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Great Expectations?
Anticipation, imagination and expectation in the tourist

Convenors:
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The Importance of Being There…
A Disgruntled Tourist in King Arthur's Court

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Abstract
"Welcome to Tintagel, the birthplace of King Arthur" is a phrase often repeated at this small village on the North coast of Cornwall. Myth, childhood stories, shop signs and merchandise all serve to attract thousands of visitors a year - who arrive with great expectations and anticipation of a place which is both real and imaginary. As 'a place to go', the area provides stunning coastal scenery, a visually romantic ruined castle and a highly commercialised village. Tintagel Island, the English Heritage run site, plays central stage as the 'birthplace' in question. On site, the character of Arthur is largely debunked as literary phenomena and without adequate presentation of the local history or archaeology many visitors are left in an interpretive limbo - complaining of a high entrance charge or reluctant to let go of childhood memories and anticipated identity of place.

Whilst the aesthetics of the Castle and scenery go some way towards mitigating against intellectual (or economic) disappointment on site, we argue that despite the seemingly ocular emphasis of the tourist experience, mediated by discursive and literary media, a more embodied experience of 'being there' is possible. Here encounters with kitsch representations of the past combine with more amorphous senses of pseudo-spiritual atmospheres as well as experiences of walking, eating and drinking to ultimately provide a 'grand day out' for many which is perceived as a fairly cohesive package of Celtic-Arthuriana. This paper therefore questions the way in which collective memory, expectation and imagination mediate through an embodied experience of place.

Keywords: Arthurian myth; Celtic identities; Collective memory; Public archaeology.

INTRODUCTION

CAMELOT – "Camelot," said I to myself. "I don't seem to remember hearing of it before. Name of the asylum, likely."
(Mark Twain, 1889)

A small town on Cornwall's North Atlantic coast, Tintagel previously existed as two separate hamlets, Trevena and Bossiney. In 1900 these two hamlets were renamed when the telegraph arrived and the postal system was updated. In a "flash of marketing genius", what was being branded was King Arthur's stronghold - an association between a ruined Late Medieval Castle (see Figure 1) and the legendary ruler of the Britons, made particularly famous through the mid-19th century poems of Lord Alfred Tennyson (1856 – 1885) (Thomas 1993: 10). Ideas of Celtic lands and legends had been attracting artists and writers since at least that period. In coalition with the rapidly developing rail link to the South West, waves of tourists travelled to this area on trains named Merlin, Lyonesse and Pendragon. Many did so in the wake of literary figures such as Dickens, Hardy and Swinburne, eager to visit the places where such authors had written their great works or taken source material (Payton and Thornton 1995: 94-98; Perry 1999: 95; Lewis 2001: 23). And since Tintagel's slate mining industry was in decline, tourism offered an economic alternative for the future.

Figure 1 Tintagel Castle

Despite being built 700 years too late the castle was nevertheless emblematic of what visitors expected to find at a site increasingly being linked with King Arthur and the legends of the Round Table. King Arthur's Court at Camelot was also mapped onto this lore-scape since, in being identified with the nearby Camel River and the town of Camelford, it was able to reinforce the area's claim as the seat of the Round Table (Laviolette 2004/Forthcoming). As we see in the quote above, it was another mid-19th century writer, this time the American Mark Twain, who parodied these romantic depictions of the Middle Ages. Yet his satire about Britain's feudal history *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889) nonetheless drew attention to and helped popularise a general fascination with the ambiguity surrounding mythological heraldries. The novel has a further, if somewhat tangential, parallel with the heritage industry since it was remarkably innovative in dealing with the literary device of time travel.[1]

Fast forwarding to the present, the town of Tintagel is arguably architecturally nondescript; the majority of the older cottages were knocked down in the ….century to make way for boarding houses. Without its legendary associations Tintagel may be like many of the other coastal villages in the area – relatively unknown except to hardy coastal walkers who venture inland off the coast path in search of victuals. However, childhood memories combine with homogenous and coherent local marketing of the legends to attract some 800,000 visitors per year. The Castle on the outskirts of the town itself is the largest revenue generating site for English Heritage in the South West region (English Heritage 2001: 32-37).

Along Fore Street food and drink, trinkets, shop signs, postcards and car park signs all act as markers or symbols which "can draw people to the site, give information at the site, and serve as souvenirs or representations off the site (Culler 1988: 159-161 citing MacCannell 1976). Broadly speaking these draw on sources from the Iron Age and Early Medieval Britain as well as the folk cultures of modern Celtic and New Age groups (Peters 2005: 198). However replete Tintagel appears to be with historical themes and imagery, visitors interviewed during the summer of 2006[2] felt that they had learnt little to nothing about Tintagel's 'real' history beyond the place's legendary associations. For the majority who visited 'King Arthur's Castle' on Tintagel Island[3], the de-bunking of myth upon their arrival left some disappointed, still wishing to believe in an historical Arthur. Disgruntled complaints from a significant number of visitors targeted what was perceived to be an expensive entrance charge. Yet upon closer examination, these misgivings reflected the lack of on-site narrative or interpretation. In such a literary place, visitors were left without stories and consequently appeared uninterested by the archaeology, spending their time on site like inverse Moai statues staring out to sea but in large part ignoring the ruins.

Through an exploration of this literary landscape and its associated material culture of tourism paraphernalia, this paper examines the mechanisms by which visitors arrive with ideas of Arthur and leave knowing little about Tintagel. The common differential to the tourist experience is that whilst on holiday day-trippers need 'places to go' and Tintagel's familiarity, its expectations, visual delights and shopping opportunities provide the possibility, on a fine day, for a 'grand day out.' We thus argue for a more embodied experience which can be mediated through memory, more explicitly through (conscious) encounters with an historical or quasi-historical past as well as through social experiences and physical pleasures (for arguments that tourists are motivated by the anticipation of pleasure see Herbert 1995: 5; Robinson 1976:157 and Urry 1990: 1-3). Hence, the powers of Tintagel's meta-narratives in combination with its stunning scenery are such that visitors are aware of an esoteric or spiritual 'difference'. In this sense, to echo Kevin Lynch's (1972) apt question, they are often in an inadvertent but constant process of wondering *What Time is This Place?*

MYTH MAKING AND 'THE FINAL BASTION OF CELTIC NATIONHOOD':

"Welcome to Tintagel:
The legendary birthplace of King Arthur"

This is the most oft-repeated phrase found in the local area. As Rob Orton, the manager of Tintagel Castle notes "There is a need to make money – all the leaflets have a silhouette of King Arthur now as well as the strap line 'legendary birthplace" (pers. comm. 12th July 2006). However, this

marketing does little more than serve as a reminder for what the vast majority of visitors already know about Tintagel and Arthuriana before they arrive. This understanding of place had for many been formulated in childhood and whilst the legends are no longer taught in British schools; older informants spoke of such childhood lessons. Meanwhile visitors from France and Eastern Europe spoke of their own national sagas such as the Nibelungen-Sage in Germany. "From Wagner to Walt Disney; Malory to Monty Python" (Lewis 2001:23) there are over a thousand texts dealing with the legends and film and television versions regularly appear to suit all ages and tastes. The popular notion of Arthur is that he was born in Cornwall, brought up as a young man in Wales and through prowess in battle became the leader of the Britons, repelling the Saxon invaders (Hutchinson *et al.* 1999:4). Yet the contemporary view is largely reflective of Mallory's adaptation, (arguably an Anglicised Arthuriad); he was a King who went on crusades and was a Knight in medieval times. For some though, he was perversely the first king of Anglo-Saxon England and a few comically asked if 'he was the one who burnt the cakes.' He was thought to have lived sometime between 400BC and the 14th century AD. The majority of responses, however, peaked more accurately between 400AD and 900AD. A 'real' Arthur was seen in terms of a local leader – of a clan or tribe. As Andrew[4] (aged 16-24 from Plymouth) put it "the definition of power would have been different back then".

The birthplace in question is now reached by bridge and a series of steep, roughly cut steps. (see Figure 2). The Castle wards which span both the mainland and Island sections were built circa 1230 AD by Earl Richard of Cornwall, the second son of King John. The most interesting thing about it is that it was built at all, for according to local Cornish archaeologist Professor Charles Thomas the site had "no military strategic value or function." Records suggest that Richard would very likely have been aware of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (1136) and of the associative legends of Tristan and Isolde, which were internationally famous in the 12th and 13th centuries.

Figure 2 Crossing onto the Island

Thomas considers the Castle to be a "statement in stone, a message, a discourse" which drew on existing notions of identity, romance and power during the Late Medieval period or it can be seen as a Late Medieval theme park or a folly (Thomas 1986:10-28; Lewis 2001:29; Davison 1999:29). Whatever the reasons for its build, physically and metaphorically it dominates the rest of the site.

Aside from the castle there are also important archaeological remains which date to the Post-Roman era. Although only partially excavated and still quite poorly understood these are currently interpreted as the royal stronghold of the Post-Roman Cornish Kings dating from the 5th to 7th centuries AD, coincidentally covering the period, popularly known as the Dark Ages, to which King Arthur is purported to have lived. Excavations in the 1930s uncovered a number of rectangular buildings (see Figure 3) in association with extremely large quantities of high-class Mediterranean wares including plates, dishes, wine-jars and glass vessels originating in Tunisia, Carthage, Asia Minor, Byzantium and the Aegean. It was until recently claimed that for this period there was "probably more imported pottery from Tintagel than all other British and Irish sites put together" (Davison 1999 8-9; Thomas 1986:11). A serious grass fire in the summer of 1983 on the summit of the island uncovered burnt but recognisable shards of pottery and foundations of some one hundred and fifty possible structures (Davison 1999: 22; Thomas 1993: 75-76).

Figure 3 Post Roman buildings

Despite the importance of these archaeological remains, no firm archaeological (or historical) evidence has so far been found to support the site's legendary connection. Nonetheless, folklore features have entered the arena over time. There can variously be described as Arthurian geological furnishing and serve to illustrate the way that meanings become ascribed to landscape and place. They include King Arthur's seat, King Arthur's cups and saucers and King Arthur's Bed, Elbow Chair or Hip Bath and are a combination of natural geology, weathering and deepening by hand. Close to the Southern cliffs is an eroded hollow, known as King Arthur's footprint, which is similar in form to a type of footprint found in other parts of the British Isles which may have played a role within inauguration ceremonies for tribal chiefs, a practice that it is believed to have continued into Medieval times (Thomas 1993: 49, 98).

Figure 4 The tunnel

Over time the wider landscape around Tintagel has equally taken on folkloric and spiritual significance. The Bronze Age rock art depicting labyrinthine designs at Rocky Valley have votive offerings pushed into cracks and ledges or tied onto branches. At St Nectan's Glen, pilgrims can pay £2.99 for entry to the on-site hermitage, including a meditation room. This overlooks the picturesque waterfall where legend states that the Knights of the Round Table received blessings before embarking on their quest in search of the Holy Grail (Lewis 2001: 31). For its part, Dozmary pool on nearby Bodmin Moor is said to be the final resting place of Excalibur, retrieved by the Lady of the Lake when Sir Bedivere cast it back to it waters of origin upon Arthur's fatal wounding. Back on the Island, Claire (aged 35-44 from Brighton) regularly visits Tintagel Island for religious reasons. While on the Island she 'feels' the lives of women in the Late Medieval period and these feelings were particularly strong within the walled garden. In her words: "Women would have been safe within the gardens, but less so within the castle and very unsafe outside the castle grounds, they needed to carry their husband's name for protection". Meanwhile the medieval tunnel (see Figure 4 - thought to be a food store in association with the Castle (Thomas 1993: 47)) is perceived as many things: Merlin's cave; a passage to the underworld; a channel for recharging crystals; or a spiritual space to commune with spirits. Rob Orton has received bits of the tunnel in the post with notes pleading for the rock to be replaced after those who removed them experienced unusual bad luck (pers. Comm. 12th July 2006).

Yet a recent Visitor Centre Guidebook continues unabated by noting that:

> at the dawning of the new millennium, there has been a gradual reawakening of interest in the mystical content of the story, and the desire to links 'its sacred sites' such as Tintagel and Glastonbury (Lewis 2001: 31).

This esoteric nature of the area's Celtic spirituality is further described in an introductory film at the Visitor Centre entitled *Celtic Connections* recorded on the 8th July 2006:

> Tintagel lies at the heart of Cornwall's Celtic spirit. What can conjure up a better perception of the Celtic traditions than Arthur the final bastion of Celtic nationhood holding at bay the hoards of invaders who would destroy the very soul of what makes Cornwall a land apart […] The mystical images of the past with their belief in natural gods and cycles of the seasons and in the other world

appeal to those who aspire to different lifestyles and values. Such evidence can be seen in numerous ships and is carefully linked to the mysticism of Arthur and Merlin.

Here Arthur becomes emblematic of Celtic Cornwall, notably defending Cornish traditions and ways of life. Ironically, the 'alternative' New Age beliefs which step in synch with environmental and anti-Capitalist movements somehow retain a certain degree of intrinsic magic for some, despite being transformed into physical economy. Yet there would seem to be little mystery in the invitation at the end of the video that visitors might like to "browse in the shop and talk to the staff."

BEER, PLASTIC EXCALIBUR AND THE DE-BUNKING OF MYTH

Cult hero to guerrilla generalissimo,
Dark Age Superman to Dark Age Che Guevara
- Wood 2005:38

Figure 5 Fore Street Tintagel

Motivations to visit Tintagel were largely connected with ideas of heritage. The term here is used as broadly and loosely as possible to denote a range of activities from the eating of traditional food (cream teas and pasties) to viewing the literary landscape and seascape or sensing the intangible presence of King Arthur. Many of course simply wanted a historically significant 'place to go.' After parking in the village's many (and reasonably cheap) car parks, visitors run the gauntlet of merchandise and advertising on Fore Street (see Figure 5), analogously the Glastonbury of the Far South West. Shops such as 'The Celtic Legend' and 'The Green Man' (see Figure 6) sell jewellery made from 'real' Cornish pewter, 'Lord the Rings' chess-sets, marijuana-leaved tins, incense and so forth. These exist alongside Cornish cream, fudge and pasties as well as Cornish ale, cider and mead. Howlett describes the artefactual (rather than culinary) kitsch as "straightforward bad taste" (2004:44). This may be tourist tack. But it arguably seems to be tack that tourists want and to some extent expect. Most of these things have nothing to do with Tintagel's ancient past – but portray the range and flexibility of cultural symbols which marketing has drawn on.

The folklore, village shops, publishing houses and the "undisputed presence of a high-class settlement contemporary with an historic Arthur (excepting such a thing) provides all the evidence that some people need" (English Heritage 2001:37). Susan (aged 55+) from Alaska and her daughter Nikki (aged 25-34) from Washington had flown from North America to see Tintagel and other Arthurian sites. Whilst Susan admitted to avidly reading Arthurian literature and believed in the legends Nikki was simply along for the ride.

Figure 6. Inside The Green Man on Fore Street

Arthur is clearly the prime marketing mechanism. When visitors finally arrive at the Island, however, the main character is effectively slain. The de-bunking of myth takes place during a seven minute introductory video entitled *Searching for King Arthur*. The video traces the development of Arthur as a literary figure stating that the site is "remote and littered with enough bones of history to stretch a good story". It also describes how "myths are made and how they lead us back to history." Thus Arthur's presence on site is legitimated but only in the sense, to quote Fowler, "that the belief has itself existed for a long time" (1992: 50). When asked if they still believed in Arthur after watching the film several visitors indicated a discomfort with the myth-busting. This reveals a desire to suspend disbelief as well as the power of collective memory in association with the indoctrination of quasi-religious belief. In the words of Yvette (aged 35-44 from the Midlands): "But feels like it could be". Megan (aged 25-34) from Sydney, Australia stated: "Would like to believe that it is true". Steve (aged 55+) from neighbouring Devon put it thus: "English Heritage say that King Arthur isn't real, but before maybe, I don't know". Finally, Akosua (aged 35-44) from London a bit more loquaciously stated:

> I always believed it to be true, but have seen the short film; they are advertising the myth but tracing the story of how people invented it over the centuries. In a way I feel a bit let down. Loved to hang on to the legend – still hope to. A lot of history books aren't right. It's little to do with Arthur – it was a subsequent king.

There were also those who believed that there was some truth to the legends with the stories handed down through verbal memories and that over time different 'historic' characters had merged into one. The minority that believed in the legend's historical truth indicated that they sensed history as Ian from Scotland (aged 16-24) put it "something happened here". Then there

were those who did not know enough to say. In this sense, George from London (aged 55+) summarised the attitudes of many others with the words it's "one of those things you can't prove or disprove."

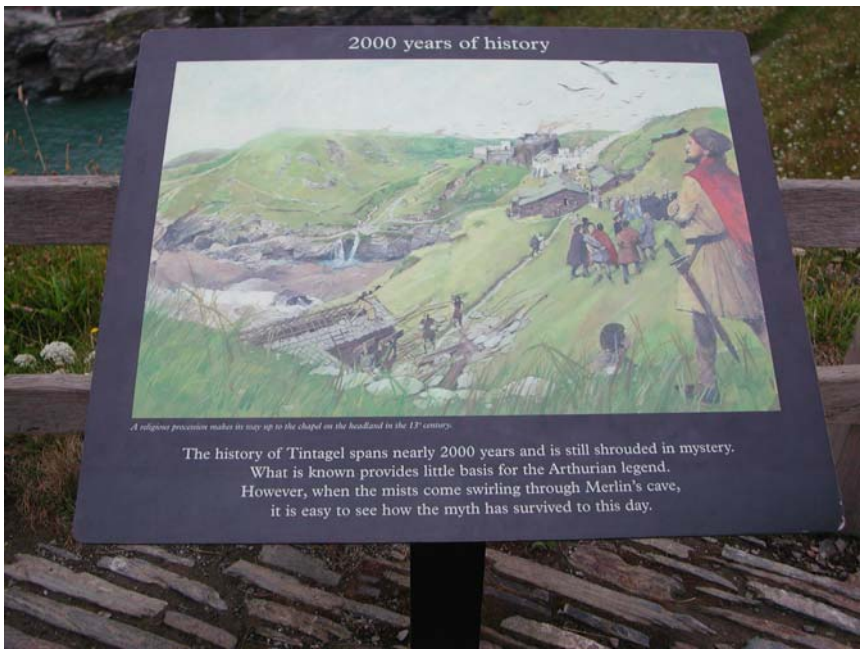

Figure 7 "When the mists come swirling through Merlin's cave"

On site the presentation boards (which pre-date the video), attempt to resurrect Arthur by suggesting that the right kind of weather (see Figure 7) visitors could imagine him there. Crucially the interpretation and presentation of the archaeological remains are minimal or non-existent. For example, features like the walled garden and tunnel offer small plaques with rather limited information. Around the site are numbered way-markers (see Figure 8) which correspond to the English Heritage Guidebook. The restriction on interpretation is, according to English Heritage, "to avoid intruding into the wild character of the site" (2001:39). At a cost of £3.99 on top of the £4.30 entrance fee many visitors were left to stare out at the coastal scenery. It can be argued that they can get the same views for free on the neighbouring coast path. It is therefore worth noting that the presence of ruins in the foreground of such views is of some significance to this tourist experience.

Comments on what the visitors had seen tended to fall into two broad but overlapping categories – aesthetics and commercialisation. Generally then, reactions to the Castle and the Island were either sensory/emotional or reflected intellectual/economic disappointment. The latter indicates a certain over-expectation or idealisation of the remains and heritage presentation. The castle and the scenery were 'beautiful' 'stunning' and 'very nice'. For its part, the charge to enter the site was declared by John from Torquay (aged 45-54) to be "expensive national patrimony" and by Edgar from Leeds (aged 55+) to be "extortionate." Those who had paid £3.99 for the guidebook were extremely positive about the information contained within what they described as an excellent factual and authoritative guide. Other happy visitors felt that they did not need a lot of information; they preferred to use their imaginations to fill in the gaps. In the main visitors felt that English Heritage 'could do better' – the castle was visually stunning, the location enjoyable but they wanted to know more about each 'bit' of the site.

Figure 8 Waymarker no. 9

These informants wanted more plans and drawings to help them visualise the buildings. Furthermore, they wanted small stories about everyday life; not necessarily a grand narrative to replace the Arthurian myth, but to know more about mundane things. It was notable that although the Castle had the ability to evoke a feeling of history and imagination no one really said what they had learnt about a non-Arthurian past at Tintagel. Very few could give more than the basic facts about the Island's history whilst roughly a half felt that they knew nothing about the place which was not to do with King Arthur. This is surprising given the range of information in the Visitor Centre on local industry, the medieval settlement and archaeological narratives on the Island. So it seems that the extent of Arthurian myth-protecting within the locale submerges other 'historical' narratives underneath a gloss of Arthuriana, which perhaps visitors cannot see beyond. The lack of presentation on site, however, clearly leaves many frustrated. As Mike (aged 55+) from the Midlands responded:

> [The information is] very poor. I think archaeologists fail to pass on to the general public their findings and conclusions. There's evidence for lots of buildings – what were they used for? Who lived in them? What did people who lived in them do for their duties?

Opinion on the village was mixed. Anna from Devon (aged 55+) felt it to be over-commercialised and was "still playing on the Arthur connection and cashing in." Kelly from Devon (aged 25-34) declared that she was "not surprised by the touristy village" whilst Stephen from Warwickshire (aged 25-34) declared it "Celtic commercialism." Nikki (aged 25-34) from Washington felt that the tourist tack was "touristy but high-quality". The village's cheap car-parking was noted and appreciated. It appears that although the village was seen as commercialised it could be more so and crucially it appeared to fulfil visitors' expectations. In order to gauge how the different signifiers of place identity combined in an overall sense or identity of place – informants were asked to choose between five descriptors - Celtic, English, Cornish, Arthurian or Pagan (see Figure 9 and Table 1).

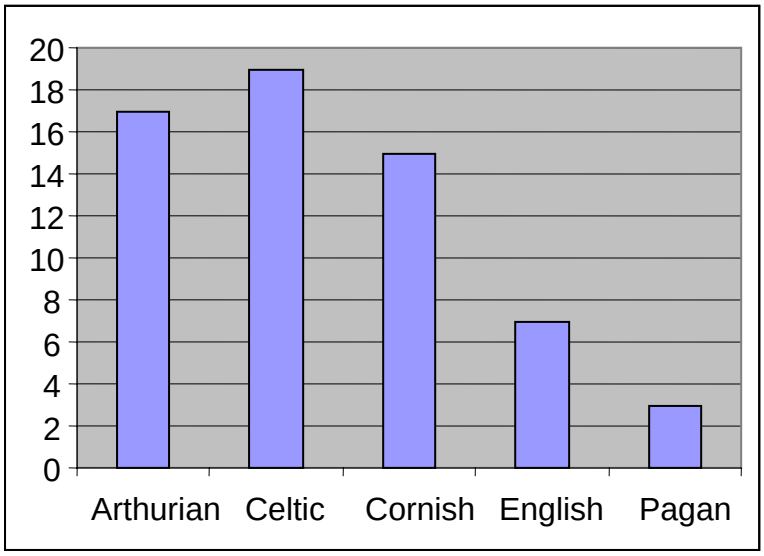

Figure 9 Pick one of two of the following words that you feel best describes Tintagel.

Cornish and Celtic	1	1
Cornish and Arthurian	111	3
Cornish and English	1	1
Celtic and Arthurian	111111	6
Pagan and Arthurian	1	1

Table 1: Hyphenated identities

From such questioning we see that the visitors described Tintagel as Arthurian, Celtic and Cornish. Hence, visitor comments reflected ideas that were cultural, symbolic and geographical. Susan (aged 55+) from Alaska felt that the Castle was Arthurian, whilst the village was Cornish. A Akosua (aged 35-44) from London felt that Tintagel represented "the history of England, Kings and Castles and battles and the struggle against the Saxons." Alex (aged 55+) and Natasha (aged 45-54) a couple from the Midlands noted that Tintagel was in Cornwall but it was run by English Heritage. Finally, another couple argued: Tim (aged 55+) was Cornish born and bred, felt that Tintagel was Cornish. His English partner, Maria (aged 55+) argued that since Cornwall was part of England, Tintagel was English.

CONCLUSIONS: THE PAST IS A FLOATING COUNTRY

It is important to question in this context whether the signifier Celtic represents Cornwall, the county and its culture or whether it is symbolic of a more Anglicised notion of past societies and contemporary cultural symbols (for further discussion on Tintagel within the context of local, regional and national issues see LaViolette and Orange, Forthcoming). The choosing of the signifier 'Celtic' demonstrates an awareness of a 'different' and 'exotic' sense of place. Visitors could be getting this from the wildness of the coastline, the gothic ruins, or the Celtic crosses in the local churchyard. We would argue that this is not necessarily indicative, however, of any real understanding of Cornish ethno-cultural claims to difference. So perhaps Cornish nationalists would be wise to wait before cheering too loudly. This is unlikely anyway given the current management of the site by 'English' Heritage. Rather, we postulate that this 'difference' is likely to be a superficial one based on MacCannell's notion of the power of site + marker + tourist = attraction (1999:41). Visitors could simply be reflecting back what they read on shop signs and marketing material. As the majority of visitors lived in an English county, it could appear

significant that an English identity was not chosen more. Arthur is part of both a national (and arguably English/British) and Celtic identity. Arthuriana, despite its apparent exoticism more broadly, continues an Anglicised theme in terms of the literary depiction of place and the historical context of Celtic tourism within the locale.

Tintagel Island is thus marketed as a national if not European site, partly through the failure to present the archaeological remains within a 'local' context. It is notable that the more 'local' legends of Tristan and Isolde have all but disappeared from view. As Roger Toy, custodian of The Great Halls of King Arthur commented, it would be perhaps "too much, to have both legends" (pers. Comm. 9th July 2006). What is clear is that Celticism is sold mainly within the village and, despite the video, the Island remains Arthurian. It maintains the *potential* for being the legendary birthplace. So even if Arthur no longer exists in 'fact,' there is still a Celtic past, the temporal context within which a person like Arthur may have lived. This is a past both legitimated and slightly confused through heritage presentation on site. It is also reinforced through marketing and souvenirs in the village as well as through collective memory and the imagination.

Within Urry's seminal concept of the tourist gaze, tourism becomes a practice which centres on imaginative and visual pleasure-seeking where everyday activities become extraordinary by being undertaken in an exotic and unfamiliar setting (1990: 11). We would argue, however, for a more embodied experience of place. Through the aesthetic beauty and the physicality of the experience and setting, imagination, memory, shop signs, tourist marketing and ephemera visitors become aware of both explicit and ephemeral features which connect to archaeologies of identity or senses of the past. Yet we apply a significant caveat here: learning about the site's history may only be of secondary or limited importance within the experience of some visitors.

Consequently, an Arthurian identity at Tintagel is conflated with ideas of Celticity, Paganism and New Age beliefs. The public negotiate these markers of distinction and their symbolic/epistemological significance to find relevance for their interests. These identities of place are not necessarily competing or that different from each other – there is a certain degree of cohesion to the Tintagel 'package.' Yet paradoxically, Tintagel's success lies in its ability to sell different components of the package. Everyone who visits can in some sense find their *own* Tintagel.

The affront to the tourist entry charge does not mean that a visit to Tintagel Castle is necessarily expensive. Rather for many, it does not appear to be good value for money. Those who paid to enter but not for the guidebook were left disappointed by the lack of authoritative on-site narrative. Whilst the Arthurian legends are accessible and well-known, the public does not 'know' a Tintagel beyond imagination, myth-making and marketing. So visitors who have not purchased the guidebook are left in a certain state of limbo. If one of the roles of heritage is to create a new sense of reality in the present, then there are opportunities to "refill the emptied commodity with meaning" (Jhally 1989:221). For others, however, the landscape, the feeling that 'something happened here,' the books, the legends, the pseudo-archaeology – is all the evidence they need to construct an alternative, romantic or mythological relationship with the past. But it must again be stressed that for the majority Tintagel is just an interesting place to visit in the present. Feifer defines 'post-tourists' as those who 'seek pleasure' in the multiplicity of tourist games, they "know there is *no* authentic tourist experience, that there are mainly a series of games or texts that can be played" (Urry 1990:11 citing Feifer 1985) and Tintagel's visitors were aware and accepting of the commercialisation of the village. Some were even happy to engage with a dialogue that presented Arthur as a purely literary figure. Others still chose to suspend a resultant disbelief for the day. As creative and reactive agents within the process of negotiation between myths, fact, experience and the material world, Tintagel is about the way that we choose to represent ourselves - a view which changes over time. Memory, imagination and expectation are firmly fixed on Tintagel Castle, hence the high expectation and idealisation. Contrarily, the village more prosaically is a pit-stop for refreshment and the buying of trinkets.

Ultimately the long term future of Tintagel Island does not rest in the hands of the visitors or the heritage managers – Tintagel is a 'wasting asset' as nothing can be done about the erosion caused by the sea (Davison 1991:14). In the meantime, signifiers of Arthurian myth continue to wade. And in a time when metaphors of socio-cultural fluidity abound (Bauman 2000; Crick 1989; Csikszentmihalyi 1998), it is perhaps opportune to revisit L.P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* (1953) which masterfully explores the nostalgia for childhood innocence and its loss. This novel is all the more relevant here since its opening lines were of course inspirational to the title of David Lowenthal's (1988) classic study of heritage issues. So in the case of the archaeological ruins of Tintagel Castle at least, we are also faced with a situation where – The Past is a Floating Country: They Do Things Driftingly There.

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ENDNOTES

1. As a vehicle for thought, time-travel obviously applies well to all issues concerned with history and heritage. It is particularly appropriate in terms of Cornwall's heritage since various temporal notions are inherently bound up the manifold constructions of Cornishness. Examples include the common understanding of the different pace of life that exists in the Duchy. Also, there's the idea that it is 10, 30 or 50 years behind the times. In other words, a place that time forgot

2. H. Orange: Fieldwork was undertaken in July of 2006 in preparation for my MA thesis which examined the relationship between identity, consumerism and archaeology. Questionnaire interviews were conducted with 50 adult day-trippers (twenty-three males were interviewed and twenty-seven females, relatively few were aged 16 to 24; the majority were over 55+ and most were from the British Isles) plus semi-structured interviews with local shop-owners and heritage managers.
P. LaViolette: Continuous ethnographic fieldwork from May 1998 to Jan 2000 with repeated research visits since. Thematically this work has involved landscape perception, metaphor, performance, phenomenology and the senses, maps, recyclia and installation art. Recent publications from this research in *Cornish Studies* (1999, 2003, 2006), *Journ. of Material Culture* (2003), *Inter. Journ. of Heritage Studies* (2006), *Performance and Place* (2006), *Cambridge Archaeological Journ.* (2006).

3. Tintagel Island is a slight misnomer. It is a granite summit still somewhat joined to the mainland by a spur of land yet un-navigable by foot.
4. All names are pseudonyms

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