

Order in a small-scale society: Social control and disputes on the Isles of Scilly



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3943 words

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Abstract

This essay investigates the question: 'How is order maintained informally in Scillonian society?'

Initial research was carried out on the internet in order to identify the people whose assistance would be of use to the investigation. These individuals were then consulted via e-mail and telephone and a day trip to the islands was arranged. This went ahead as planned, and during the day several informants contributed to the project by permitting interviews recorded on a tape recorder to be used in the final essay. Photographs were also taken, bringing an observational dimension to the fieldwork.

This ethnographic material gathered is analysed in the essay in an effort to investigate the underlying patterns and causes behind order in the islands' society. The aspect is explored more fully through the application of anthropological theories such as functionalism, and is developed by the enveloping theory of Legal Pluralism.

The essay concludes that order is maintained largely due to the relationships of reciprocity which exist among the islanders, and their resulting dependency upon each other. This is at least in part due to the communal nature of the tourist economy. Directly, the methods used in the upkeep of order include shaming, bilateral negotiation and sanction by detainment. The latter is shown to transgress formal sources of law, and this highlights the plural levels at which law on Scilly works when the society is viewed in its wider context as part of a nation state.

(240 words)

Introduction

As Michael Walzer has put it ‘something may or may not be right in an absolute sense but it can be assessed in terms of whether it is right for us’¹. If this statement of cultural relativism is true, the application of anthropological analysis to the nature of ‘right’ in the legal sense will surely assist greatly in uncovering the social and cultural mechanisms behind it. In fact, any rigorous study of order, or ‘the state in which rules regulating public behaviour are observed’² will naturally include the extensive investigation of concepts such as the role of the institution, power, and agency, which lie at the very forefront of anthropological thought. Indeed, Anthropology often involves placing institutions in the context of whole social systems in order to explore the nature of the relationship between a society and the institutions within it. In addition, the study of social control raises opportunities to apply theories to ethnographic data in order to explain underlying causes and patterns of behaviour.

This is most certainly the case when investigating society on the Isles of Scilly, which lie off the south-western most tip of Great Britain. The islands themselves provide a small territorial area for an equally small population, whilst the society found there can be described as ‘small-scale’. This is due to the fact that each member of it ‘interacts over and over again with the same individuals in virtually all social situations’³. The geographical location and social situation of the Isles of Scilly both impact heavily upon Scillonian culture and make it ideal for an investigation into social order, especially as the society lies on the very periphery of centralized state authority. Consequently, the people there enjoy a greater degree of autonomy, and seem to manage the preservation of order in their community largely through non-official means⁴. These reflect the reality of relativism and potentially pose a serious challenge to idealist claims that there is legal equality nationally. Several of the principal methods of unofficial social control are uncovered over the course of this essay, which investigates the question: ‘How is order maintained informally in Scillonian society?’

Background

The Isles of Scilly, or simply the singular ‘Scilly’ as the people of Scilly prefer⁵, form an archipelago of 200 islands and islets 45 kilometres Southwest of Cornwall. Only the five largest islands covering 14.43 square kilometres are inhabited, and three quarters of the 2100 people live on the largest, St. Mary’s⁶. In decreasing order of population the others are: Tresco, St. Martin’s, Bryher, and St. Agnes. Since the early 20th century agriculture on the islands has declined sharply, whilst tourism has become the main industry; today accounting for the vast majority of the islands’ income⁷. Politically, the islands’ elected local authority is equal in power to a county council⁸.

¹ Walzer cited in Rosen (2006) 198-199

² Pearsall (ed.) (1999) 1003

³ Benedict (1966) 23

⁴ Kan, Tony. E-mail correspondence. 5 August 2009 Para. 1 [see appendix A]

⁵ Mitchell (2006) 93

⁶ Mumford (1970) 20

⁷ Jones (2008) Para. 1

⁸ Bennett et al. (1991) 7-10

Method

As stated by E. A. Hoebel, after preliminary research, the initial steps of an investigation of this sort must be 'inquiry with competent informants'⁹. To this end, I interviewed a police officer from Scilly via multiple e-mails and made a day trip to the islands. During this visit, I recorded interviews with a variety of people on paper and by audio capture (relevant excerpts of which are located in the appendices). All such interviews were held alone with the informant. I also made observations and took photographs. My process of fieldwork was participant in so far as a visitor meeting councillors and investigating culture on the island would interact with society there. Clearly, in the strict sense of the term, long term social and cultural participant observation was not possible due to the lack of funding. Prior to questioning I informed each interviewee of the general purpose of the enquiry, before confirming that they consented to the publication of their answers. Permission was also gained for the photographing of several vehicles.

Alongside these ethical concerns, the methods used for the collection, evaluation and presentation of data also present inherent problems. For example, my informants may not have trusted me with certain key information, or may not have deemed it relevant. Even when they did, it is possible that their accounts came tinted with personal embellishments or were inaccurately recalled. The only way to insure against inaccurate accounts, whether they are incidentally or deliberately misleading, is to collect data on each set of events from as many perspectives as possible- a process which is obviously extremely time consuming.

Furthermore, there is the problem of the anthropologist. Even if trusted by an interviewee such that accurate answers are provided, it is then for me to interpret the answers as they were intended, and to subsequently represent the information accurately. Anthropologists who are unaware of their ethnocentricities can be inhibited from effectively evaluating their data, as they struggle to interpret it in terms of their own culture. Ultimately, my observations in this situation are etic, as I am an 'outsider' looking in. Much greater depth could undoubtedly be brought to my fieldwork through participant observation.

Finally, a point must be raised regarding the nature of ethnographic data which has a bearing on the methodological problem of presentation. After all, the interview is essentially a tool used to elicit oral accounts, and consequently the written report will not be able to convey the oral version in its entirety. Despite these issues, well-implemented fieldwork is the most effective method of ethnographic research currently known, and together with the demands it places on anthropologists, is one of the distinctive identifying features at the heart of the discipline¹⁰.

⁹ Hoebel (1954) 40

¹⁰ Kaplonski (2008) para. 2

Order on the Isles of Scilly

According to Simon Roberts 'some degree of order and regularity must be assured if social life in any community is to be sustained'¹¹. His reasoning for this is that 'conditions must be such that children can be reared and consistent arrangements made for the provision of food, drink and shelter'⁹. Indeed the need for some kind of order is rarely disputed, but what remains controversial to this day is the nature of the foundations upon which such order lays and how it is maintained¹². Political scientists such as Thomas Hobbes thought that order was tied inextricably to a centralized state authority¹³, and his idea was not seriously challenged until colonial expansion brought non-literate, acephalous societies into the academic consciousness for the first time¹⁴. Early ethnographers were then forced to explain how social order could exist outside of a state, without any official written rules or a legitimate sovereign to formally enforce them¹⁵.

Whilst society on Scilly is not acephalous, the national institutions tasked with preserving social stability face extraordinary the extraordinary practical difficulties of island life, with the result that much of the formal preservation of order is replaced by procedures of the islanders themselves¹⁶. The people of Scilly undoubtedly take great pride in being able to exert their own effective social control, and relish the autonomy that such control gives them. As one islander says, 'very rarely does the actual Law become involved here; we solve our own disputes'¹⁷. By 'Law', he is taken to mean the official legal institutions such as the police and court services, rather than informal, extra-institutional means of social control. The degree of agency that the islanders hold has much impact on their behaviour, and when examined through any theoretical approach, raises the question: What is the law there?

Considering Scilly, the answer to such a question will involve a cross-cultural comparison between the legal phenomena observed there and those understood to be in place across the wider British society, of which Scilly is undeniably still a part. Details of such phenomena can be drawn from an interview with a member of the council and long time shopkeeper on the islands¹⁸. However, it is important to consider this individual's social and political status with regard to the context of the information he provides. As an elected representative, he is answerable to the people about whom he speaks, and this will affect his reliability. Also, as Scilly's economy relies heavily on tourism, he has a vested interest in the promotion of Scilly as a safe and desirable holiday destination.

However, his insight into the inaction of institutions is certainly useful. He explains, for example, that he is happily aware of three islanders who drive cars and tractors on the islands' roads and have done so insured by a local firm for at least 30 years, but who have never owned driving licences. In addition, the only speed restriction in effect on all of these roads is the national speed limit of 60 miles per hour. Despite this lack of official regulation, a recent speed

¹¹ Roberts (1979) 30

¹² Roberts (1979) 11

¹³ Hobbes (1651) ed. (1986) 234

¹⁴ Roberts (1994) vii-viii

¹⁵ Roberts (1979) 11

¹⁶ Kan, Tony. E-mail correspondence. August 2009. Para. 3 [see appendix A]

Bennett, Marian. Personal interview. 5 August 2009. Para. 5 [see appendix D]

¹⁷ Watt, Steve. Personal interview. 5 August 2009. Para. 1 [see appendix B]

¹⁸ McCarthy, Richard. Personal interview. 5 August 2009. Para. 1 [see appendix C]

check on what is purported to be the fastest road on St. Mary's the top speed recorded was 29 miles per hour¹⁹.

There is an underlying explanation for the absence of stringent rules regarding speed and for the lack of enforcement against drivers without licences. In the case of the speed limit the matter can be viewed as one of practicality, as there are very few straight roads. By the longest line, St. Mary's (the only island with a significant road network) is two and a half miles long, and it is simply impossible to drive fast on its winding roads²⁰. So the lack of formal speed rules, such as the 30 MPH limits found on the mainland, reflect that there is no call on Scilly for the particular function served by such written laws.

Similarly, in the instances of long-term islanders driving without licences, no function would be served through the state enforcement of licence-holding that occurs across the rest of the United Kingdom. As already mentioned, the individuals in question are all insured, and are clearly capable of driving to the point that they are trusted by their own community to do so responsibly. Indeed, the manifestation of trust in relationships extends back to the lack of speed limits. For alongside practical limitations on speed, the social expectation among islanders not to put each other in danger is another factor limiting agency when it comes to the speed of driving²¹.

One materialization of culturally specific behaviour can be more easily observed. Photographs taken during a day trip to the island reflect the attitude of some islanders towards the security of their cars and bicycles. The following images show parked cars with the windows down, along with bikes left unattended and unlocked.



¹⁹ *Ibid.* Para. 2 [see appendix C]

²⁰ McCarthy, Richard. Personal interview. 5 August 2009. Para. 2 [see appendix C]

²¹ *Ibid.* Para. 2 [see appendix C]





These are striking due to a natural cross-cultural comparison: on the mainland it is unusual to happen across poorly secured yet valuable possessions. Initially it seems that this can be explained in terms of function. It is unlikely that anyone could steal a car or bike and remove it from the islands without arousing suspicion. However, according to a local police officer, the minor theft and joyriding of unlocked vehicles does occur²². So whilst thieves are unable to remove vehicles altogether, Islanders who do not secure their cars and bikes do take the risk of losing them, and therefore trust their fellow islanders not to take them.

Two key issues thus arise. Firstly, it is apparent that the existence of laws can be explained through their function rather than necessarily their content. This idea is very much in tune with the findings of Bronisław Malinowski. He writes:

Law ought to be defined by function and not by form, that is, we ought to see what are the arrangements, the sociological realities, the cultural mechanisms which act for the enforcement of law²³.

With this in mind, it is now quite possible to postulate that there is unwritten, informal law on the Isles of Scilly that is visible through sociological realities. Secondly, it has surfaced that there is an important role played by trust-based relationships between individuals and the wider community in the preservation of social order on Scilly. To investigate this further it is useful to employ techniques of the legal realist anthropologists, Karl Llewellyn and E. A. Hoebel. Llewellyn notes that studies into the maintenance of order should place emphasis on how 'observable behaviour'²⁴ reveals the processes of social control, whilst Hoebel writes that a 'main road into inquiry' can be found in 'trouble cases', or disputes²⁵.

²² Kan, Tony. E-mail correspondence. August 2009. Para. 2 [see appendix A]

²³ Malinowski (1934) lxiii

²⁴ Llewellyn (1962) 39

²⁵ Llewellyn and Hoebel (1941) ed. (1967) 28

Disputes on Scilly

It is widely accepted by social scientists that 'disputes are found everywhere in human society'²⁶. However, behind this consensus, there is a divide in thought pertaining to the effects of such conflict and whether it is pathological in nature²⁷, or whether it is integral to the continued existence of human societies and therefore inevitable²⁸. Either way, the study of dispute resolution, or the 're-establishment of some order'²⁹ provides a detailed picture of how a society retains its cohesive properties necessary to sustain social life. This is well illustrated in the following cases from the Isles of Scilly.

i) An internal dispute: The Boatmen's War and reciprocal obligation

The first example of such a dispute comes chiefly from the account of a long-time Islander working in the Scilly media. Whilst this places him in a good position to recount the facts as recorded at the time, it also follows that the story may be presented in a way that has been crafted to entertain rather than purport to fact. Although the events in question occurred just over fifty years ago, they left a lasting impression on the islands, and provide an important opportunity to examine the maintenance of order there. This dispute, discussed here in the ethnographic present of 1958, came to be known locally as 'The Boatmen's War', and occurred within the society between men who ran the ferry and tripping boats during the tourist season.

The details given in the account³⁰ of this particular dispute provide an incredible synchronic snapshot of a transitional moment in Scillonian culture. As the economic situation on the islands changes to incorporate tourism as the means for survival all round; accordingly the number of boats and touts at the quay increases. This drives economic competition and leads to pushing and shoving between boatmen as they race to entice visitors first. This conflict then has a negative effect on the relationship between the boatmen and their friends, family and neighbours who are also reliant on Scilly's reputation as a holiday destination. When boatmen begin a brawl in front of the Atlantic hotel, the proprietor is able to affect the pressure of society by kick-starting a resolution process; partly as he is enough of a source of business for the boatmen to hold political influence with them. Yet at the same time, as the only means of transport between islands for people and goods alike, the boats are absolutely vital throughout the whole year to businesses all over Scilly. It is this relationship that directs the wider social pressure for resolution, as the boatmen are involved in a network of associations based on reciprocal economic obligations within the wider community.

As a result, resolution via collectivisation is sought, but is only reached by the ten boats with the greatest capacity at the omission of all others. Although the method of resolution could be summed up as that of externally-prompted *bilateral negotiation*, or settlement-directed talking without umpire or go-between³¹, this is evidently to the exclusion of the captains of the smaller boats. Their absence from the discussions shows that they are ultimately marginalized, and the result is that their problems are compounded rather than resolved. In fact, the decision to

²⁶ Roberts (1979) 45

²⁷ Llewellyn in Hoebel (1954) 279

²⁸ Simmel (1908) trans. Wolff (1964) 15

²⁹ Rouland (1988) trans. Planel (1994) 117

³⁰ Watt, Steve. Personal interview. 5 August 2009. Para. 1-3 [see appendix B]

³¹ Roberts (1979) 72

collectivise is effectively a mechanism to restore the state of the quay to a manageable level for the major players, forcing others to diversify into other areas of the tourist trade as a result. This highly politicized solution reveals, to some extent, the hegemony of the larger boating businesses in Scilly society, and also shows how the wider society is able to exert control on agents within it through reciprocal obligations.

ii) Social control: Shaming the wholesaler burglar

Another example of a 'trouble case' occurred much more recently during December of 2008, yet there is a significant degree of continuity concerning the underlying themes from the previous case. It is discussed below in the ethnographic present of the time of the events, and is taken from individual accounts given by a member of the Scilly media and two councillors; the social and political statuses of whom reveal much about the value and limitation of their contribution as expressed previously. In particular, there are problems with these specific accounts³² due to either a lack of information or of willingness to disclose it on the parts of the informants.

An interesting view of informal control mechanisms in the society is given by the account, in which over a thousand pounds in cash are stolen one night from the wholesaler's in the industrial estate on St. Mary's. The wholesaler's are the single supplier of most goods to everyone on Scilly, and the idea of such a theft occurring outside of the tourist season leaves islanders believing that the culprit(s) must be local, from within their very midst. The sense of shock and outrage sparks a Scilly-wide response, and the question of who took the cash is the main topic of conversation across the islands for days. The case is therefore that of a grievance caused to the wholesalers by an anonymous party, yet again resolution is sought by the community as a whole, which begins to engage in the naming and shaming of potential suspects.

A resolution of sorts is achieved four days after the incident, when the island awakes to find the stolen banknotes deposited by the doorstep of the wholesaler's in a plastic carrier bag. Although many people claim to know who took the money, and the entire incident even comes to be named after one of the community's suspects, no one comes forward to officially confess to either its removal or replacement. This case is therefore fraught with problems, as it is not known for certain why the money is returned. However it is quite clear that the general pressure from the community acting on the thief would be a substantial motivating factor. This social control certainly limits the agency of the culprit, as they are obviously unable to spend or bank the stolen money locally without raising suspicions and facing shame. Having first decided to take the cash, rejecting the cultural norm as regards stealing, the thief's decision is then reversed partly by the actions of society, and the money is replaced.

³² Watt, Steve. Personal interview. 5 August 2009. Para. 4 [see appendix B]
 Bennett, Marian. Personal interview. 5 August 2009. Para. 6 [see appendix D]
 Mumford, Dudley. Personal interview. 5 August 2009. Para. 1 [see appendix E]

iii) An external dispute: the Bryher Film incident and local processes

A third example of the informal maintenance of order differs in several ways from the previous two. It involves a non-islander and centres on the second least populated island, Bryher. It is again discussed in the ethnographic present of the time of the events in 1991, and is taken from a detailed account given by a local contact who is a council member³³ working in the tourist industry. These roles may well have had a bearing on her disclosure of information, as she is democratically answerable to people involved in the dispute, and it is in her interest to ensure that people are not dissuaded from visiting Scilly. The details of the account exemplify the local dimension when it comes to social order, and can be explored more fully with reference to the theory of legal pluralism³⁴.

The dispute is sparked off when a film production on Bryher falls through and the company staying there default on all payment, causing the islander who arranged their accommodation around the island to be put in a very difficult position. She feels responsible for the considerable loss to the community, and so she coerces the producer, who is staying of the mainland, to return to the island. It is arguable that her reason for doing this is simply to avoid damaging her own relations with the community by providing a figure of greater accountability. So her agency is limited by the social pressure on her, which ultimately causes the offending individual to be brought before them. Then, led by those who suffered the most loss, the aggrieved parties decide in general consensus to sanction the producer. Supposedly in the hope that they might be recompensed, he is detained on the island and even secretly moved around it in order to avoid being found by investigative journalists. After three days, it becomes apparent that there is really no way he will find the money, which amounts to some thousands of pounds, and he is taken back to the mainland.

These actions provide an insight into dispute resolution methods used by people on Scilly in relation to outsiders. Whilst it is clear that the method of resolution is decided through an informal adjudication process led by aggrieved islanders, it is uncertain whether the islanders' sanction arises mainly from a desire for compensation or if it is simply intended as a retributive punishment. However, as an unofficial form of arrest, what is most striking about the islanders' judgement to essentially hold the producer hostage is the conflict shown therein between official and non-official law. Indeed, from the account it is clear that journalists from the mainland later referred to the sanction as an illegal kidnapping. So unlike the previously complementary interactions between these two levels of social control, there is a divergence, which highlights the existence of legal pluralism³⁵. Unofficial social control exists on Scilly entirely in its own right, set quite apart from and even opposing the law of the centralized state. In this case it is also apparent that unofficial resolution is prioritized more highly within the society, as once again, informal methods of social control are relied upon to maintain a level of social order.

³³ Bennett, Marian. Personal interview. 5 August 2009. Para. 1-5 [see appendix D]

³⁴ Rouland (1988) trans. Planel (1994) 46

³⁵ Mauss and Malinowski in Rouland (1988) trans. Planel (1994) 47

Conclusion

The anthropological study of the maintenance of order on the Isles of Scilly exposes some of the underlying causes of social cohesion in the islands' society. The anecdotal accounts reveal sensitive, yet essential information that is inaccessible through any other means. These accounts suggest that informal social control on the islands is deeply rooted in the socioeconomic network of reciprocal obligation, where cases demonstrate that islanders share a common goal to sustain the life of the community through cooperation and compromise, partly due to the communal nature of the tourist industry. Indeed, the imperative for social cohesion is such that it renders some of the functions of official law unnecessary.

To conclude, the informal methods that maintain order on Scilly include bilateral negotiation between parties of sufficient political status, the pressure of shaming by the wider community, and the sanctioning by detainment of offenders from outside of the society. Further fieldwork could undoubtedly extend this list, or perhaps focus on the degree to which the types of social control mechanisms used are dictated by disputants' statuses or genders. It could also expand upon the importance of trust between islanders based upon observable behaviour, such as the attitudes towards the security of personal possessions. However, an advanced research project may well be better spent determining the real significance of legal pluralism on Scilly. Such an investigation would involve a more rigorous cross-cultural comparison of both official and unofficial methods of social control in Scilly, in Cornwall, and across the wider national society as whole. This could reveal the wider implications legal pluralism holds regarding the egalitarian principles theoretically held to be behind the official law of the United Kingdom. Indeed, these principles seem to conflict somewhat with the words of one informant, who noted: 'It just goes to show; we do tend to take the law into our own hands.'³⁶

³⁶ Bennett, Marian. Personal interview. 5 August 2009. Para. 5 [see appendix D]

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Watt, Steve. Personal interview with Thomas Hawker. 5 August 2009.

Appendices

Appendix A

Extracts from e-mail correspondence with PC Tony Kan 27 July 2009

Thomas:

What is the effect of the relatively small local population of the islands on crime?

Tony:

The effect of having such a small population is that few actually commit crime. Most people know each other and the islands run on trust, therefore commit a crime and you breach that trust. However, there are 'accepted' practices on the islands, such as the taking of pedal cycles to ride home after a night out. These bikes are usually dumped near to where they were ridden and this does cause the owners some grief but few report the incidents as 'crimes'. Minor traffic matters such as **adults** not wearing their seatbelts are usually let go.

Thomas:

What crimes are committed on Scilly?

Tony:

Minor public order offences such as S5 POA or Drunk and Disorderly. Some minor theft and damage, thieving and joyriding of bikes and sometimes cars, the occasional assault.

Thomas:

Have you ever been aware of any disputes that were settled without police involvement? If so, what were the circumstances?

Tony:

Yes, for example, a crimdamm [criminal damage] to a local's car. Turned out that there had been a party and one of the host's friends had taken her car without her consent whilst drunk and crashed it. The initial theft of the car was 'unofficially' reported to us but as soon as the host realised her friend 'had done it' the matter was settled with the damage being paid for. This kind of settlement happens a lot.

Appendix B

Extract from a personal interview with Steve Watt 5 August 2009

Thomas:

Could you tell me about any incidents where islanders have sorted out a disagreement or dispute?

Steve:

Oh yes I should think so. Only very rarely does the actual Law become involved here; we solve our own disputes you see. I can think of a good example- we remember it as the Boatman's War of 1958. It's probably the most famous dispute Scilly has ever had. You see, it used to be that there were independent boat operators running between the sights and islands for the tourists. Well, there were always scraps on the quayside as each boat tried to get the most custom. The boatmen would barge each other out of the way to get to the visitors first as they walked down the quay. It got quite dangerous really.

Then of course what happened was they would stand closer to the entrance of the walkway down to the harbor side. There were several incidents outside the Mermaid Inn just by the wharf as a result- there was a fair bit of pushing and shouting when the others found out about these new underhand tactics. Finally it got to the point where the boatmen stationed themselves as far from the quay as the Atlantic Hotel – that's quite a way a fair way from the quayside. Well, it was clear that this escalation wasn't benefiting anyone- it put the visitors off if anything, so the crews of the ten biggest boats got together to sort it out.

It was decided to partly collectivize the work, with a points system based on the distance boats had covered and a pooling of all the income, which was then redistributed partly relative to the points earned by each individual business. This would solve the problem, by evening out the income more. Licenses were also then needed to run boats on different routes to keep them happy.

Thomas:

What happens if an islander betrays the communities trust, say by stealing something?

Steve:

Ah, well there's a great example of exactly that, that happened quite recently- so don't be surprised if people are unwilling to go into it! Basically a thousand pounds or so disappeared from the wholesaler's on the industrial estate last Christmas. They provide everyone with all sorts of goods, and everyone was pretty outraged really. It was the talk of the islands at the time. There was a thief in our midst! Everyone had their suspicions on who it might be, and weren't all that concerned about keeping their ideas to themselves, neither. Then a few days later, the money was left outside the door- in a plastic carrier bag. No-one ever came forwards and confessed.

Appendix C

Extract from a personal interview with Richard McCarthy 5 August 2009

Thomas:

How are the roads policed on the islands?

Richard

Ha, well there really isn't too much of an issue on the roads bearing in mind the size of the community. As a result of this I think we're a bit more lenient here when it comes to driving and so on. I mean, there's hardly any road at all on St. Agnes, just tracks. I know at least three people who have been driving their cars, tractors and quads there for more than thirty years without licenses. They're all insured under arrangements with a local company- there just isn't a problem.

St. Mary's is the only island with proper roads really, and speed wise it just has the national speed limit of sixty miles per hour everywhere. The island is only two and a half miles long and the roads wind all over the place, so it isn't realistic to actually reach anywhere near the speed limit anyway. When the chief constable Stephen Otter visited yesterday, we did a speed check on the fastest road on St. Mary's using a hand-held speed gun, and the fastest car was only going at twenty nine miles per hour. There are always so many people cycling and walking on or by the roads, that taking risks could be very dangerous. No one would be happy with someone whose actions resulted in injury to another islander or damage to the tourist trade. We just wouldn't expect to see anyone taking such a risk.

Appendix D

Extract from a personal interview with Marian Bennett 5 August 2009

Thomas:

Could you tell me about any incidents where islanders have sorted out a disagreement or dispute?

Marian:

Back in 1991, a production company was going to make a film version of a novel set on Bryher. Being a friend of the author, I helped to arrange all the accommodation needs of the company for their stay. It got a bit worrying when the crew arrived with all the filming equipment, but the deposits were overdue for all the guest houses including mine, as well as for the hotel rooms. Well, the men of Bryher and the crew all began to unload the boat, which wasn't local to the islands but made regular trips here from Penzance. Anyway they unloaded the equipment onto the quay.

A few days went by, and I arranged with the Producer to collect the money owed from the airport on St. Mary's- it was to be flown over by a British International helicopter. But when it landed, there was no money, and I was told by his aide that the film was off for financial reasons. All this after our hospitality had been used for several days by a large film team! I was horrified. The community of Bryher was owed a lot of money- thousands of pounds. I called my husband back on Bryher and told him not to let them load up the boat; else they'd get away without paying a penny. He raced down to the quay and told everyone what was going on. Meanwhile, I flew to Penzance on a helicopter and was told the same again, but also overheard that the Producer himself was just around the corner. I found him and informed him that he had to come back to Bryher and explain himself. I even bought his ticket, and frog marched him onto another helicopter, then down to a boat back on St. Mary's and across to Bryher.

When we arrived, I passed him to the angry throng on the quayside, formed of just about everyone on Bryher, and especially all the accommodation owners. The crew of the boat had continued loading up for the return journey to Penzance. I told the skipper "If you take anyone off the island, I assure you that you will never find business on Scilly again!" Then I climbed up onto the cabin roof and addressed the crowd, shouting "No man and no material will leave Bryher today!" There was quite a cheer. Then the boat pulled away.

We took Roland up to the Community centre- it was a bit like a kangaroo court! We had to decide what to do, and I was saying that really, we ought to just let him go- he told us that he was having his house repossessed and that his credit card had been taken. He couldn't pay; there simply wasn't any money. But the hotel owner, who had lost out the most, said "we should damn well keep him here." It was quite amusing really; we held him hostage for three days! It wasn't really legal I suppose, but we felt we had to do something. It was such a great sum we had lost.

Of course, the money really wasn't there, so we just took him off Bryher and let him go after three days. Eventually another company took on the film, and we were partially reimbursed with some money by them. It was all okay in the end I suppose. It just goes to show; we do tend to take the law into our own hands.

Thomas:

What happens if an islander betrays the communities trust, say by stealing something?

Marian:

Well obviously it really depends on the circumstances, but the bigger picture is that the community isn't going to like it. There's a very strong sense of inter-dependency here, and we work together to put things right. Quite a bit of money was taken from the wholesaler's a little while ago- the safe in the office was found open and the takings were gone. It really affected the community- we didn't know whether we were at risk from the thief and it was worrying that someone within the community could be doing anything like that. A few fingers were pointed but nobody could be pinned down. Still there was obviously some effect, as the money mysteriously turned up again a couple of days later in a shopping bag.

Appendix EExtract from a personal interview with Dudley Mumford 5 August 2009**Thomas:**

What's the most recent memorable crime committed on Scilly?

Dudley:

We had a real scare at Christmas when the wholesaler's was broken into and some cash was taken. Goodness knows how many people fancied they knew who did it- and the message soon spread of what they'd like to do with whoever it was, you know. Well, regardless of that, the money was actually returned in the end, although most of us still don't know who it was. I'm pretty sure someone must do- how else could they have been pressured into giving it back? Not that it really matters- it's more important that the money found its way back to the rightful owner.

Appendix FWider Research

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