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As we made our descent from the hill top car park and the town of Tenby spread out before us, flanked by the bay to our left, I was immediately struck by a strong sense of familiarity, even though I had never been to Tenby before. This realisation at the outset of our visit made me question what it was about the place that I could relate to. Certainly the architectural styles and the general layout of the town (see figure 1) bore some similarities to other Welsh coastal towns (notably Aberystwyth and Aberaeron) with which I am familiar. It turns out that, like Aberystwyth, Tenby was also a holiday destination for the Victorian middle and upper classes (Hembrey *et al.*, 1997: 6), and I could see why – the sea air smelt clean and I could imagine Victorian holiday makers and invalids arriving here to relax or convalesce – making a pilgrimage of sorts to this picturesque spot (Badone & Roseman, 2004).

The buildings, at least those which appeared to me to be of a Georgian design, were painted in various pastel shades and this was another factor which linked the place in my mind to Aberaeron (but Aberaeron was a 'planned' town, and therefore lacks the deep history which Tenby and Aberystwyth share). The soft hues created a sense of calm, and prompted me to wonder whether it was coincidence that this colour scheme crops up regularly along the Welsh coastline? Is it an identity marker of Welsh coastal towns? I don't know of any English seaside resorts which share this look. I wonder what restrictions are in place with regards house painting? Are people allowed to paint them whatever colour they like? Is there a committee which decides these things? Definitely something to look into...

Figure 1: Looking down onto Tenby.



Walking round the town with the historians and archaeologists it struck me that this was probably not the best time to be an anthropologist in Tenby. The place was pretty much deserted. Difficult to people watch when there aren't any people! But this turned out to my advantage in the end. Shop staff were only too pleased to talk, and I doubt that I would have had as much opportunity to ask questions if the tourist season had been underway. Tourism seems to have become Tenby's main income generator, and like many rural coastal towns in the UK and Europe (see also Macleod, 2004), the town has had to undergo multiple transformations over the years. Where fishing would have been the mainstay in the past, the locals now have to sell their souls to the tourists. But is that just me projecting my own interpretations and perceptions? Certainly my Welsh informants in Ceredigion feel some animosity towards English incomers (Hurn, 2009), but does the same apply in Pembrokeshire, or 'Little England' as it is commonly known? It would be good to come back and do a survey of local people's attitudes towards the tourists. Do they see them in a positive light? What groups of people come here on holiday? I wonder what sort of changes local people have seen in terms of the number/type of visitors to the area? There is a long history of Tenby as tourist destination (e.g. Borsay nd), but modern Tenby has acquired a reputation for being the stag and hen capital of the UK - is this justified? The presence of a costume hire/joke shop, and large number of pubs suggested there was certainly the infrastructure to support this type of clientele (see figures 2 and 3). In the toilets of one high street pub was a poster advertising a forthcoming Anne Summers party... Was this for the locals or another indication of the types of tourists who visit the area?

Figure 2: Costume hire shop



Figure 3: Advertising one of Tenby's night-time attractions



Anthropologists have repeatedly observed that Wales, like other regions on the 'Celtic fringe', is an 'internal colony' within the UK (Delamont, 1995: 86 - 87; Hechter, 1975), and there has been much written about tourism as a form of cultural imperialism (e.g. Nash, 1989), but I wonder how local (Pembrokeshire) Welsh people think about it. Do they see English tourists in such terms? What relationships develop between the locals and the incoming tourists? Are the modern stag and hen parties perpetuating the colonial history of Welsh oppression/disrespect/exploitation? (cf. Abbink, 2000).

Thinking about the potential relationships between locals and incomers led me onto the big questions surrounding 'Welsh identity'. Looking around the town I got a very mixed sense of what it means to be 'Welsh' here. There were Welsh flags aplenty (see figure 4), but signage was mostly in English – again, Pembrokeshire's reputation as 'Little England' appeared to be justified. I tried to speak Welsh in a pub, and the response came in English. Is it possible to be 'Welsh' without language? This is something which has been widely debated (see, for example, Bowie, 1992 and 1997; Khleif, 1975 and Trossett, 1993). I wonder what makes Tenby residents feel 'Welsh'?

Reflecting on my experience(s) of Tenby, and looking forward to the trips to Hafod and Llanerchaeron, the over-riding theme/question which emerged in my mind is what attracts 'outsiders' to these places? The lure for me personally is certainly the picturesque qualities of the local environment, the landscape/seascape, and the sense of familiarity in an unfamiliar place. As an anthropologist this raises many interesting points to investigate further – why do I regard the rural Welsh landscape in such positive terms? Is it because I have been brought up within a culture which places value on the aesthetic qualities of a landscape shaped by human activity (see Ingold, 2000 and Milton, 2002)? Or is it because I have grown up in the city, and as such view the 'rural' in idealised terms (Williams, 1975)?

How do my perceptions differ from those who have grown up in this area? How will my experiences of Hafod and Llanerchaeron compare to my experience of Tenby? I have been to these places before – how will this *actual* familiarity compare to my *perceived* familiarity with Tenby? ... to be continued!

Figure 4: Welsh flags on display



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