth discussed 'temporal aspects of perception and the bodily experience of meaning' and phenomenology can offers a way of exploring 'otherwise mute or aloof notions of interconnectivity and 'in betweenness', helping to express a coalescence of subject and object, body and environment, figure and landscape' (Smith, 2013). The immediacy of corporeal experience through rhythm and touch is something Hepworth returns to repeatedly in later years, and although she is talking about the way in which she hopes to produce a response to her sculpture, when she says the real thing is for people to move with their bodies. If I can make them to do that then I'm very happy', she could be equally be talking about a party (Fraser, 2015:83)

Reflecting on the abstract-figurative quality of her sculpture, not only does she emphasise the importance of community in place and people rather than landscape, she also speaks of 'the importance of stance and rhythm, dancing, [...] movement and poise' how 'this is the very basis of sculpture in itself.' (Hepworth 1967)

Hepworth hosted the most 'wonderful wonderful parties'. (Hunt, 2009) With a reputation for the springiest dance floor in the South West, the Palais de Danse opposite Trewyn Studio was bought by Hepworth to store her the larger sculptures that she was working on by this point, although this was not a particularly popular move with local people:

She was a very flamboyant lady/And when she/When she wanted to buy the Palais de Danse in St Ives/Which a lot of people didn't want her to buy/Because it was the only spring dance floor in Cornwall/And people was really annoyed/But anyway/Being Barbara Hepworth/No more was said/And that was the end of the Palais de Danse

(Coad, 2009)

From a social space of rhythmic movement, the dance floor played host only to the rhythmic movement of Hepworth's sculptures for most of the year. For Hepworth's parties, the Palais de Danse transformed from static space for sculpture to social space for community, when art works become party guests and party guests become sculptures.

Well Barbara/Barbara Hepworth used to have the most wonderful wonderful parties/ Usually towards the end of the year/And they were champagne parties/And they were held in the old Palais de Danse/Which was the/Uh/Dance hall across from where she lived/And because of the noise/She actually bought it/And um /She stored a lot of her sculpture there/But it still has the original swing floor in there/And it was the swingiest floor in the South West/The champagne used to flow like water/ And you just held your glass and it was full/Always Full/So consequently it got rather Sort of happy/And people would be sitting in the sculptures/Drinking their champagne/And the whole floor would be swinging/Swinging swinging

(Hunt, 2009)

There is something performative in Michael's description of Hepworth's parties, with guests swinging as they interact with the sculptures. This exemplifies the modernist

party's 'twin propensities to constructive enlightenment and destructive excess' (McLoughlin, 2013:2). Michael suggests that Hepworth had bought the Palais to get rid of the noise, and although this may have been unpopular, pop music was changing and so was dancing, and there was less need for sprung dance floors.

The party is a work of art, where Hepworth has carefully choreographed her guests to 'move with their bodies' around her sculpture in an

Hepworth, Sculptor of Community

Barbara Hepworth's comments in the 1967 BBC documentary, demonstrate her passion for St Ives' community:

It's not only the marvellous light and the fact that I've got more warmth so that I can carve out in the winter ,[...] but there is a comprehensible community, not just artists, but all people, writers and musicians, and all the local people, who have such a natural perception that they're warm neighbours and friends and one can understand how communities have to integrate.

(Hepworth, 1967)

Hepworth's statement on her passionate belief in the importance of the artist's social responsibility were made at the same time that she was fighting a legal case against the town council in 1966 in protest at their attempt to tarmac over part of the Island in order to create a car park. The Island was already used frequently as an unofficial, free, carpark, and sometimes campsite. Hepworth counts 60 cars left overnight on an early morning inspection in July 1966, 'some with people sleeping in them'. (Hepworth letter to Jervis, 03/03/1966) Finally in June 1968, co-respondent J Holman writes to Hepworth that 'at long last we seem to have reached the end of the road in this matter; let's hope that the great majority of St Ives residents and visitors will come to bear some measure of gratitude towards the three of us for the effort which we made.' (Holman letter to Hepworth, 28/06/1968) Hepworth is particularly anxious to complete the action as quickly as possible that year, as 'it matters a great deal to me to have this matter closed before September 23rd. when I receive the Freedom of the Borough.' (Hepworth letter to Jervis 03/09/1968) Ultimately, work begun on tarmacking the Island was halted, and although a car park was completed, it was on a much smaller scale than the council had

intended. Councillors who were involved in the action at the time still consider this to be a contentious issue. As part of the evidence in the trial, a statement from Tom Heron is also submitted, in which he explains the initial conflict between fishermen and Crysède in the conversion of the factory, which casts doubt on the ownership of the Island and adds weight to Hepworth's case. Heron describes the alteration of a small boundary wall outside the factory, which leads to conflict with fishermen. The wall is used for drying nets, and the issue requires careful negotiation with the fishermen to achieve a resolution satisfactory to both parties, as the fishermen state that they will demolish the wall if their demands are not met.

Hepworth brought the case at her own expense, because she believed that it was her duty to protect the place that she loved for future generations of local people and visitors alike, despite its unpopularity with the town council, and the acrimonious resentment on the part of some council members that (gossip suggests), remained for many years after Hepworth's death, even though it is hard to imagine anyone today who would take the town council's part. In June 1966, a QC in the High Court described the Borough Council's plan for the car park as 'an almost incredible act of vandalism' (St Ives Times, 17/06/1966). In a letter to Hepworth from co-respondent in the case J Holman writes, 'at long last we seem to have reached the end of the road in this matter; let's hope that the great majority of St Ives residents and visitors will come to bear some measure of gratitude towards the three of us for the effort which we made' (Letter from J Holman to Hepworth, 28/06/1968).

For all Hepworth's achievements, the story that Michael has to tell about one of her parties expresses much more clearly a sense of Hepworth's generosity and humour:

And um/One particular/Um/Party/Boots Redgrave/For a joke/There was lots and lots of food/But she picked up a whole ham/And put it round her shoulder/Like this/And walked out/[...]We'd all had a lot to drink and we thought it was quite funny/
Anyhow/We went down the stairs/And one of Barbara's daughters saw us going/Ah/
But as we were drunk we really didn't care/So we continued on our way
And went to a party at Betty Holman's/And we had a wonderful party there/That must have finished probably about four or five in the morning/Nevertheless we were on time to open/And in those days we opened at nine o'clock in the morning/Boots

came in with a terrific hangover/Saying what have I done/And we told her that she'd stolen the ham/And that the daughter/Of Barbara/Had seen her/So she rushed out and bought the most enormous bunch of flowers/And went up to see Barbara/Who was perfectly alright/And said/Oh/You should have taken another ham with you/But uh/Boots was a little bit scared then/But everything worked out fine

(Hunt, 2009)

Hepworth's parties, therefore, are the kind of party 'which provides inspiration, food for thought and a model for creativity. This version of the party is often a forum for testing the relationship of the individual to other people, exploring the nature of the self and critiquing the state' (McLoughlin, 2013:1). The party If the party is a work of art, then the reverse is also possible. If in the work of art it is possible to read:

textuality as sociality; writer and reader as host and guest; intra- and extra-textual relations as social discourses (small-talk, talking over, conversation, interruption, miscommunication, quarrelling); narrative as the party arc from invitation to thank-you note; intertextuality as hospitality; rhythm as anticipation, fatigue and second wind; absorption as intoxication; authorial self-effacement and intrusion as shyness and showing-off; reader response as RSVP; and so on.

(McLoughlin, 2016:8)

The same is true of the archive, where voices are brought together for a moment in time, speaking together, or syncopated, resonating with or echoing each other, often discordant, looping, creating rhythms of community.

Appendix

Oral History Interview Transcripts

Sheila Oliner Interview with Celia Mackintosh

Monday 6th November 2009

Penwith Studio no. 7

Right

My full name is Sheila Constance Oliner

Did you say my age?

When and where I was born

I was born
Seven eight thirty

I was born in London
In Clapham

I first came to St Ives with my family in about the late sixties

Where we were staying in another part of Cornwall
I can't remember where
But we visited St Ives to come and see Maurice Sumray
Because her was a friend of both my husband and myself
And they had the cafe

So we went and had a rather [grunts] meal
[laughs]
But it was lovely to see them

We were down on holiday
And then I decided we needed a bolt-hole
And the estate agent kept on driving us around
And I kept saying no
Not yellow lines
Somewhere like Zennor
And I had stayed at places a couple of times in St Ives
So I knew the district a little bit
And um
So
He said as it so happens there is a place in Zennor
But it's not actually on the market
And he took us to see it and it was Gerald's Cottage in Post Office Row
And we had no money

Gerald's, yes

So we had absolutely no money
But I posted my husband back to London
To go and see the bank manager
And he said look
In Zennor
Just give them a hundred per cent loan

So we did
Well immediately after that
Windrose (?) Cottage came up
Which was much bigger ground and an end of terrace and really much nicer
So we went and borrowed loads more money
And got that
And then the interest rates shot up
So we sold Gerald's to
You know
Help pay the mortgage on that

At one time
But for a very short period

And for a very short period I did let out Gerald's
But it was just such
I'm not nature's landlady
It was a nightmare
People set fire to the place
Did all sorts of gruesome things

And that was another reason really
It was just too stressful not living here

I used to come all
Mostly with the children
But also with my husband
In the school holidays
For the whole holidays

And then as soon as they were a bit older
I would come all sorts of times
And um
And because I always felt rather guilty
About having this place empty in the winter
Um
I let
Um

There was a a potter called Willy Nankervis
Who lived in Meadow Cottage in a caravan
His dad had a cottage there
Bill Nankervis
And he lived in a caravan there with his girlfriend called Ruth
So I used to
In exchange for them just
Slapping a bit of emulsion on
I used to let them stay in the winter
Rent free
And that sort of assuaged my guilt
About people living in a caravan
And we had a cottage
So that's what I did there

Um

Well I'd always painted and drawn
For as long as I can remember really
And I was not a good child
I kept on getting kicked out of school
And my parents had a friend who was an artist

Are we alright?

And um
And he suggested I went to art school
And he taught at the Slade
So when I was about fifteen
I went there
But
After about two years
My father and I were involved in a very serious car accident
We weren't hurt
But it was serious
And I was meant to go back
But I didn't
And after some time
A friend of my mother's

My mother had been a painter

We
There was somebody killed
It wasn't us who killed him
It was somebody who went before us
So there was a whole court case
It was just a trauma

And I suddenly felt
You know
Art is so self-indulgent
And this that and the other
I need to be doing something more worthwhile
Anyway I didn't do anything more worthwhile
For a bit
I went off to one of my mother's friend's studios
At City and Guild
And worked with him for a bit

Just as an apprentice
If you like
Well
It involved things like
If he got a mural commission
I would go and fill in that bit
Or that bit

Um
And really just helping him with his work
Um
You know
And learning more

I was too young at the Slade
And I was a very
Rather undisciplined
I dunno
It wasn't right
I was too young
Everyone was older than me
And I used to spend all my time prowling around in corridors
Um
Trying to get out
And
There were times when they wanted me to go back
When all this hubbub was over
And there were times I wished I had
But
Um
I didn't
And then but this time suppose
I was about eighteen
And I suddenly decided that all this art was too self-indulgent
So you know
That was what everyone wanted me to do

And I suppose I did really
So I went off
And became a nurse

I keep quiet about this
Because
I mean it's all so long ago
So I went to Edgeware General
And because I kept dropping out of school and one thing and the other
Really
Um
You had to sit this entrance exam
And I suppose I've always been somebody that just said what I thought
Regardless if it got me into hot water or not
And so this
Whatever she was who interviewed me
I had to sit and write an essay
And I can remember what it was
I had to sit and write an essay about how I'd like to go to the opera in Milan

Then I had a paper on maths presented to me
And I said I can't do that
[laughs]
Can't do it

And to my amazement
I got accepted
I was there for three years
Did my hospital finals
Met my husband
While I was doing TB nursing

No he wasn't
He had TB
He was a Czech Jewish refugee
His parents and family all died in Auschwitz
And he and his brother escaped
His brother went to Israel
And he came here
With about ten bob

He came over
I should think
Well it was when the Nazis came into Prague

Um
Or maybe just before
People who've had that experience don't really talk about it much

And um
But he escaped
He was older than me
He was
I'm thinking he might have been nineteen twenty
Or something
And um
He
I think he had quite a difficult time escaping

And he had married somebody
To really get them out of Prague
I don't know why that was the case
It had to happen
But she went
She was a Zionist and he wasn't
So she went to Israel
And he came to this country

And we met in about fifty two
I suppose
When I was doing my TB nursing
And um
That was it really
I nursed him for a year

[Talking about husband - international bridge player]

Well I
I came
Oh
I
Oli and I separated
We're still married
And he's lived with somebody else for years
But um
We separated in the beginning of eighty one
My son and his first wife were living with me
It was a very big flat in Lyndhurst Gardens
And I was down here by myself one time
And I thought if I come down for six months
Then they can have the flat to themselves
And then I went back and I thought
No I won't

I'll move
Move to Cornwall
I think I must have been a bit unbalanced at the time
Anyway
Um
I rang up
Um
Oh Maurice rang me
Because I was always very friendly with Maurice Sumray
And he said I'm giving up my studio
I'll put in a word for you
And John Emanuel had had it before him
And then Maurice
Um
I spoke to Roy Walker
And I spoke to Cathy
And I spoke to my children
And said look
It'll take two years to get a studio
So no rush
But five weeks later Cathy rang me up and said
We've given you our biggest studio
We want a professional artist in it
So panic stations
I took it in the April
Moved down here in October
October eighty five

--

I knew Maurice
John Emanuel
Roy Walker
Roy Ray
I had a network of people that I knew
So I had work
Like I had these walls insulated
And floor and everything put down
Before I moved in
So I got as much maximum
Because it was a bit of a tip really
And um
Then
What happen next
Oh I know
I hadn't been here long
And there was this bang at the door

And this little man stood there and said
I'm Karl Weschke
I hear you're a proper artist
So actually
Karl was one of my closest friends here
We were very good friends

--

Mamie (Mary Dulcie) Lewis interviewed by Janet Axten Friday 4 December 2009

Wallington, Surrey September 1915

[Came to St Ives in 1943]

Well

Um

The war was on

Wasn't it

My husband was take on by TRE Establishment

I went off and became a Land Girl

[husband posted to Singapore, so moved to a one-room flat in St Ives]

I decided I wanted to stay in Cornwall

So I came back here and got myself a little flat

And I worked in a cafe

Which was the only cafe in St Ives

In those days

My flat was in Norway Square

Just a one room flat with a little kitchen and bathroom

Um

The cafe was the Copper Kettle

Right on the harbour front

It was the only cafe there

Believe it or not

There's about thirty of them now

It had lovely views across the harbour

And a couple of people ran it

He was called Pop Short

And his wife

I forget her name

But they did very well

And I waited there

And made home-made cakes and things

For a whole year

Or perhaps a bit longer

Yes I went to Leonard Fuller's School of Painting

About two mornings
And um
I was learning
Really

Oh he was lovely
A biggish man
Didn't really look like an artist all
He was very good at his portraits and things
Very encouraging
He was the first...
I'd been to Croydon Art School
Before but it was very very different from that
And I did quite well
Eventually
Eventually I got in to St Ives Society
Showing my pictures in the gallery there every year
I made a thousand pounds in one year
It was in those days yes

Well I did landscapes and portraits
I liked doing portraits best of all really
I've got a little gallery at home here
But unfortunately it's full of building materials

Yes I did
I met a lot of people
I shall have to look in my diaries for the names of some of them

And um
Of course Sven Berlin was down here then
He didn't come to the school
He was an artist on his own
And Guido Morris
There were loads of artists
Yes it was absolutely delightful

Yes lots going on
The artists were very important
In St Ives
They were looked up to and respected

Yes we did
Well I had a boyfriend by then
I was separated from my husband because he wouldn't come and live down here
And um

I met this man
And he was a tremendous pub goer too
[laughs]
And um
I used to go to The Sloop a lot in the evenings and meet all the old fishermen
They used to tell yarns about boats sinking
And one thing and another to do with the sea
And fishing
And I used to go there most evenings
Just for an hour
I didn't stop all the time
I can't think
Oh no
They were
They all drank
We sat round tables
And all drank together
And the fishermen used to tell great yarns about their sea trips
And one thing and another
I don't know that the artists really talked about themselves
[laughs]
They just roared with laughter and they loved talking to them
[laughs]
[makes arrrrrrwarrrrrrrrrr noise in impression of fishermen talking]

He was very pleasant

[Sven Berlin]

[Guido Morris]

[Fire]

I understand you lived on the Island in a caravan

Yes I did
When I separated from my husband
He stayed up in Malvern
I stayed down here
And I made cakes and all that for the Copper Kettle
I had a flat
And then I had a cottage in Trelowarren Street
And of course when summer came
Spring came
They turned me out
They let it to summer visitors
And I then bought a gypsy caravan
Well I wanted one

And I looked around
And a heard there was one up in
Um
A garden of a hotel
If I can remember the name
I shall have to look that up
Began with G
It was somewhere up at Ayr
A hotel there

Angarrack

I was out for a walk one day and I happened to see the top of this caravan
In the garden
Oh
It's exactly what I want
I'm going in to ask who it belonged to
And so forth
Which I did
And they told me
No I want to sell it
And they told me how much
And I thought
I'm going to have that at any price
So I went out
And I managed to borrow a bit of money from my brother I think
And I bought it
And I had it on
Above Porthgwidden Beach
The little beach
And it was lovely
Just woke up in the morning and dressed and
Slithered down the cliff on to the sand
And it was lonely and lovely and beautiful view right along the beach to Porthmeor Beach
Right along to the Island I could see from it
Well anyway
I lived there for at least a year
And had a nasty experience
Well I had a child by then
Newly born baby
He was only about a few
A matter of months old
And I moved from the
Uh
Uh
Flat that I had
The cottage that I had in St Ives
Into the caravan

And I lived there most of that summer
With my baby
And I had a big old fashioned pram
And I used to push him down from Ayr
Down to St Ives and go shopping and things
And push the pram back up again
And one day
You know I was shoving this big
You know
Really big old fashioned pram
Pushing up by the cemetery
And uh
Men were working on the road
Digging
I don't know what they were doing
Laying drains or something
And one of them rushed out and said
[leers]
Oh I'll give you a hand
[laughs]
And he was only a little man
And
So he came up
And he pushed the pram up for me
Right up to Ayr
To this field in Ayr
Where I was living
And I said thank you very much
And he cleared off
And um
I never thought any more about it
But that very evening
I was in the caravan
My baby was asleep
I was pottering and doing things
And suddenly there was a lot of rattling
At the door
And a voice said
[assumes deep voice]
Let me in
And this business
O my god
There's an awful person after me
And um
And the door of the caravan was locked
We had
Went up steps
And the door at the top

I've got a painting of the caravan
And um
This voice said
Let me in
And I was terrified
And I thought
God
And I rushed back in to the caravan
And I put my legs through the window
There were little windows quite high off the ground
Ready to jump out
And this man had come round to the window and grabbed my legs
I was really terrified
And I kicked wildly and screamed and screamed
And he
He actually had to let go
And I rushed back to the door
And pulled it open
And ran out of the caravan
Went running across this field
Shouting
Help help
Somebody's trying to murder me and
You know
I left my baby in there though
And
Ah
It was pub closing time
There were lots of people about
Coming home from the pub
And some family heard me and ran out to me
And then
I told them
There's a man round
Trying to get in to my caravan
I live over there
Or something
So they said
Well you must come home with us
And they took me to their
They lived in a cottage
Near there
Quite near my caravan
They took me home
And um
Then they asked me questions and things
And they said they'd call the police
So the police were called

And I had to give all my details
Which I told them
And um
And I stayed the night with these people
Of course I went back and got my baby
He was sort of sitting up in bed with wide eyes
Wondering what on earth was going on
[laughs]
He was only a few months old
I suppose he was six months
Anyway
The next morning I had to give a statement to the police
And I didn't want to stay there any more after that
I couldn't get a flat or anything quickly
Cause it was the season was just starting
So I closed the door and went home to my mother in Bournemouth
By train and
She really didn't want me to live at home with her very much
With a young baby
But she...
You know I stayed for a while
I s'pose a month
Or something like that
And I decided to go back to Cornwall

So I went through that awful long journey
What's the name of that station
Temple or something
That's right
Long wait for a train with a baby in the middle of that line
Anyway I came back again to Cornwall
And I found a little flat which I rented
Which was in Norway Square
And it was only a one room flat
With a little kitchenette
And so forth
Still there
Nice little place it was
And uh
I moved in there
And I had this baby
And I haven't told you this properly
The right way round
I met
When I first came down to Cornwall
I met up with my girlfriend that very same night
We went for a walk down to Mousehole harbour
And there was a man hanging on the railings looking out to sea

And he was very friendly
Sort of
Hello how are you
And all that stuff
And he was not a cornishman
And I immediately thought he was most attractive
And I met him quite a lot after that
And it was through him that I had my baby
And where are we now

Well I did sell it
I sold it to a woman who lived out at
Um
Near St Just
She had land and she wanted it very much
So she took it

--

And um

Yes I was painting for a time
I think I stopped for a bit because my child was so young
It wasn't until he was a teenager
And he went to High Wycombe
And he went to train as a school master
And he wasn't really equipped for that
He didn't really want to do it
But he was talked into it
And um
And while he was up there he wrote to me and he said
I don't want to be a school teacher
At all
I want to do pottery
I want to teach
I want to learn how to do that
There was a pottery path to the school that he went to
He got really interested in it
So I said all right
I'll see what I can do
So I got in touch with Bernard Leach and his wife
And I asked if she would take him
As an apprentice or something

I became a member of St Ives Society a

And I showed a lot of pictures in that gallery

Barbara Hepworth

Ahh

I don't know how to describe her really

Well I suppose at an art gallery or somewhere

Nowhere special

Oh yes she was in the town

And I met her at meetings and things like that

I didn't really know her well

She was very much yes

Oh yes

Lots of parties

Lots

Well the artists themselves

I mean there were

Everybody turned up and brought something

Brought a bottle I s'pose

And that's how it all grew

But um

There were a lot of parties

I didn't go to them all by any means

[laughs]

Because I had to get someone to look after my baby

Interview between Celia Macintosh and Lieka Ritman and Jenny Eyre, Bowling Green Terrace Monday 29 March 2010

LR: I arrived here in 1968, and it was because a few years before that
I came from Australia to London
And then to Holland and then to Spain
And I met some people who were family of friends in Australia
It's a bit complicated, but anyway
And that was Douglas Portway
And Betty Holman
And Caroline Shackle
As they were called then
Who lived in Ibiza

.....

And then I went back to Australia after being in Holland for a while
And I didn't like it
Anymore
So by that time
Betty
And Caroline
Were together
No sorry
What am I saying
No
Caroline and Douglas were together
With Betty in Salubrious House in St Ives
And they said
Would I like to come and stay with them in St Ives
And he could sort of
Introduce me into the artists community
And um

I was an interior designer
But I'd started painting
A little bit
You know
A little bit of
In my spare time
So to speak

And uh
Anyway
I had a sort of

I suppose it rather felt
A little bit of a disastrous love affair with a bloke
And that broke up

So I thought right
I'm going to grab this opportunity
And go to England
And so I stayed in Salubrious House for quite a long time
And worked for Robin Nance all summer
You know
In the shop there
There was Mrs Popple and myself

[description of furniture weavings and ceramics]

[becomes picture framer]

I wasn't frightened of it

[first client Bryan Pearce]

It was a bit iffy

[worked for Heron, O'Malley etc.]

It was wonderful

[Stella Benjamin, Bryan Ilsley, Breon O'Casey left studio at Penwith, suggested it to Lieka who
could then move out of Wheal Dream
More space to do framing and painting
Worked for Willie Barnes Graham
Member of the Penwith]

As far as
Um
Getting to know the locals
So to speak
The actual Cornish
Like I said to you earlier
And we um
We used to gather in The Sloop
Um
Stella Benjamin and myself
And Bryan Ingham
And Leslie Ilsley
In the early days
And Friday night was booze up night
You know

JE: Let your hair down

Let your hair down
Very much so
And all the fish
All the old
All the fishermen used to be there
On one side of the pub

They probably thought we were awful
But amusing as well
I suppose
They sort of
We used to be
They used to be
A bit of argy bargy
We'd take the Mickey out of each other quite a lot
But also quite a lot of
Talking to the fishermen
Especially a bloke called Willie somebody
Who had a

Was it Willie James?

A sweet man
Who had a little dog
I think at one stage
His little dog fell off
Fell off of Haines Walk there
And I think he had to
Sort of
Go and rescue it
Anyway
That's aside
But yes
That's where we sort of communicated
With the um

Yes the first
After Salubrious House
Actually after Salubrious House
I moved
Moved to Academy Steps
In a flat
Ah
Which the whole thing burnt down
Lost everything

And um
Janet Leach approached me
And said Bernard needs looking after
And would you like to look after him
For as long as it takes
You can have my flat
Which is above Bernard's flat
I used to
Um
Make his dinner for him
And make sure he was okay

.....

That was in the seventies
Sixty nine seventy I think

....

Then I moved in with Peggy Frank

[damping down Ben Nicholson's house during fire]

[parent's car crash, buy a house with the insurance money]

[Stella Benjamin 20 The Digey, wanted to move to 22 The Digey]

And for a single woman it was difficult to get a mortgage

And I don't know if I'm allowed to say this
But Tom Trevorrow
Saw to it all

I was being employed then
As a potter by Anthony Richards
Liza Opposite
That was Liza Trevorrow
She used to be always
[does Cornish accent]
Alright my dear
Alright Lieka
Saw you had a bit of a do last night

[laughter]

So she was
She was very sweet actually
She put up with us all

I mean it was extraordinary
I think
She was alone
So it was sort of a bit of life for her
Interesting
Mm

JE: and it was brilliant as well because all the houses were lived in

There were no holiday houses then

It was a total community

JE: Zoe Stevens

.....

That was lovely
And you got to know them
But there was always a distance between you
You'd never really go into their houses
But you'd be
Hello
And
[Does Cornish accent]
Alright my dear

So then I got to hear that this was for sale

[kept following Stella around]

[Crusoes down the road, Digey was getting really noisy]

I probably made some of the noise myself at weekends
But I decided it was time to move somewhere quieter

[met Jenny in 1982]

JE: I moved down in 1969

[worked in the Midland bank, lived with sister, brother and mother, sister was in a pop group]

[Could hear tiles popping of the harbour restaurant during the fire in the Warren where she lived]

[mother wanted a guest house, bought a house in Draycott Terrace]

[mother died suddenly in 1977]

[gave up bank 1982 to run guest house because of (step) mother dying intestate]

[met Lieka at the Penwith]

[Learned to paint, Bob Devereaux]

[Sold guest house and moved in with Lieka]

[Bought restaurant The Sunflower in Chapel Street]

[Taught etching by Sheila Oliner]

[Joanna Lacey - bought paintings - tombola for Penwith - won a lot of paintings - artists name pulled out of hat]

[hates Tate]

LR: The Cornish are sort of

Um

Accepting us now

So to speak

Th-they

They're much more communicative

JE: Yes

After we've lived here

Well I moved here in eighty four

LR: So forty years now

Ann Kelley interviewed by Celia Macintosh
Monday 12 October
Hawk's Point, Carbis Bay

December 1941

Um

I came here on my honeymoon

My first honeymoon

Um

When I was married to Derek Kelley

Nineteen sixty

I was eighteen

Just eighteen

And uh

He wanted to live here

And he brought me down here

In fact we had our honeymoon in the Queen's Hotel

In the high street

And I spent most of the honeymoon

Cause it was a week

And it was a fantastic week

Because it was the end of May

Um

Beginning of June

And it was so hot and sunny

And we spent most of our time

In those sand dunes over there

On Porthkidney Beach

I don't think we did anything apart from lie in the sand dunes actually

It was gorgeous

We got very burnt

We came here when our son Nathan was nearly a year old

Uh

Yeah

He must have been a year old

So yes

We came here in nineteen sixty

One

The end of nineteen sixty one

No

First of all we stayed with friends in the Crow's Nest

On the Wharf

Um
Which is behind
You know that little house on the beach
Directly on the beach
Immediately behind there
And uh
We stayed with Clive Cable
And Took's
She was called
Mindy
I think her name was Mindy
And god knows how they put up with us
Cause Nathan wouldn't stop crying
And uh
No no
We just stayed with them while we were looking for somewhere to rent
And then we rented
Um
The little house in Street an Pol
And it was incredibly damp
And in fact it was so damp
Nathan got pneumonia
In fact he got bronchitis
And the doctor wouldn't believe me
When I said he's got to have antibiotics or he'll get pneumonia
And because my son had
Uh
Heart problems
Um
And of course he did get pneumonia
And it was Doctor Barwell
He's a sweetie
And he came round
Every day
Three times a day to give him injections
For antibiotics
And he lent us a fire
I think it was an old paraffin heater
To have downstairs
And he said
You mustn't go upstairs and sleep
Because it was so wet
All our clothes were mould
Covered in mould
In the cupboards

I don't know
Too long

It was awful
Yes I think it was two pound fifty a week or something
No I didn't know anyone
Yes he knew Clive
His friend
Clive
And I didn't see much of Kelley because he was out
In the
What was the pub at the time
Well it was the Queen's
And the Union
And the Castle
That's where he spent most of his time
And I spent most of my time
Washing nappies
In cold water
And hanging them up to dry
To freeze
It was a horribly cold
It was a really bad cold
We had snow here
It must have been sixty one or sixty two
Winter of
I'm not sure

Yes
It was a horrible time
But he got to know a lot of people
That way
In fact I don't know how he got to know them but we were invited to
To um
Boots Redgrave's
Restaurant
In Back Road East
Called Daubers
And
You know Mary Red
Redgrave
Boots
Well she was
She yes
I don't think so
Yes she did have that
Or someone did
Because when we were on honeymoon
We bought a Hamada pot
In the
The Craftsman

I think it was called the Craftsman then
Or the old Craftsman
Perhaps it was just called the Craftsman
And it was
It think it was
I can't remember how much it was
It was very cheap
But I mean it was a lot of money
To us
But we bought it
And I unfortunately
It
It ended up in my pile when we separated
And because he'd paid for it
I gave it back to him
Aren't I stupid
[laughs]

No
No
So I uh
Yes
She invited us to dinner
Um
I don't know why or how that came about
Uh
And we met Tony O'Malley there
Who'd just arrived
And she was looking after him
She did look after people
She was brilliant
Um
She cooked
I can't remember who else was there
But we all had
A sort of grill
A mixed grill
With pork chops
And tomatoes
And things
And Tony
Had a steak
[laughs]
Yes
She really spoilt him
[laughs]
Yeah
So

So I don't know who else Kelley knew
At that time
But the person I remember most
Who was a friend
Friend to both of us
Was Tony Shiels
Who was married to
[whispers]
Oh my god I've forgotten her name
That's terrible

Not at the time
No
Um
His children were babies
He had all these babies
And
He was an incredible character
He was a very wild
He was a wild man
Yes he was a painter
And still is
He lives in Ireland now
He was in touch with me quite recently because he wanted to write a book about
St Ives in the fifties
Or sixties
Or whatever
And sent me some bits of art just round the corner here
[rummaging around]
[shows artwork]

Tony and Chris
Chris she was called
She was brilliant
How she put up with him I don't know
Because he was a wild man
Totally wild
There was one time he had um
The lived in the Cuddy
Which is next to where Scott's Gallery
And one time
She phoned the police
Um
Because he was going mad
Uh
There was one policeman in St Ives at the time I think
And he came along
You know with his helmet on

And said
Now now Mr Shiels
Give me your gun
Tony had a rifle
And was lying on the step
You know
Sort of aiming this rifle at passers by
[laughs]
And just pretending to be
You know
Yes he was
He was
Yes I think he was ill
at the time
Because I remember her shouting out something like
Take him away and give him some electric shock treatment
And I think they did
And then he was all right after that
But yes he was quite wild
And he had these little children who when they grew up
They all joined the
Uh
Farns
Farn uh

Footsbahn?

Footsbahn
Theatre

Yes
Yes
Before Kneehigh really

Well all his family were members of it
And he fire eating and silly things like that
And I think he burned himself
Rather badly on the cheek

Yes they were
I used to go round with my screaming baby and
Talk
Talk to Chris
Who took no notice whatsoever of her screaming babies
She had twins
Baby twins
And she'd be feeding one of them in her arms
And the other one would be lying on the table with a bottle propped up somewhere

Tony never had anything to do with any of them
As men didn't in those days
Especially my husband
Clearly my husband
And she would try and listen to the Archers
No Mrs Dale's Diary on the radio
She had one ear glued to the radio
You know
While she was trying not to listen to all the other children who were screaming in various parts of
the house
[laughs]
Having said that she was wonderful
She was a wonderful mother
[laughs]
She was just very relaxed
She had five children

Yes
Yes
Yes I think the little one
One of the little ones
Could it be Gareth
They used to send him round
There used to be a little shop in St Andrews Street
A tobacconist
We used to send him round there for his dad's cigarettes
And they just refused to serve him in the end
Not because he was three
Or whatever
But because Tony hadn't paid the bill for such a long time
[laughs]
They were great characters

Yes
Yes
Yeah
Who else do we know from that time
Well of course
Tony
O'Malley
Who we met first at Boot's
Kelley eventually
Or quite soon after that
Uh
Worked in the same studio
They shared a studio
One of the Porthmeor Studios

There was also a Portuguese painter there
Who was very good looking
I don't know what his name was
He was incredibly vain
He was in the same studio
And this chap
Was so vain
And he had black curly hair
Tight curls
But he was going bald
And he was a great one for the ladies
And apparently he used to draw
With charcoal
These little curls
You know
Like you might draw
On a
He used to fill in the gaps with charcoal
[laughs]
So there would be pillows all over the St Ives covered in charcoal

Or so I heard
And Kelley was painting over the top of
Canvases
Of
My mind's gone blank
Sorry
Turn it off
Famous
Famous

[tape paused and resumed]

So Kelley was painting over the top of old Francis Bacon canvases
That he'd left behind in the studio
That was another mistake
Like the Hamada pot
Yeah
So um
Yes and
Kelley had another studio
Before he went there
I think that used to be one of Tony's
The Sail Loft
The sail loft studio

No

It was down um
Down
Back Road East
And down to the right there towards the harbour
And who had that before him
It was some woman
I remember we had to clear away all these whisky bottles
Before he could move in
I've forgotten her name
Luckily
But the whole place was just
Just
Full of discarded whisky bottles

Yes
Yes
He's painted since he was fifteen
Full time
Still does paint
Yes
Oh yeah he came here to paint
He wanted to be here to paint

And uh
Who else did we know who was around at that time

Oh yes
All the years he was here
We arrived at the same time
Um
And uh
Barbara Hepworth
You'd see her walking round
And Bernard Leach looming around in the distance
Wandering around
I didn't know any of them
I did know
I've forgotten her name
She was a nurse who was looking after Barbara Hepworth at the time she had the terrible
accident

Right
I've completely forgotten the name of this woman
She lived up the Stennack
Um
And we knew
Um
Stella

Stella and Benny Sirota
Who is um a jeweller and a weaver
And I remember seeing her
And she'd just got off a boat
And I'm not sure if it was Yorick's boat or Benny's boat

And um
Yes
Yes
Yes now
Lesley lived next door to
We eventually I
Kelley and I moved to
Number five Bowling Green

Um
After a stint in London
Yes
And I can't remember what date we came back to Bowling Green
Ah
Well it must have been
Um
Nathan was four
And Caroline was four months old
Or he was five and she was four months
Because I have a photograph of them
Upstairs
I'll show you later
With carpet that didn't fit
So it was sort of rolled up in front of this horrible old fireplace
There's a telly in the window on the floor
And he's
Nathan's playing with his dinky toys
And Caroline was lying in her baby grow or something
In her nightie
Lying on her tummy
On the floor
And I took a picture of my daughter Caroline's children in exactly the same pose
When they were exactly the same age

Yep
Caroline's in that house now
And we had bought number four
Bowling Green
So she can't escape from me
It was her idea actually

He lived in number six
That was Isobel's
No it was Isobel's
But whose was it then
It was Lesley's
And Caroline's
And um
You moved in to the little back room
One-eyed Mick
Wasn't one-eyed Mick there

Bu yeah that was a house that was always full of people
Number four yes
No number six
And the house that we bought

Lived in by the Rowe family from Rowe's the printers
There's a picture of them in my book
Born an Bred
Their house was full of paintings
Marine paintings

And in the house next door
Number three
that's where John Park lived
I found a photo to show you
In the book Morning Tide
By Austin Wormlaten
Gosh he looks miserable
And that's number two
Where Jenny Mailer now lives
And the house on the corner you can't quite see
And that was the house opposite
Yes
And in the rest of Bowling Green
Bowling Green Terrace
There was Breon O'Casey and his wife
Doreen
And their children
Yes
Una Dymphna and Brendan
Three
But that little back lane was full of children
Always
And behind us there was the Parkin Family
And they had four children or something

Well they were very tolerant

And their children and our children would play together
Um
And yes
Just ran around the streets and alleys
And beaches together

I don't know
There was a bit of
There was a bit of a problem
Someone in the terrace
I can't remember who it was
Who objected to
On a very hot summer
Our little children
Our very small children
Naked in the garden
This was because of the
Um
Strong chapel influence
But that was the only problem we had
It was around when we had all the problems with the beatniks
But we were here before that
We were called
What were we called
Beats
I think
Rather than beatniks
We certainly weren't hippies
We were far too old to be hippies
[laughs]

No
No I didn't
I was
I was um
Had a very sick child
So I was always um
Always

Yeah
So no
I didn't go any parties
But Kelley did
[laughs]
Perhaps you should be interviewing Kelley not me
Bu the might not remember
He probably doesn't remember anything about it
But was

Later on
When Kelley and I split up
And I eventually bought number five
Bowling Green
From him
Um
We had
There were lots of dinner parties in that little kitchen at the back
My kitchen was always full of people
And you know
I'd make a small meal
And then people would sort of arrive
At the back door
Gradually
And I said
Oh come in
That's all right we'll find something
I don't know how it all
We always managed to make something

Stretch
To
You know
However many people
Were there
Would bring things as well
It was just
It was lovely
And it was
Uh
Yeah
There were good times had in that kitchen
It was I suppose
Yes
Yeah
Yes
Oh gosh
I can remember making very elaborate things like
Rabbit terrine and things
Can you
Oh good
Oh that's nice
How nice
And I had a great boyfriend who brought me lobsters
He was a diver
He brought me lobsters
And um
Although I remember one time

There was this lobster still alive
Obviously
We put it in the sink
While we were having a drink
And um
Before I cooked it
And um
And Nathan found it
And felt sorry for it
And put water in it
So it immediately came back to life
You know
It sort of woke up
And starting dashing around everywhere
So there was water everywhere
And you just couldn't get anywhere near it to pick it up
[laughs]
Or to take the plug out
And I remember inviting Boots and Tony O'Malley to dinner
When I was still with Kelley
And
I'd made
I can't remember what
But it was
I can't remember what the first course was
But it
We had straw
Strawberries and cream
And I put them all into little dishes
And they were in a cupboard in the kitchen
Cause I don't think we had a fridge
I can't remember having a fridge
Anyway
They were in this cupboard in the kitchen
And I went to get them out
And
Three of the dishes were empty
It was as if goldilocks had been there
And only one of the dishes had strawberries in it
And it was Nathan
He'd found these strawberries
And I couldn't be cross with him
Because he didn't eat anything
You know
He never ate anything except chips
[laughs]
So the fact that he was eating strawberries was fantastic
And I had to produce something else

I can't remember what it was

It was something like just ice cream with a bit of a dollop of cream and one strawberry on top
Or something silly
You know
Yeah
That was a memorable dinner party

Oh yes
Especially on the beach at Porthmeor
Many an evening spent watching the sun go down with Tony and Jane

Ron
And Carolyn
In fact
When I married my second husband
We had our honeymoon in St Ives
[laughs]
I'm afraid so
At Bowling Green
Well we spent one night together
He had to go back to work
Um in Southampton
In the hospital there
Where he was at that time
I spent the rest of the week with his mum
His auntie
And my children

It was very strange
Oh and that's right
The day before the wedding
Audrey and I
Audrey Knight
Who's a painter and still lives in St Ives
Uh
We painted the floor in the kitchen
Because it was a cement floor and it was very scruffy
And we painted the floor to look good
Sort of two days before the wedding
And someone came in in the night
And walked all over it
With the wet paint
[laughs]
And obviously realised what had happened
And turned round and went back again
So there was this dreadful mess

[laughs]

I don't think anyone noticed
There was too much champagne to notice
Yes Audrey made
They were wonderful
That was strawberry sweet pastry
With um
Cream cheese underneath
And then strawberries
They were lovely weren't they
And we had fresh picked crab meat
With new potatoes
That was it
We did all the catering ourselves

No I met her in London
For a little while I had an antique shop in Camden Passage in Islington

Didn't I oughtn't to talk about me
I thought you wanted to talk about painters
Artists
That sort of thing

Um
And um
Yeah
I had this little shop in Pierpoint Row
It was called
And Audrey used to

[phone rings]

Yes
Sorry about that
Yes that's right
Yes and Audrey used to come on a Wednesday I think
Or a Saturday
To the outside market bit
Where there were stalls
Cause I had a proper little shop
Um
She used to come
And we just got talking
And I just thought how lovely she was
And we just sort of hit it off right away
We used to go together to Bermondsey Market
Sort of four o'clock of a Friday morning
In the dark

Driving through the streets of London
When the only other people would be taxi drivers
No no
To buy
To buy by torchlight

She is
Gosh I don't know
I'm hopeless with dates
Um
Sorry
The cat's walking across the desk and making a lot of noise
And she's probably going to start talking to us in a minute as well
Yes I'm hopeless with dates but quite a long time ago now
And she's lived in
Um
Bel Air terrace
And
Oh she lived at St Peter's street
In fact there's a photo of her
Her little sitting room
In my book
The Light of St Ives
Yes
Yes um
Then she went to Bel Air Terrace
Lovely house there
But started to get hip problems so moved into town
Into Downalong
Mmm
Victoria Place
Very nice house there
She always makes houses look beautiful

She's
I think she's heading in that direction
She's getting back to it
But she's had a lot of health problems

Yes
Um
Yes
Yeah
Um
Not landscapes so music as interiors
Still life and interiors
Very nice
Lovely colours

We have one hanging up at Bowling Green

Um well

There are pictures

In fact god knows where that picture's gone

There's a photograph of um

Now what could it have been

It must have been

A royal occasion

Um

Diamond anniversary

Silver jubilee possibly

That was it

Were you there

In our front garden

Right

It was incredibly windy

Coming from the west

And people being sort of blown apart

Out in the streets

And on the beach

But come to our little front garden

At Bowling Green

And it was absolutely still

And hot

And so people who'd been to other parties

Gradually ended up in our front garden

And there was

There's a picture of a huge group of people

Including um

Molly Parkin

And um

Patrick Hughes

And I think one of their daughters Sophie

Her daughter Sophie

The boys weren't there

His clones

Do you remember

His boys were clones of him

[laughs]

They dressed exactly the same way to

It was very funny

Not very well no

They weren't here for very long

We did go out to their cottage for a meal or something once

Um

That was when I was with Ron

Um
Ron Sutherland
Uh
He and I were together for nine years
Um
He's a photographer
And now lives on
At uh
The little house
What's it called
The Dolls' House
On Porthmeor Beach
And uh
Who else did we know then

Well you know what they say about the sixties
If you remember it you weren't there
Well I don't remember it because I didn't take part in any of that
I wasn't any part of the party scene
The drugs scene
The sleeping around scene
I was married
Very married
And uh
I had a very sick baby
And um
My whole life was spent looking after him really
In the seventies
The late seventies
When did I split up with Kelley
We were married for thirty years
And then got divorced about three years after that
So can't work it out
About late seventies I suppose
Um
Life began for me
And I started to have some fun
[talks about Nathan going to university]

[fish autopsies]

Yes

Stella Benjamin interviewed by Celia MacIntosh
27 April 2009
Bel Air Terrace

Stella Margaret Benjamin
Born third of June nineteen thirty three
At Chisenhurst
In Kent

In nineteen fifty six
With Anthony
My husband
Um
He'd been down previously
Because he met Bill Redgrave
At the Regent Polytechnic
Which I was studying at too
And
He wanted to move from London
So he came down
And Bill Redgrave gave him a note
To give to Boots
On Island Road
To say
Put Anthony up
And he looked around for a place
And he saw a little cottage
One up one down
At Cripplesease
Near Penzance

And it belonged to Sven Berlin
And it was up for sale
And it had no running water
No facilities whatsoever
Except electricity
And it had an earth floor
And
And that's it really
But it had outbuildings
Which Anthony looked at
And didn't look at the cottage
And he thought
Oh that would be good

Yes

So then
Um
Decided that
His mother had died
So that's how we had the money
To buy a property
Rather than rent

So he came back
And my parents drove me down
To have a look
And it's opposite the Engine Inn
At Cripplesease
And I sat in the window
Wondering
If ever
You know
Winter
Winter's Cornish weather

Yeah
This little cottage
Wondering if I would ever live there
Where I did move to

It was called Little Penderleath
Uh
And that's where I had Yorick
My son
With Anthony
And then Anthony got a scholarship to Paris
When Yorick was about ten months old
So that was a hard time
We had land as well
Um
And we tried to grow anemones
Unsuccessfully
Um
I had Yorick on my back
Picking them
And then at the cottage
The room downstairs
Was full of buckets of anemones
You had to bunch them up
In a shape
You know
To make a proper shape
And tie them up

Put them in the boxes
And then Anthony
He put them on
He went on the bus
To Penzance
To the station
To send them up to Covent Garden

Yeah
But the money was
Appalling
And there were lots of weeds
[laughs]
So it didn't work
We had goats
We were going to have a milking herd
I think one milked
The others were just
Um
Eating
And had to go up on the moor
We used to take them up on the moor

Ten months
And then
Well my sister and her husband came down
Lived in the cow house
Because it was only one up one down
The cottage
And

Yes
Which was quite primitive
And at that time I had a pony
And I used to work
Um
Down at the Beachcomber Cafe
Which is on the harbour front
Pat and Hugh Rowse ran it
And all sorts of people worked there
Marie
Marie Wilde
She was there
Um
And a couple of gays
Paul and Miles
Various people

And it was about the only restaurant in town
Apart from the Gay Viking
On Fore Street
And I was the washer upper
I used to go in on the bus
But once
Jim Downing
Who was the washer up in the evening
He wanted to change shifts
So
Uh
I rode my pony in
Freddie Curnow
He made me a bridle out of rope
It was all bareback
I didn't really know how to ride a horse
I sort of learnt
On the way
And came in
Um
Jim took Ginger the pony up to the Clodgy
To tether him while I was working
About eleven o'clock at night I was washing the floor
And the police came
And informed me that my horse had been running riot
In the town
And I was to go to the police station
[laughs]
And about one o'clock
They were going to charge me with all sorts of things
Because of the rampage
And she was tethered up in Ayre Field
The playing field up there
Playing field
And the police escorted me up there
And I asked them to give me
A leg up
[laughs]

And I was riding back
And she was so tired
The pony
That um
We took ages to get home
And on the way
A jeep passed me
And it was a beautiful moonlight night
And it was Roger Hilton

And he just screeched to a stop
And said
What a wonderful sight
And drove on
Which really upset me because I thought
I would really like a lift

[Laughs]

So I didn't do that anymore

Yes
Up on the moors
You could
You could rent cottages all over the place
You know
For little money
They were very primitive
But they were there
And you could
All sorts of people rented cottages
Alan Lowndes
He used to live in a barn at Tremedda
You know
That farmers did that sort of thing

And it was great
We just

Yeah

No

No second homes
In the way it is now
They've all been sold and done up
And are holiday lets
Yeah
So um
And then
Um
Well

Anthony went to France
And then he went to Italy
He got a scholarship in Italy
And the cottage was sold
And I moved into Hanter Chy

Into the stable block
Yes
And Heather James lived there
And it was a notorious house
For parties et cetera
And I was in what was Anthony's studio at one point
And Yorick had a partition as his bedroom
Again
It just had a cold tap
And that was it
Lavatory in the yard
And um

I came down in fifty six so it would be early sixties
Really
And
Then
I
After that in sixty three
Um
I worked at Troika
With Benny and Leslie
And I was the first decorator in there
And lived at Sea View Place

On the end of Smeaton's Pier

Yeah
Just there

Yeah
With Benny and Yorick

And from there
Moved to Cripplesease again
To Gew House

With Benny
Yeah
Oh yes

Still didn't have running water though
Even though it was quite a big house
Um
And Janet leach

No
It was just rainwater

You had to bring in your drinking water
And then when I was on my own there
When Benny left there
Janet Leach used to come along in that jeep thing she used to have
And bring me water
Cause she was on the way to Trevaylor
And then eventually I moved back into St Ives
In the Digey

Yeah
Tiny
The only thing I liked in that house was a cupboard
When we moved in
It was all wonky
And old

[laughs]

So I worked my way around it in the end
But it was very small
And um
I then
Oh I worked for Denis Mitchell
Yes
The sculptor
And he had a studio in
Which is now
Noall's
Cyril Noall's Yard
Which it wasn't then

Yes
And it was one of the old lofts
And it was lovely at that time
Because Smith's
It was Smith's ironmongers shop on the corner
And their workshop was on the back of that courtyard
Uh
Spencer family lived in the little cottage
That had a little bay window in the courtyard
Behind the shop
And he was a postman
And he used to make model boats
And there was always a boat in that bay window
And he went up these rickety stairs
I carved all these wooden sculptures
And I worked on the bronzes
Plugging them

You know
If they had holes in them
For casting
And cleaning them and that sort of thing
Just a useful assistant

He was a lovely man
His mother used to come in
Blanche
And she had bright blue eyes
And she used to paint her straw hats bright blue
And she'd come in with grapes
And little treats for Brian
And she'd sit there and have a chat
Everyone came in to have a chat with Brian
He was having a show at the Obelisk Gallery
Uh
In London
And we just couldn't get the work done because everyone was coming in
So I put a notice on the door
Coffee time

[laughs]

Yeah
He was really really lovely
After that I asked Brian Ilesley
If I could have a job making jewellery
He said to ask Breon
By that time they were partners
Breon O'Casey and Brian Ilesley
And they talked to Dennis about me
And
So they took me on for a month probation

No that's when I left Troika
I was there for about thirteen years
I think I worked with Dennis when I was at Troika as well
Or may have been
I can't quite remember
How it was
I wasn't full time with Dennis

It may have been
It could have been
No
It would've been when I was at Troika
I think it was probably quite early on

Um
Anyway
So I was a jeweller

That was about thirteen years or something like that
Porthmeor Studios
Yes
We were in the top one first
And
Bryan had his studio
His painting studio
There
If you went into
If you went through the door
There was a big Colombian printing press
First
In the first section
And then in the middle section there was a
Our jewellery workshop
And then it was
The last section was Brian
Ilsley's
Painting studio

No
It's on the other side
On Porthmeor Road
And then we moved
I think we had problems with noise
But we were there quite a long time
Quite a few years
Yes
But um

So we moved
Well
Making jewellery
Banging
Yeah
Well all of us
And Brian
Particularly Brian
Cause he used to carve as well
And
You know
He would
If he
He was going to make a piece of jewellery

Out of any weight of silver
He would choose a thick piece
A thick piece
And beat it out
He wouldn't choose the easy option
He'd really work his metal
And his wood
And he carved me a post
By hand
You know
Like a barley sugar
And I was in The Gap then
I needed the support
Because I only had a little landing
And I asked Brian if he could make me a post
And when I sold the cottage
I took the post down and replaced it with a mast
Yes
In Bethesda Hill
That was after The Digey
I moved there
Well
That was after
After Twenty The Digey
The little cottage
The first small cottage
I moved across the alleyway
Six feet across
To eighteen
Where Rosetta used to be

And then from there
I moved to The Gap
And that was four storeys high

Yes
And replaced it with a mast
A nice piece of wood
But I've still got it upstairs
But he just
Just carved it
Just did it
Um

Oh yes
It was mostly sent away
I don't know if The Craftsman did jewellery then
Did they

Yeah we probably did
But we sent a lot of it away
Oxford
London
Primavera
Um
Crafts Council
V&A
Places like that
Electrum
And I
I was the one who often went up to London with the stock
To see what shops wanted

Yes I suppose it was
Yeah
Yeah
Yeah I did
And I
I really feel privileged
Working with Breon and Brian
I gained so much from both of them
And it was through Breon
He taught himself to weave
And he asked me if I'd work with him weaving one day a week in his studio
He had one of the big studios in Porthmeor
He was a painter
And
Yes
Just an artist generally
In all sorts of mediums

A printer
And he
So he taught himself to weave
Built these looms out of old beds
And
I worked for him one day a week
And I really liked it
And Vicky Rainsford
Who was working with me there as well

Yeah
And um
Anyway
Breon moved to Paul
And we took over the studio
Vicky and I

And we bought the looms
And the shelving
And you know
That was it
We were on our own

And then Vicky left
She was having a baby

And
Peter
Book collector
Mm
Over the chemist
Yeah
I know
I know
And the floor
You just thought it was going to go

Did you
[laughs]

Up there
Or in the house
Cause they lived up here
Number eleven
In fact they bought the house up here
From Breon

Oh yes
So
And I carried on
Well I wasn't then
I was just beginning
But then I
The studio was big and cold in the winter
And I thought that
Um
That if I had a loom at home then I would do more work
So I asked Brian if he's make me a loom
So we discussed it and decided on a loom
Similar to the Navaho
And
It was just branch wood
Like his sculptures
I didn't actually put it in the cottage
Because by that time I'd sold The Gap

And came up here
And
With Yorick and my nephew
Tim
He was living with me by then

So we came up here
And my loom
So I erected the loom that Brian made me
And it was in what is now the dining room
But eventually
In eighty two I went up into the roof space
My workshop now

Oh it's easy
Because it's just branch
And
It's still up there
With a ladder to go up
And uh
Yes

Yes very much so
So
Yes
That's the story really

Trevor Bell
Yes he was here

I'm not sure
I can't quite remember
He was certainly around in St Ives a lot
So he wouldn't have been far out

Peter Lanyon
He was at Little Parc Owles
And when I was at Cripplesease
I used to
Um
Annie Dolan
Do you remember her
She was Annie Cummings
Well she was out at Towednack
And she was married to Patrick Dolan

And Patrick used to go to Spain a lot

And I used to walk Yorick in the pushchair from Cripplesease to Towednack
Skelly Wadden is where they lived
And Peter Lanyon was creating
That uh
A big mural
In one of the outhouses
Tiles
Sheila was around
I used to go once a week to and a bath
And wash my hair
[laughs]
With Yorick
Poor Yorick
Had a tin bath anyway
In front of the Rayburn
So
That was
Yes
He was certainly around
And they were all in the pub
And
Just meet up in the streets

And Sydney Graham
Nancy Wynne Jones
Poet
Yeah
He was eventually

Yes
Well
She used to see Boots
Boots was at Trevaylor
With Nancy Wynne Jones

Boots was Mary Redgrave
And she had the New Craftsman Shop with Janet Leach
And she lived down at Nancledra
But then moved to
Well
She moved back to Nancledra
Well she was in Island Road
With Bill Redgrave
And Sheila Lanyon use to come in
Because they ran
They ran an art school
Well
Bill did

St Peter's Loft
Well
They used to have students
And St Peter's loft
It's where the
The print room is now
Karl Weschke
I think he taught there at one time
And uh
Peter Lanyon

Yeah
I don't quite know
Boots used to put them up and do the cooking
And Bill had a studio
A Porthmeor Studio
And
Um
Sheila Lanyon used to come in with all the produce from her garden
Which was wonderful

Yeah
And that house was a catalyst for all sorts of people
Island Road
Yeah
Oh that was Caroline
Yes
After Boots left
And she had
Um
She opened a restaurant there at one time
Daubers
It was called
Um
Yeah
She was a very good cook
And then
Later on she moved to Trevaylor
With Nancy Wynne Jones
And Nancy used live on the Battery
In the Battery
On the Island

Oh yes
Willie Barns Graham
Yeah
She was first in Teetotal Street
Then she moved to the flat on Porthmeor

The Barnaloft
Three stories
Mm
Her studio was at the top
And then living in the middle
Oh yes

Oh Brian Wall
Brian Wall
He worked under the old mission
The Fisherman's Mission
Which we took over
Troika took over
That's where Troika was
And Troika first
Benny knew this couple
Daphne Wells and Roger
And she used to make
She was a potter in London
And she used to make name tiles
Like Johnny's room
Toys
You know
All sorts of things like that
Beware of the dog
And that
The business
We came down on a boat
From the Thames
Benny and I
And we sailed it down with Roger
Who knew how to navigate
And we arrived in St Ives
Took three weeks
No I left him behind with my sister
Yes it was an adventure
We were going to live on the boat
But it wasn't really successful
Her draft was too deep
So we had to have sea legs made for her
And I think we
We probably got
Caught the last business
From Mister Couch
From Mister Couch the shipwright
Who was just behind Fish Street
And he made the sea legs for us

Yeah
Yeah
Benny and I
Yes
So Benny came down with Daphne
And Roger and Daphne were going to go off into the world and have an adventure
And so
The tile business
Was taken over by Benny and Lesley
And it gradually became the Troika Pottery
As it was known
Because Lesley knew how to cast
And
He started to cast the clay
Rather than throw
Benny could throw
Um
He was a
Yeah \

Um
But I don't know where he trained
Yes
And it was from Lesley's skill Troika emerged in way

And um

But Brian Wall was in that studio
And he was going off somewhere
And they
he was a sculptor
He worked in iron
And steel
He's a good sculptor
He's still alive
But he works in America

Yeah
No Daphne was in London
Brian Wall was just a sculptor on his own

Yeah

On the wall
Well
Yes
John and Maggie and the children came down to live
Yes

And they lived in a cottage just by The Sloop
And when
Because it was the Beatnik time
Well we
Most of us were
Beatniks
So called
[laughs]

By the locals
And if you had long hair you weren't allowed into the
Some of the pubs
Or the cafes
They used to have a notice on the window didn't they

No Beatniks

Or undesirables
[laughs]
The Digey Cafe
And then you know
They got to know you
So they let you in
Not the cafe so much as pubs
And um
Yes
Well it was the harbour wall
And the Beatniks used to sit on it
And lay on it
So the council decided to knock it down
So John Antrobus wrote a play about it
And it was performed on the wall
With many locals watching
And tut-tutting
But they did knock it down
Which was a dreadful thing to do
Cause what replaces it is so awful
Negative

And not a good sea defence either

No

ugly

[laughs]

Shirley Beck interviewed by Janet Axten Wednesday 11 March 2009

My full name is Shirley Anne Treen Beck I am aged 70, and I was born in 1939, in Moretonhampstead.

I came to St Ives on May 10th
(I remember the day very well)
1964

It was a Sunday
I came with my son
My two year old son
I came from Moretonhampstead
In Devon
The result of a broken marriage
I've been here ever since
The best place in the world to be

Oh it was very different
It was a town that had visitors that went home in the middle of September
And from September until the following
Probably easter
There were hardly any people here except the local people

Well I was very fortunate that I found somewhere to live in Downalong
And Downalong St Ives has a very important
Had a very important gallery
Still is a very important gallery
The only major gallery in St Ives
The Penwith Gallery
And because I had done pottery at um art school
And I was interested in doing pottery again
And meet some people
I went round to Penwith Gallery when they had an opening

Oh
Goodness me
Unfortunately many people who are not there
Not with us anymore
But there was the Tony O'Malleys of this world
Mary Pearce
Bryan Pearce's mum
Patrick Hughes
Who came down from London
With Molly Parkin

They were very outrageous people we all thought
Terry Frost
Clare White
Roy Walker
And interestingly enough
Roger Slack
Dr Slack
Used to come round and take photos of us all the time

Oh yes
Oh yes indeed
In fact Peggy Walker and myself
And a couple of others
We organised afternoon teas
With Cathy
Who was the curator there
And then we had Jazz evenings
Trad jazz evenings
Which were great fun
And we used to have lots of fun
And everybody used to come
Because that was the place to go
And in those days
There wasn't so much outside
The town
As there is now

Oh gosh they were wonderful
We did lots of organising with that
Who was going to wear what
How
And when
But it was just great fun
I think
I don't think
There were very many people that belonged to Penwith Gallery
Or were involved in the arts who didn't come
People from Penzance came
And I'm sure people from outside came as well
It was just a really fun night every year

Well only peripherally
I was very fortunate that I um had access to costumes
I knew some friends who were in the theatre in Penzance
And we had costumes
So I sort of
Used to go round to people and say
What costumes can we get

And
We used to go through trunks and sometimes a trunk used to arrive in my house
In Downalong
And people used to come and root through

Yes
Yes Barbara
Barbara came
To some of the openings
But she was generally
At that time
More reticent than she used to be before

But she was a terribly generous person
I went round to Barbara's house a few times
And she was very
Different
In her house
Than she was outside

When she was outside
She was
Almost
Not shy
Wrong word to say shy

Um
That that
That
She was very careful of what she said
And how she said it
The you were in her house
She was just relaxed
The housekeeper used to bring tea
Or Brian Smith
Her secretary
Would come in
And I had a small child
And my child used to go and play in Barbara's garden
She didn't say don't climb in and out of that
Anything
I mean you could just go and play
And sometimes
I used to bring a friend
And he used to go and play in the garden

She was a delight

Absolutely

My son has been in and out of the sculptures many times

He was only small but he did go in and out of the sculptures

Yes

Oh yes I did

He was

He was super

Brian

He was a very careful person

Who cared

He cared desperately for Barbara

He really did

Um

Their association as secretary and employee

Were

Um

Was really special

And that

Um

Her every

If he thought Barbara was looking tired

Or that she needed a rest

He would actually gently come in and say

You know

Barbara

Do you think you ought to do this

And she did

Which is amazing

She obviously listened to what he said

She was very

Very

Um

Some people thought she was aggressive

Well she had her way

Because that's how she had to fight her way

Her

Fight her living

And

So if she wanted to do something she would just do it

She was a very very strong lady

Yes well I was a member of the Labour Party

And in those days we used to have jumble sales

There were not charity shops in those days

And
Um
Well Barbara particularly
She just used to ring up and say
Oh I've got some jumble
So I used to go up around to Barbara's
And pick up jumble
And
Um
Then when we had
Um
Elections and things
We used to have car rallies
Around the town
And Patrick Heron
He used to say
Right I'll come in the lead car
He was on the microphone
Shouting
There down the microphone
No problem at all
He just adored it
Um
Then
Um
My friend and I decided in the middle sixties
To have an anti-Vietnam shop
Very naughty I suppose
In Fore Street
We were so fed up with the terrible things that were going on
And there was a shop in Fore Street that was coming up
And of course people thought
Who were these two girls
Well who are they
And I was talking to Patrick about it
And he said
Oh tell them I'll stand guarantor if there's any problem
And Barbara said the same
So Barbara and Patrick
Stood guarantor for Jill and I
While we ran our anti-Vietnam War shop
In mid sixties
In Fore Street

Well we just gave out leaflets
And we had lots of photographs
Terrible
Some of the terrible photographs

Of little children who'd been napalmed
People who'd been killed
And said
Please write to the American Embassy
And we had forms there to write to the American Embassy

Put pressure on people to stop this dreadful war
And we had my friend Jill's little boy
Baby was called Sebastien
And he was one and a half
So we had him sitting in with us
And he was a beautiful little round-faced baby
And we had a photograph
Would you like your child to be like this
Which was a napalmed child
Or like this
And my son
Who was five years old
Was running about all over the place
And so we were just making the comparisons
That when there's a terrible war going on
It's the innocent that get so injured
And that's why we were asking people to write to the American Embassy
And put pressure on anyone we could to stop this dreadful war

It was a restaurant
I think it's a surf shop now
It's right opposite
It's got
I can't think what it's called
I can't think
I'm dreadful
It's on the left hand side
It's um
Opposite the entrance where you go down to
Where
Where the fish restaurant is now

Yes
It's right opposite Court Cocking
That's where it was
And it was a lovely shop with big windows
And it was just empty for part of the season
And I think we had it for most of the winter
Um so
Mind you it wasn't very nice being in there
Some people came in and spat at us and called us dirty reds
And other people came in and said well done and we'll sign the forms

But you know, that's politica...that's politics
You know
Sort of
But
Patrick came in a couple of times
And said how are you getting on
Barbara
Actually she didn't come in
I think she wasn't terribly well at that time
Um
She didn't come down
But Brian did
Her secretary
Came down to see if we were alright
I mean
Very very caring people

Oh yes
Oh yes
Oh gosh
Oh well
I mean
It was just
It was just
It was his home
His workshop
And it was so
It's wonderful
And if anyone has not been there
Then I would suggest that you get on the Zennor road
And go and just stand outside and see where it is
Because it's wonderful

He was always terribly sweet
Polite
Um
We didn't go if he was in the studio or working
We often used to sit in the garden and have a cup of tea and a chat
About all sorts of things
Not just politics
About St Ives and where he was there
And what he was doing
How he felt about things
Just generally about
You know
We
There was all sorts of people
In the town

Um
Like when we used to go to Penwith Gallery openings
And things
So we used to see each other
And we used to say
How are you going
How is it
How's this person
Have they recovered from their flu
It was just general
It wasn't any in depth talking
At all

Well
I have to say
Early in the afternoon
That um
Of Barbara's death
I actually went there
To collect some jumble
And
Unknowingly
That was
You know
That was dreadful
And I went there to collect some jumble
And I did see her briefly
But she
She wasn't
Terribly well at that time

So I just said thank you for letting us have it
And I stayed
Had a cup of tea actually
Had a cup of tea with
Jackie, the housekeeper
And um
Then
Just left
And um
I was devastated
Absolutely devastated
To hear such a special person had died

Such a dreadful unfortunate death

I think the whole town went into shock mourning
Uh

I mean not just the artists community
Just lots of people
There were lots of people who knew Barbara
In various ways

I mean I have a friend who
Who used to deliver her
Her um
Property
When she was doing a new sculpture
He used to deliver the raw goods
And then take her other goods
Up to um
Uh
When she had exhibitions
He used to take her goods to exhibitions
So that he knew her and different things
So there were all sorts of people who felt
Barbara's death
Very very hard
Un
Particularly Brian
Brian
I don't think her ever really got over it
It was so sad
He was such a sweet lovely person
And he
He
In a way
He did for a little while
I know
Blame himself
But it wasn't
He didn't do anything wrong
But he did everything he could
And it was dreadful

Well
I didn't know him personally
As such
Not
Not
Only to say hello to him
When he was in his shop

And when he was about
I sort of talked to him
When he was in his shop

Go in and say hello

And then when he was doing these sketches
You know
He was just sometimes
What
Sit and watch him sketch such a talented person

Um
I didn't know him personally
But he was always around
One of those people who was always around

Um
At that time
There were all sorts of people
Who just wandered the street
And because he lived here
And knew
It was a smaller community

You always said hello to people
Um
And now
St Ives in two thousand and nine
Is very different
Than it was in the sixties and seventies
Even the eighties
I mean in those days on a Sunday
If it was a fine Sunday
We all used to go Porthmeor Beach
There was a place where all the locals used to congregate
And sort of sit
And Willie Barnes Graham she used to come down on Porthmeor Beach

And sit and talk
Oh yeah
Yes

Um
It was just
Just
You know
Come and sit for half an hour
Have a talk
And go back in the studio
Or go off again
And um

It was just all sorts of people around
All sorts of people
Who did all sorts of things
So you didn't necessarily know them close to
But you knew them to say hello to
And
How are things going
Have you had a good week
Whatever
This general
Thing

I like
Like Mary Pearce
I met Mary and Bryan
I was going to Porthmeor Beach with
I had my dog actually, and my little son
Well I was just walking along
And there was this lady
And this person
Other
Man
And um
She said
Oh what a lovely dog
And where
And I said oh yes
And where are you going
And she said
Ooh, we're going to Bumbles
Which was the tea room
And I said
Oh yes I've been in a couple of time
She said
Want to come and join me
Bring your lovely little boy
And she said
This is my son Bryan
Oh hello Bryan
And I said
Oh well I've got the dog
But I tied the dog up outside
And just had tea with Mary
And that's how I met Mary and Bryan

Casual
That's just how it was
Casual

Yes that's right
It was
Um

Bryan was much younger then
Obviously
[laughs]
But Mary was a very strict mum
And when we were having tea
Sort of like
She'd watch what Bryan was doing
Because
He was very special
Bryan was a very special person
And I was very fortunate
That
Um
Whenever I used to see Mary
We used to stop
She was often
Well every day she used to walk with Bryan
Um we used to stop and chat
And she used to talk to the do
And she'd talk to my son
When you've got children and animals people do talk to you
You know
If I'd just been walking on my own she might not have spoken to me

But it
But it was the start of a long term friendship
Which became a friendship with Bryan
Which was very special to me
And he was such a dear lovely person

He was a very special person

Um
Only we did a couple of September festivals
Back in the seventies
When we had various things on
Um
He always used to come to the festival
So I used to sit there
And make sure that he was comfortable
And make sure that he was alright
And a couple of times
I took him home

In my car afterwards
Cause he was so tired
Cause he always wanted to
Be involved
And be there when things were going on
And um
Some
But
That was sort of the extent of the friendship
Was
Again
I suppose it's sort of periphery friendship
You'd call it
But it's people you'd get to know
I you see somebody and you say
How are you
Sit and chat to them
And say
At the end of a two hour concert
Bryan was tired
I'd say
Do you want a lift home Bryan
I'll give you a lift home
And I did
And
So
[chuckles]

Well
I
I
I was a potter
I worked
I went to work with Jess Val Baker
In the Mask Pottery
And eventually when Jess gave it up I took over

No that was at
She was at Porth...
Jess
Jess moved in nineteen sixty
I think it was sixty six
Sixty seven
To Penzance
I'd met Jess before
Because Jess was
Again
Involved in CND

And
I used to go to Jess's
And we had parties at Jess's
Because
Um
We were all
Of the same political feel
At the time
And um
When she
She did a bit of pottery
Down at
Um
Porthmeor Studios
Uh uh
St Christopher's
It was called
Um
But then we she moved to Penzance
It was the Mask Pottery and I moved
And I started working there full time with her
Um
But also of course in St Ives at the time we had Troika
Benny
And Lesley
All the Troika people
Who were great friends
We all
Again
We used to go to parties
Because that's what we all did
And um
Anthony Richards
He was a potter
Um
And we all just got together
And had parties
And then I was always raising funds for something or another
And I used to do tombolas
Um
If you have a tombola you pick a number
And if you got a nought or a five you win a prize
And it was I think it used to be twenty pence
Um
A go
Or ten pence a go
Twenty pence for two goes
Ten pence for one

And I didn't have very much stuff
So I used to go round to everybody
And say
Have you got anything I can have
And I had boxes of Troika pottery
Boxes of Anthony Richards pottery
Mask pottery
Um
Tremayne from Peter Ellery in Penzance
Who sometimes used to come over to St Ives
Um
Maggie Fisher's pottery
Um
All these people were so generous
That used to give me lots of pots
Mostly seconds
Cups and things
And um
So
Somewhere
In the whole of Cornwall
Are people who've bought
One
Anthony Richards pots
Troika pots
And I had a couple of seconds
Um
A few seconds
From the Leach pottery
Not much
Because it was much more reverend
And very careful
But occasionally I used to be given
Sort of
Two or three Leach seconds
And they used to go in as well
Which I never kept
I was very honest and put them in the tombola

Yes
Janet
And Trevor
Trevor Corser was there
And strangely enough
Um
One of the girls who came to work at the Mask Pottery
Brenda Ticklin I think she was
She became my apprentice

And um
She was with me for two years and then she left
And she went to work in Leach Pottery
And I met Brenda
I hadn't seen her for
Oh gosh
This was back in
Back in the seventies
I hadn't seen her for many years
And I met her two three months ago
And she's head of art at Southampton University
It's a really strange big round circle
She was back here on holiday
Going into the Leach Pottery to have a look around
So that's really amazing
How the world goes round

Oh yes
Oh Clare
Clare was always a chirpy lady
Um
Very chirpy
If you saw Clare she was always sort of smiling

And I'd say
What you doing
And she'd say
Oh I'm just going out to do this
And I'm just...
She was a very busy person
Never seems to be sitting down for very long
She was always busy
She was in St Ives for a while
And she went to live in a home
In Carbis Bay
A residential home
But every single day she came into St Ives by bus
You'd see Clare either walking or
Part way walking
Or getting a bus in
Or coming in and out
And she's always be on the harbour front
Sketching
Or talking to someone
Or doing her lovely little postcards
She was just a very lovely lady
She was
Again

It was a case of just sitting and talking
Have you had a good day
How are you feeling today
It wasn't anything in depth
It was just gen
Everybody in those days
I think
We were all very friendly
And had time to stop and talk
The world has gone around a bit faster
And people are very busy
Mmm

Oh yes
Yes she was
Oh yes
Yes
We used to go down to the Arts Club
We used to put on exhibitions and little plays and things
And um
We used to go down to the Arts Club
Because
Again
There wasn't very much going
And for some reason
I don't know why
We didn't stay in and watch television
We were out
If it was in the summer
If it was a fine summer evening
You'd find people walking about the town
Saying where you going
Oh we're just going
Down
And there weren't lots of cafes
Um
There was just the occasional place
But we used to just sit about and talk
Which was very nice
Talk to each other

Yes well we used to go to Porthmeor Beach sometimes
Sit on the harbour front
And then
Um
We used to go to the Arts Club
And Penwith Gallery
We used to say we're going round to Penwith

Ten o'clock in the morning
And have a coffee round there with Cathy
Or just be around there
It wasn't
Um
Wasn't thinking
Like
We'll go to the Hub
That exists now
Well it didn't exist at the time
And there were hardly any places
There was Pop Short's place
Which was the Copper Kettle on the harbour front
Which is now closed
That's if
If anyone was going to meet anywhere
They used to meet at Pop Shorts

Occasional if he was in the mood
You could go there in the evening
But Pop Short was a man of his own devices
And then I suppose there was the Harbour Restaurant
Which was
Um
It's just
On the other side
Which is now the
Um Pub
There was no pub on the harbour from until sixty four
And uh
The Harbour Restaurant was upstairs
And is now a fish and chip restaurant
And um
We used to meet there sometimes
But there wasn't many
There weren't many places
Where you could go
And meet
I mean we used to go to the pub
We'd go round the pub
And
Um
Have a drink
Um
Just to pass the time
Not necessarily drinking alcohol
We sometimes'd have orange juice
But we'd sit there and talk

The Sloop
The Union
And The Castle
We used to use mostly
And uh
For some reason we didn't go in the Western
The Western was sort of like a hotel place
We didn't 't used to go up to the Western

And um
The um
The Golden Lion we used to go in occasionally
When I was first down
My friend and I
Jill and I
Were young
On our own
We used to go in there
We became part of the darts team

[laughs]

That was
That's a whole different story
But
I mean
Yes
And I s'pose
We used to have regular parties
There were parties
Always
Every week somebody had a party
And you just went along
And it wasn't hard drinking or anything
Sometimes you'd just sit there
And talk all night
Sit on the settee and talk to somebody
Because you hadn't seen them for ages
But it was
Just a
They were social get togethers rather than parties

Oh yes
Well John [Antrobus] and Maggie
That's his wife
Came down to St Ives
And they lived

In a flat
In a house
Behind The Sloop
It was
There's a sort of alleyway behind The Sloop
And they lived there
John had
Had the two small children
And of course I had a child
Playing on the beach
The children met
And we met
So they became
We all became friends
With our other friends
And um
He used to write for a living
He still
I presume he still does
I haven't seen John and Maggie for many years
They left I think
In the middle seventies
And um
But they used to write for the Goons
And sometimes
I can't remember which one it was
The Goons used to come down
And I remember going to a party
Or going to John and Maggie's
And we spent the whole
There was maybe half a dozen of us
Just laughing
Falling about laughing
Because they were doing a mock Goon show thing
So it was really
Really
Really really funny

Yeah
And it was
It was just another group of people
That were here in the town

Like Patrick Hughes
Who's quite a famous artist
And Molly Parkin
Who had the hats
They were here in the late seventies

When they had
Um
The early September Festivals on
And um
They were around
They lived at the bottom of Fore Street
Um
Again
They were just people that we'd meet and talk to
Pass the time
And I'm sure if I was in London and
They were around
And I went to see them
I could just say
You know
Hallo
Do you remember me I'm Shirley from St Ives
And they'd say oh yes of course we do
That's how it was
We were
It wasn't in depth friendships
But it was
You know
Casual friendships

Oh
He did
[laughs]
Yes he did
Yes Pat
And Molly liked it
As she liked it
But Patrick liked it very proper
Everything was

Well
If you were going to have
Like
A concert
Which
They helped us with the festivals
Patrick used to say
Right
Well this person is going to come
And are they going to make us money
Are they going to do this
And what are we going to do at the end
And who's going to come and see it

He sort of like
Put it all in order for us
So that
He didn't want any
Frayed edges
That could cause problems
He liked everything very straightforward
And um
That's what he used to to
If we were all going to be organising something
Patrick would say
Well I'll put it together

[laughs]
And then he put it together

Yes
That's right
We all just fell in
Say
Alright Patrick
Where am I today
Am I over there or over there
And he just organised it

No
No I didn't
Yes they did
No I didn't
I didn't go swimming with them
But yes they did
They
There was a mad swimming group
But um
Yeah
Again
Again
They were all people
That they came down integrated into what was
The old St
I call it
St Ives as it was originally
Before
Before we became open on a Sunday
I'm not anti opening on a Sunday
But there was a very different feel about the town
Um now it's a very changed town

We're open all the year round
There's people in and out
I'm sure there's very famous people
And very lovely people around
Um
But we don't
Get to grips with each other
Anymore
Like we used to

Well
We used to walk up to the Scala Cinema
Which is now Boots the Chemist
We used to buy our papers
Because that's where you bought your papers
[laughs]
And then we used to go home
Get our flasks and out sandwiches
And go on the
Go on the harbour beach
With the
We had the children
They used to be on the harbour beach
Or else we used to take them round to Porthmeor
And it was always the corner of Porthmeor where the Island is
We all
Where we all used to congregate
Lots of people
Were very interested to see
If you wanted to see if anybody was around
That's where you went and looked over
To see
Oh there's my friend
I'll go and join them
And that's what we used to do
Other than that
We used to go for walks
But we didn't actually go
I don't think we used to go to each other's houses on a Sunday
I don't remember that as such
Um
But we used to
If it was nice day
We used to go out
Everybody
A lot of people used to spend their time
Out
You know

Enjoying themselves out
That's how I felt anyhow

[Roy Walker]
Parties

Parties with jazz in the Penwith

Oh yes
Terry was a case of himself
[laughs]
He was um
He was
He was just a laugh
And I must say
Maybe I shouldn't say but I will
He was just a terrible flirt
He loved ladies
And he loved ladies to be
Um
Nice to him
And um
Innocently
He would have devastated if anyone had taken it seriously
His wife sort of
Didn't mind
Um
Uh
He was just a terrible flirt
And when he met you
He would give you a cuddle
Or he would say
Oh come and sit on my lap
Um
And tell me all about what's going on
Um
But he was a very very talented person
He did lovely
Lovely
Um drawings
And I've got one of his scarves that was produced from when he was drawing
So I'm delighted with it

Yes he used to come over
Particularly
[gallery openings]

Michael Hunt interview with Fred Stevens

17 March 2009

New Craftsman Fore Street

Michael Hunt

[43 years - known as Michael New Craftsman]

A vintage creature of St Ives

Yes she was

She was a lovely lady

Um

After work quite often

Particularly on a day like today

When it's quite sunny

And bright skies

We used to go there after work for a drink

She lived in the room above the

Uh

Kitchen

It was then

And as we went up she would pour us a glass of whiskey

We would all file out in to the garden

And one by one find a little chair

And all sitting and talking

Um

So it was really really pleasant in those days

There was no rat race that I remember

Where as now

There are seventy three galleries I think in St Ives

In those days I think there were three

Maybe four

So I think it has changed quite a lot

In those days I think I knew just about every artist

There was

But now

Every week

We get a poster for an exhibition with about ten names on it

And I think

I've never heard of these people

It's sort of

Self perpetuating really

One artist comes down

And the ten come after that

And then ten more

And ten more

So

Just about everybody in St Ives would appear to be an artist of some kind or another

She was quite a wicked lady

She had a wicked sense of humour

But then

In that group there were people like Boots Redgrave

Janet Leach

Um

Probably

Tony O'Malley

Or somebody like that

So there was quite a gathering of people there

And they all had lovely tales to tell

Of times before I was here

When I was a little boy or something like that

Uh

So it was fascinating

it's a shame in a way it's changed

Boots

She did yes

Um well Boots had originally been married to Bill Redgrave

Bill Redgrave and Peter Lanyon had a painting school

And Boots was perhaps the first lady

In the whole country

To have her own little bistro

Which was in Island Square

It's now where the Picture House is

And that was called Daubers

Do you remember it

And she used to do all the cooking

And the waiters were painters

Who wanted to earn a bit of money

A mean a lot of these painters are now internationally famous

But in those days they were just students

And wanted to earn a bit of money

And the food was delicious

By the way

Oh no before that

I mean she was sort of the doyenne of all the ladies here

Um

If you wanted anything

Go to Boots
Boots would
I mean that was Boots Redgrave
Not Boots the Chemist
And um
She would always
Uh
Lots of people would find themselves giving birth to babies
Artists wives
I won't mention any names
They'd no towels
A lot of artists were poor in those days
So Boots would gather loads of towels and rush round for the birth
And things like that
Which wouldn't happen nowadays
It just wouldn't happen

This is true actually
No home births

They were partners here
But I knew Boots before
No
I tell a lie actually
When I moved down here
Which was about forty seven years ago
Janet wanted me to work here
But she thought to work here
Um
I should work for next to nothing
For the glory of working here
Unfortunately people have got to pay mortgages
So I refused the kind offer
And then I became friendly with Boots
I used to work in the Abbey Hotel in Penzance
She used to be there quite a lot
And Janet invited her to become a partner here
And she would only come
If I came with her

So I came with Boots
We took over
So to speak

Boots's mate
I never worked for her
I always worked with her
And um

In those days there was the New Craftsman
And four doors down there was The Craftsman's Gallery
Um originally
It has belonged to Robin Nance and David Leach
When Janet got married to Bernard
And came to St Ives to live
David and Janet didn't get on very well
So he went to Bovey Tracey
Robin Nance
Went to number thirty eight on the Wharf
And Janet took over that shop
This particular shop here
Or gallery
Belonged to Tom Stallybrass and his partner
And they sold it to Janet
So we had the New Craftsman
And the Craftsmen's Shop
Which is quite a mouthful when you answer the telephone
Um
So there was the two shops there

.....

I mean Janet invented a glaze called a hamstone glaze
And whereas most people when they invent a glaze
They tend to keep it to themselves
Whereas she published it in the Ceramics Review
So anyone can use that glaze now
Which is quite something
Most people don't
And she helped so many people
She was American
Slightly brash
But really she was quite a shy lady
And because
Of her shyness
She tended to overcompensate
And become this
Almost aggressive person
I used to hear dreadful stories about her
And I used to think
But she's really just a pussycat
Really
But because she was sort of frightened of people
She would be quite abrasive to them
You know

[Friendship between Lucy Rie and Janet Leach]

That's the reason that I came down here
Actually
Tommy Reisen??
I used to come and stay with him at Carbis Bay
And His wife Tine used to say why don't you come and live down here
And I said well
You find my a cottage and I'll come and live down here
And I got back to London
And it was the time of telegrams
And there was a telegram
Saying
I've found a cottage
Come back
So I came back
Bought the cottage in July
And then came down in December

.....

I used to half manage the Abbey
So I would stay there all night
And uh
I'd just come from London
And there's be a knock on the door
And it would be Roger Hilton
At the kitchen door
Saying
Let's have a party
And uh
The kitchen was a big room
With a big scrubbed top table
And from eleven o'clock onwards
People would appear from nowhere
And we had lovely parties 'til about three or four in the morning
Um
But after about two or three months you think
Oh my god I want to paint this ceiling
But there'd be a knock at the door
And it would be Roger
Saying
Let's have a party

He'd been thrown out of most pubs by then
So
On one occasion I'd bought a drawing pad
And some crayons and some paints
And very condescendingly

I'd say to Roger
You do me some pretty pictures
While I paint the ceiling
So he would do either a painting
Or a drawing
Or something like that
And invariably I'd give him a drink
And invariably he'd knock a drink over it
So when he'd gone
I used to pick the pictures up
And tear them in to pieces
So I probably threw away
About forty Roger Hilton
Little drawings or paintings
How about that for stupidity

[discusses Roger some more]

[friends with Penwith Society Artists]

Willie Barnes Graham very much so
Very feisty lady
Loved her
Yes that's it
From St Andrews
She would spend so much of the time down here
And so much of the time in St Andrews
But Willie was lovely
I don't if she much cared for women
[coughs]
But when Barbara and Sarah were in here
Willie would come in
And they'd say
Oh hello Willie
And she'd more or less push them aside
To get to me
And I loved this
This was super
Um

These were real people
They were wonderful people
You'd find them at the Castle or somewhere like that
Congregating

Oh I mean a long time before I arrived
But lots of them would go in there
It was a favourite haunt of theirs
And uh
Lots of the real characters
Um
Very very much so
They used to have
At the Penwith
Um
I mean we had arts balls there
One time it was Tregenna Castle
And then it was the Penwith
And this was great fun actually
But um
Now I don't know how it is
I mean there are different people
In the Penwith Gallery
To what you find in the galleries around
There are so many people that I've never heard of
They've just come and they're there

It's not a community anymore
I don't think
No
They're all fighting against one another
Which is damning
Isn't it

[Tate influence]

I mean ever since I was a little boy I used to come down here
We came to St Ives
It was an artists' colony
We loved it
But we loved it because there was a beach and it was a beautiful place
Uh
And there were artists there
And in those days we used to go up to the Leach Pottery
We were given sixpence
And we could buy a little dish
From the Leach Pottery
Made by Bernard
Which was love-wonderful
Um

Uh

Well Barbara
Barbara Hepworth used to have the most wonderful wonderful parties
Usually towards the end of the year
And they were champagne parties
And they were held in the old Palais de Danse
Which was the
Uh
Dance hall across from where she lived
And because of the noise
She actually bought it
And um
She stored a lot of her sculpture there
But it still has the original swing floor in there
And it was the swingiest floor in the South West
The champagne used to flow like water
And you just held your glass and it was full
Always
Full
So consequently it got rather
Sort of happy
And people would be sitting in the sculptures
Drinking their champagne
And the whole floor would be swinging
Swinging swinging

And um
One particular
Um
Party
Boots Redgrave
For a joke
There was lots and lots of food
But she picked up a whole ham
And put it round her shoulder
Like this
And walked out
Because we were going to another
Another party at Betty Holman's
And uh
[chuckles]
We'd all had a lot to drink and we thought it was quite funny
Anyhow
We went down the stairs
And one of Barbara's daughters saw us going
Ah
But as we were drunk we really didn't care
So we continued on our way
And went to a party at Betty Holman's

She was another
A naive artist
Down here
Was the brother of
The sister of
Jim Holman
Who just about owned Camborne
From Lorraine

And we had a wonderful party there
That must have finished probably about four of five in the morning
Nevertheless we were on time to open
And in those days we opened at nine o'clock in the morning
Boots came in with a terrific hangover
Saying what have I done
And we told her that she's stolen the ham
And that the daughter
Of Barbara
Had seen her
So she rushed out and bought the most enormous bunch of flowers

And went up to see Barbara
Who was perfectly alright
And said
Oh
You should have taken another ham with you
But uh
Boots was a little bit scared then
But everything worked out fine

Um
But
There were
They used to have wonderful wonderful parties down here
Um
Just about everybody
Gave parties in those days
Usually they were quite small
Intimate parties
With about ten or twelve people at the most
Um
And usually quite cheap booze
You used to be able to get a
A litre bottle of wine for something like one ninety nine
But it was all granules in the bottom I think
But um
I mean Janet gave some lovely parties
Janet Leach

For more than twelve
Sometimes more than forty people
And she really was a superb hostess
Lots and lots of lovely food
And as much drinks as you could manage
[chuckles]
And great fun was had by all

Absolutely
Well some ideas I think
But everybody enjoyed themselves
That was the main thing

Um
But I suppose one of the strangest parties down here
Was when um
The uh
We had the fire
Do you remember that

Right
Well um
In those days we used to have two shops
The Craftsmen and and the New Craftsman
And we would be open until ten o'clock at night
And that particular evening
I'd been working in the old Craftsmen Shop
Which sold a lot of basketware and things like that
And in the those days one could smoke
And I smoked behind the counter
When I'd finished
And locked up
Just before I locked up
I emptied the ashtray
Into a wicker bin
Under the counter
I mean
I thought everything was out
And went home
And about one o'clock in the morning
I heard pebbles on my window
And it was Boots
Boots Redgrave
Saying there's a big fire in St Ives
Come quickly
And I thought
My god
I've set the whole place on fire

With my cigarette
So I grabbed a pair of shoes
A pair of trousers
And a sweater
And out we came
And we arrived in St Ives before the fire brigade came
And uh
Fortunately it wasn't my fire
It was somebody else down the road
I think it was a chip pan
From the Captain's Table or whatever it was
So I felt relieved
But we
All we could do was stand there and watch the fire
As it jumped across the road
From the right hand side of Fore Street
To the other side
The bottom of Academy Steps
Finally the fire brigade's arrived
And all the fire bri-men
Got their hoses out
Ran down the street
Put their ladders against
What is now
I've forgotten what then call it now
Um
The cafe which was burning nicely anyhow
Run up the ladders

And um
Put the ladders against the side of the building
Ran up with their hosepipes

Turned the hosepipe on
And a little trickle of water came out
Because apparently you have to ring South West Water
For them to turn the water up
To get any jet from it
And
That particular night
It was the harbour
The tide was out
Right out further than I've ever seen it
Right outside the harbour
So as we stood there watching
It jumped across the street
And I think it burned down
Two shops

Fifteen cottages
And such and so forth
We uh
Actually
The shop
The Craftsmen shop
We evacuated that
Because there were people living above it
And the first
On Academy Steps
There's a granite wall
Then the next granite wall is in the New Craftsman
So there's about seven places in between there
Which is just lath and plaster
And all the attics above were all open
So if it had caught fire
It would have swept right up
And everything would have gone
But in the shop I thought
Well
What do we take
So we took the money
And left everything else
[chuckles]

Um
And then we ended up in The Castle
At about seven o'clock in the morning
Having a party
With free booze
This one particular time
That was Stan and Stella
Whose daughter in law
Has Jensen's shoe shop

They were there for years and years
Lovely couple
And very much liking artists and things like that

Um
There was always a regular Saturday night
Friday night
Thursday night
Wednesday night
Tuesday night
Monday night

Not on Sunday

[laughs]

The Sloop

Yes it was
Lots of people
It did become a tourist pub in the end
It used to be the back bar there
You never went in the back bar
Which was great

Um
But it was more places like the Castle that the artists went to
Um
You got a few in the front bar
In the corner there
But very few really

Yes they were
And of course
On the other side of this wall here
Hymie and his wife Beryl

Um originally they used to live on the top of the Stennack

[discussion about Bryan Pearce]

Susan Murray/Wynter/Lethbridge

Toy Trumpet

Well I thought it was awfully exciting. There were very interesting people around. But there was a lot of drinking going on, if I'm going to be critical now I wasn't critical then
There was a lot of partying and things like that.

But there was also a lot of serious work going on

A lot of struggle shortage of money

In every corner. In fact there was a 10 shilling note round to help people there was only one

It was a very different environment from anything I had experienced before

I had a crate of tools, very primitive tools, and ideas of what I wanted to do

I had made toys when I was a very small child, I think since about eight.

My mother had an estate office in Cheyne Walk, and next door there was um, billiard table makers.

You see I was at school boarding school

I went down to the billiard table make us because there was no one to play with you see

Mabel was working in her office the video table makers was next door Thurstons

And are used to go down there and make things

Mostly railway engines and railway carriages

And uh

And then the foreman saw me under one of the benches

With my bits of offcuts

And he said you know this isn't really for girls

I'm very sorry dear

He was a very nice young man

So cut a long story short

(I had my hair cut as well as a long story)

And I put on a pair of shorts the following Summer and I went back and I said that I was my brother that I was Patrick

And he let me

It was this most wonderful atmosphere there

Huge gluepots

Great big gluepots

And the men there

With moustaches like this

And long white aprons

It was fantastic

And they were polishing

Like this

And

And it went on for two or three years

And then on the 49 bus

My mother Mabel met the foreman

And he said

Your sons getting on very well with his woodwork
Mrs Lethbridge
And she said but George I haven't got a son
You see
But he never let on that he knew
And she didn't say anything to me
And I stayed for not much longer

And that's when I really started making toys

[Flight mechanic during the war, went to engineering college]

Mabel had a cottage down here
She still had it when she died

Albert Terrace

...

We were broke, my then boyfriend and I
And so we came and moved it to it then
And that's when I opened Toy Trumpet

I got in touch with a man I was advised to get in touch with
I think it was in the Castle Hotel actually
And asked him if he'd got any premises
And he said no he didn't
But I could share with his
(he was an undertaker)
I could share with his undertaker
It had two storeys
(So difficult to make sound out of this)
I moved in there
And you came u a few steps to the second floor
They were making he coffins right in the front room
And then you got up these few steps
(not the height of a man)
And there was an enormous room
Glass, with glass in the windows that were very small
And overlapped
They weren't done with putty or anything
So it was freezing
And there was a great coffin in the middle of the room
And there was an enormous lathe on the side of the room
A wheel and? Eight feet across
Which drove the lathe
If you had a boy to
That was how it was

and we moved the Coffin out of the way
And it had some wood in it
And when you tried to move it
It would [makes fnrfnrnr bumping noise and laughs]
But still anyway
That's where I went first
And started making my toys
Out of the offcuts from the coffins

And very nice meant there
The hearse used to draw up there
And then they would put down their aprons
And put on their morning hats and morning coats
And follow the hearse

Walk it to the house and pick up a body
And they made a lot of jokes about it

But there was a notice on the wall saying no swearing

There were bits of the length of the Coffin cut to shape
Which was really quite sinister

Oh yes that was very funny
I dipped them
And sometimes if they were dropped they went rolling across the floor
Because I turned them, not on that lathe because I had one of my own
Turned roundabouts and things
And they went across the room like that

A light
A light on one occasion
And they were made of
The paint was cellulose
The whole place could have gone up in flames

For a short time I had any then boyfriend
And, yes!

I had a woman working for me
And I used to send her out to buy
Buy things at the shops that I needed
And she used to
She you to go and buy
[laughs]
You couldn't buy wrapping paper
To pack things
I used to send her out to buy toilet paper

And
[Laughing]
And she was a very refined woman
And she came back one day
Having lugged these great parcels
And she said
Would you mind if I go to another shop
It's very embarrassing

I never forgot that
It was very funny

And then I moved to the Digey
Because it just became available

[undertakers on the stennack on left past the cinema no longer there]

And the Digey at the time had a ground floor and the stairs going up out of it

Which have gone
It's become another part of another building

And I had two more floors above
It was very very old and filthy, you know

And the ground floor was, um, I think it was bricks on them

Did you sell them from there?

Yes, in the window

Because there's a nice window there isn't there

But I also sold you see to Fortnum and Mason
Burlington Arcade
(and where else, Andrew?)
Heals?

No, not them. Much posher than Heals.

In fact, Heals I don't think was open.
Anyway
That sort of area

How did they find out about you?

Well you know people used to come down on holiday
Probably

Because I had the toys in the window
Probably
Like that
But I don't really remember

But you see I didn't really make any money because it was all handmade

I'll tell you something else
They used to pile it and send it to London by rail
And there's a man called
A carter man
I can't remember his name at the moment
It was something like Willie
Anyway he had a cart
And he piled the cases up
They were like tea chests
Up on the back of his cart
And going up the Malakoff
They kept falling off
So we had to walk behind and catch them

Me and Richard
Richard Care came and worked for me
I don't think he's still alive
He was the most beautiful Spanish throwback
And very amusing boy indeed

I got a cottage on Skidden Hill
It's called Courtyard Cottage

....

But that front part of it I didn't have
I just had the back part of it
The front part of it was um, owned by a woman who was selling trinkets
Knitting
Things like that
In fact she very much reminded me of
Think it was Alice in Wonderland

Who had sheep
She was very like a sheep

The people you mixed with, they were all artists, were they
I think so
In fact I remember Peter Lanyon coming
into my workshop
Jumping up and down

His first child was born
Was due to be born
And he came in and said something like
The head's engaged
Or something like that
That was his first baby

....

Could you get my cardigan for me
I'm suddenly very cold

Thanks so much

Thank you

This is a sentimental journey

You mentioned the Castle Inn
And of course, um

Yes Michael...

So Endell Mitchell...

Yes
He wasn't called Endell
He was called Michael
I know he was Endell

And um
And he became godfather to my little son
And Willie Barnes Graham was godmother

Did you meet often in the pub

Oh yes
Especially on guise nights
And um, fireworks
Special occasions

Lot of Peter Lanyon
Put some drawings in there
I remember them

[Downings Bookshop]

I don't know a lot about it
Except that I think Bryan shared a um, shared an exhibition in there
with someone

Oh he had, I think
Uh
I read about it so recently
But I know that Bryan was one of the people showing there
It'll come back to me I guess

I don't know
Shops did you see
That's really what got it going
No I don't know
I think they were visitors

Oh yes
In the season

Oh yes
It's so awful when visitors arrived
From the point of view of going to get a loaf of bread
You had to queue for everything

Oh yes
I see the same chemist is there
I don't know how it survived with boots in the town

Pretty soon, Bryan and I got together, you see
And so I had the cottage in
Courtyard Cottage there
I also opened a shop in the Warren
And I moved in to the Digey
It all sounds like big money but it wasn't
The three places cost me fifty one pound forty pence
One pound
One pound what sort of pence not forty pence
One pound forty shillings
One pound four shillings

The three places cost that

Until recently there was a street light there called the Toy Trumpet light
But there doesn't seem to be a street light there this time

Yes
One the other side of the road

There's a
It's called a gallery
Something gallery
What was it called
He's gone to sleep
Never mind

You see being against the country
You'll see it
It's a separate little building
It was a coal shed
And being against the country
The water came in
So they put damp proof plaster up

But they couldn't put it right to the top for some technical reason

This was the back wall you understand
And so they made the far corner
They made a gully to take to water
And then in the grounds
They made another little trough
And they took it to the right
And they took it under the door
So that I had a stream running through
All the packaging for the boats and things got soaking

I was the only shop in England I swear that had a stream running through it
And also some plants appeared in it

My mum
Yes
She came along
Made quite a success of the shop
Originally it was my toys only
But that wasn't good enough
We bought in beach balls and things
Just in the Warren

Yes I suppose we were
It was a beach road
Wasn't it

I must have
I just wasn't very interested

A met a lot of people
Apart from Bryan

[Wille Barns Graham]

She became married to David Lewis after I knew her
She was godmother to my son
Because she stayed with me
In the cottage
When Bryan went to France

So she wasn't married then

[Barbara Hepworth]

Yes

Yes

Only sort of

She was very refined

How are you Mrs Wynter

And um

A friend

A friend of mine

Used to go up and help with the sculpture

She was a really nice lady

There were two factions

You have to know

In St Ives

And one of them

Was headed by the

What are they called

Not Hepworth

The Nicholsons

And Peter Lanyon

And the other

Wasn't headed by anyone

But it included me

And Sven

And um

Tom Early

Dennis Mitchell

Guido

He did a poster for you, didn't he?

He did
I think it was shown at the Tate in 1985 in that exhibition
And was commented on by David Lewis
Who was curator
And he said
Sue Winter the magical toy maker

Which I thought was so sweet

[Terry Frost]

David Houghton
Sydney Graham
Pat Heron

There's a portrait of me by Pat Heron that has just been sold at Christies for twenty four thousand
Isn't that sweet

No no
I did sit for a lot of people though
For Willie
For Garlick Barnes
A lot of people would stop me in the street
And ask me to sit for them
And I never charged people

Garlick Barnes was the woman who had twin boys
You know
Who opened the film museum in Fore Street

...

I knew them when they were sailors
In London
They were so sweet
With their hats
You know
In this uniform
Identical faces
It was incredible
They were so beautiful

When they were young
I suppose they were about eighteen

I'll tell you a little story

Which isn't very kind
Um
Willie was getting married to David
And that was the Nicholson faction

And um
She had been
she was about to be godmother to my son
And I called around
To tell her the order of the service
And where and all that

And she opened the door about this wide
And she said
You know we're having to have two separate parties
And I said no I didn't
And she said
Well this is the other one

And she shut the door

There was a lot of that sort of thing

These things were really accepted, you know

They were just accepted

Did you spend time at The Sloop? Everyone says that's where the artists...

We used to spend time in the summer outside
I remember there was a men's loo outside
And there was this famous quotation
Which is not
Seems to me
Is not quoted anywhere
From Sydney Graham
In the loo
In the men's loo

The painted white haired kingdoms of the sea

That brings tears to my eyes

That quotation
Another quotation you'll read about

But you won't read about that one I don't know why
Perhaps it was wiped

Sven Berlin, he had quite a chequered history here, didn't he?

Yes, he did
It was lovely that um
I just read it again actually
What was it called?
Sven's book

The Dark Monarch

The Dark Monarch
Well I was presented as Petrucha
Petruscha
Very kindly
And Bryan was Moss
He was very kindly presented
But Mabel was not
Mabel was attacked
And Mabel sued
And she was one of the people who sued
And the book was withdrawn
Pulped
And several people
I think Arthur Caddick
And his wife
Also sued
There were several people

At the time you see
It was very cruel
Why the hell should he

I found reading it again
It was very um
Very well written
I mean there are two parts of it
The only one I can recall at the moment
Was the splitting of the stone
Don't you agree
That was brilliant
Absolutely brilliant

But there was another bit
Do you remember which it was

Cuckootown

How well did you know John Wells

Not well

I used to meet him in the pub

I used to go into the pub with Bryan

And Johnny would be there

That's all I can say really

Except he was a doctor in the Scilly Isles

Yes

But Sven

I did like very much

But it was after I left this one was published

And then I'd been in touch with

Ansel

Ansel

Coombe

He's been down

And

He

Bought

I had a painting of Sven's

And he came down

And he bought it

And he's a great promoter of Sven's work

Festival of Britain

Happy

It was very happy

But of course I lived up at Zennor

Bryan had that place at the carn at Zennor

It was pretty soon

1947

Or eight

Or something like that

He had that house

He would stay up there

Sort of

Three or four days

And then come down to the town

And then we would stay together in the cottage

So we were using both places

The only thing was

There was only one bus
At six o'clock in the evening
So if we want to go for a drink
We had to walk home

Rather a long way

Yes
It was
But when you're young

You just do it don't you

...
Tell me
Did you know Will Arnold Foster at Eagle's Nest

Yes
[laughs]
Very pompous
Well I think so
Bryan used to call him fuck dust
Refer to him as
Old Fuckdust
Perhaps I shouldn't say this on
So you can imagine what he thought of him
But he wasn't there long
Yes then he died didn't he
Perhaps you better remove that
Because it isn't very kind is it

...

Did you know Delia
So long ago

She was
Yes
Huge laugh
Mmm

Andrew and I used to bring the children down
To courtyard cottage
We used to come every summer
Yes
And we used to join up with the Wynters
Didn't we
Christmas time and that
Holiday time

And I had two children
Jake and Rebecca
They were both Bryan's
And then Andrew brought them up
Obviously
Because they were with me
And then he had two sons by Monica

She died the other day
Very sad
Billy came and saw us
Took us over to see the grave
Because I couldn't travel to the funeral

She was a sweetheart

Turns out it was a haematoma on the side of the brain
She must have knocked herself
They had a very late
What's the word
Funeral

I stopped
I think I sold the business in 1985
I think that was it
Or eighty four
And I was
I stayed on as a design consultant for a year
But a lot of the stuff in the toy museum
I suppose there's only about fifty odd pieces
There were over a hundred made
But I didn't have them

Quite apart from the ones you did for Galt

Galts would come to me and show me a fire engine
And she's say
do you think you could do something like that
Susan
Without offending our friends in Sweden

I had to have new ones every year
Went to
At first to Brighton
And then we had to move to the National Exhibition Centre
Because Brighton closed down
But it was much nicer in Brighton

The British Toy Fair

The British toy fair
And you see they were being represented
It says in there
At the biennale
The Venice biennale

In the states

But you
People say
When you open a shop
Um
Was it originally a toy shop
And I say
Well no
It was a coal cellar
Things like that
And that doesn't appear in the leaflet
The fact that it was all done on a shoestring

That was only to make a certain toy that I used the elm [from coffin makers]
Yes I used to buy it
I forget where from

In a lorry usually
Specially when it came to Brightlingsea

Like some beautiful Danish beech came in
I heard about it in London
I rang up the timber merchant
And
I was making Galts bricks at that time
And I rang up the timber merchants
And asked if I could have some of these
About five thousand quid
I was spending

And he said yes sir certainly sir
And I said
Well it's madame actually
And he said
Oh well all right dear

And that's the sort of thing that went on all the time

Especially running a factory
See
When I sold it there were three men doing the job I had been doing

All the people were so interesting
The poets particularly
There were other poets
There was George Barker
Kit Barker
Who was a neighbour of ours
He was a painter
His brother was George barker the poet
You see
And David Wright
Yes
He didn't live down here
But he came down here
And he
He stayed on Gurnards head
And I once stayed with him down there
I remember
But that was queer
Staying with someone who doesn't hear anything
Anything at all
He stayed with us in the cottage in skidded
He was a deaf poet
He had a degree
Was it
Oxford I think
Never heard of him?
He was a lovely man

For your files
David Wright
South African

He wrote a biography
He wrote two
I think

But you'll have enquire about the titles of those
He stayed with us for a while

Was it you and I or Bryan and I
He stayed with us for a while
And um
He had a sore finger

So he couldn't do anything
He was a bloody nuisance
He couldn't do up his shoelaces
Of course
He couldn't do that anyway
Because he'd been brought up like that

To
Um

What am I trying to tell you

Yes
He had to
He lived completely
Dependent
Upon other people
When he lived alone he wasn't so bad
But when he with us

People came across the moors
They came to visit you
They didn't stay for a cup of tea
They were with you for three weeks
[laughs]
And David was the worst of these
Then we came down to our cottage in St Ives
Courtyard Cottage
And I had a dresser by the side of the door
And he finally left
And he had a rucksack on
And he wiped all the china off the dresser
With his rucksack when he was leaving
And it all fell to the ground
Behind him
But he didn't hear a thing
And he continued out of the courtyard
And up the steps
And I'm saying
DAVID

And I didn't hear from him again for something like twenty years
And I told him about this
And I never told him before
And he was so ashamed

And Arthur Caddick was a character, wasn't he?

Yes I feel sad about
About that
His daughter
Diana
Yes
Lovely girl
She's written a book about him

It was lovely
Lovely that book
How she managed to present him
As anything but a complete shit
Is so clever of her
But he was
That's what he was
I mean a person overtaken by alcohol
That's all you can say really

You say that there was a lot of drinking going on
And parties
Who had the parties

Well we had some up at the Barn
Um
Where were the others
In the pubs in the town
I s'pose
And people would go back after drinking in the pub
to the cottage or whatever or wherever they lived
But you would never catch David Lewis or Willie at one of those
Or Peter Lanyon
Or even Dennis Mitchell
But they were all such nice people

I can't say I knew them well

Is that it?

Mary Dobbin interview with John Pollard

4 September 2009

Born 15 June 1928

[came to St Ives in 1936 from Devonport]

[moving people out to council estates in 1930s]

The artists used to be down on the front with their easels painting
Nobody bothered
You know and they weren't any old people
And they were all painting pictures
Not squares lumps and blobs

Well the Tate talks as if
Well I went to a meeting
Well no one can afford to get in the Guildhall
So they had it in Bedford Road Chapel
And it was a meeting re. The beginning of the separate
Of wanting more room
And the woman who I don't ask me her name
Who was in charge
Of the Tate part for that
They were yak yak yak and they wanted more room
And a local chap got up and said why don't you close the restaurant
That's a big area
It would give you much more room
And she said
[posh voice]
Oh no no
We can't do that
We need rooms with a certain temperature
And every time I hear that word I want to scream
Um
They wanted
You know they had to see these paintings at a certain temperature
And I thought
God forbid Borlase Smart and all those
They'd be changing place and they'd chuck a sheet over
[huffs]
You know we've always had artists here and they were nothing unusual
Painting
Oh yes
Because of the paintings were
When I say they were all paintings
They weren't

You know
Like they are now
They were a scene
They were a scene of
And any of them you see'd in those days
Back a bit
But you knew what you were looking at
But no they were very good paintings

When I say you didn't take any notice
Not that you could care less
It wasn't that attitude
Just that they were an artist
And that man's a butcher
You know what I mean
It just didn't uh
It was just part of the scene
Really

[Hyman Segal]

They had no choice
Same as Segal did
Mean
He was a very nice chap
He was always in the Sloop
I mean not drunk
No that was part of living
Bu no
People didn't have the money to go in and drink gallons
But uh
You know
Most pubs were
What ere there seven
About seven
And a lot of chapels as well

So but uh
But no
The artists were just artists
You never came across the front but
Oh I can't remember what he was called
Parks
Pointed red nose

Always painting down in the front

The gasworks were part of the character

[didn't want to join the arts club]

[not to do with money]

[in the arts club last night]

Those sort of people like their own company

So they had their

The arts clubs been there for years

No you never thought about it

Didn't know what they were anyway

Well Bernard leach was up out of town

I have no patience with wanting money to rebuild

-- real misses leach

[Janet Leach]

She married Bernard

But it's none of my business

Fair enough

No she came later

Then needless to say he died

Then she eventually died

Then apparently she left all the money to the Redgraves

Well the Redgraves were doing bed and breakfast because they never had any money

You know this is where

It makes you smile

No not so famous as that

Um

Now they used to have a guest house on the corner of Island Road

And uh

They were artists yes

But they never had any no

They needed the extra money

And uh

She
When the second Misses Leach died
[drops voice]
She left money and that to Boots Redgrave
And uh
I mean Boots
Lived maybe two years
Three years
And she died
And then
She was always known as Boots
I dunno why
Always never known
Never called her anything else but Boots

Again it's one of those things that you grow into
I mean the hippies were down when you weren't allowed to mix
Well
From parentally wise
You know because uh
Just one of those things
But you went round
It's like the French crabbers
And lovely atmosphere
As such
Because they all wore their clogs
Smoked their
Their fags
They naturally go in the Sloop because it was down there

Mary Coad interviewed by John Pollard 21 October 2008

Born 5 January 1932
Revere Walk/King George 5th Walk

Husband worked at Bennett's Delicatessen

Barbara Hepworth would come in and say
Boy
I need you now

Just a moment Miss Hepworth I'll be with you in a moment I'm just serving a lady

Do you know who I am

[laughs]

And then course she have come in when she was a bit tiddly
Well when she was a bit tiddly she didn't have any patience they used to leave the customer and
serve her

Well my brother in law
Cecil Coad
He used to have dealings with her because he had connections with her as well because he
used to be the photographer
For all her
Um
Statues
Or um
Whatever she done
But he used to be employed by uh
Butts of St Ives
And em
She got on very well with my brother in law
He was very quiet I think
And
What she wanted
And he done the technical bit
And she used to send all these things abroad
She used to say to him
Well there's five pound
For you

And that was a tip I think because she used to have to pay Butts through
You know
Through the business

Yeah

Yeah

She was a very flamboyant lady
And when she
When she wanted to buy the Palais de Danse in St Ives
Which a lot of people didn't want her to buy
Because it was the only spring dance floor in Cornwall
And people was really annoyed
But anyway
Being Barbara Hepworth
No more was said

And that was the end of the Palais de Danse

Oh he met her several times

[orders from Bennetts and drink from Lanhams]

She wouldn't speak then

[Sven Berlin was a gentleman, cried when they left]

Donovan lived on the beach in Porthminster
Well
He was a hippy
Well they weren't hippies then they were
Er um
Flower power
And the flower power
This was the sixties
Yes quiet enough
Done his singing round his fire
That's how he lived
Then there was John Milliner
Beautiful landscape artist
He was very nice
Um Peter Lanyon
Another lovely artist
Very nice gentleman

--

The Sloop I think
And The Union
Cyril Woolsey owned The Union then I think
Um

The Castle
Was another one
You know

Sometimes
I think a bit separate
Because they were a bit
Their clothes were a bit
Flamboyant
You know
And of course
We were all straight-laced
You know
And I wouldn't have known them if it wasn't for Peter
But they were always very nice
Well I always found them very nice and so did he

Well no they were just there
They were doing a job
You know
Um
And they always had money
They always lived well
You know
um
Or they appeared to be
You know
Well I think they might have done that John
That I don't know
But Peter always used to say that they always had money they always bought the best of
everything
You know
So
And of course it wasn't as busy in St Ives with visitors
I think more of the paintings used to be sent away
I don't know

No

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