Lammas - A Pioneering Low Impact Development

Conflict and emotion: Exploring the feelings and needs behind local opposition to Lammas, a proposed ecovillage to be developed near the Southwest Wales village of Glandwr.

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ABSTRACT

The Lammas development project is an unprecedented and controversial proposed housing development to be sited near the village of Glandwr, South-West Wales. Aiming to combine a traditional smallholding model with the latest innovations in environmental design, green technology and permaculture Lammas hopes to become the United Kingdoms first planned Ecovillage. A paramount objective has been to be wholly integrated into the local community, however, concerned by the perceived implications of such an eco-development some local residents have been motivated to engage in social action and have formed a Dim ('No') Lammas campaign.

The focus of this research has been to try and hear the feelings, needs and experiences of some of the local people of Glandwr as part of a local community in the process of confronting a possible major and unique change within their community. Based primarily on informal conversations and some structured interviews conducted over a six-month period this research gives voice to some of the concerns raised by local people in relation to Lammas, which are expressed as uniquely individual responses to the proposed project.

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I INTRODUCTION

This research set out to focus upon a small group of individuals within the West Wales village of Glandwr who have been motivated to come together as a social action group to protest against the planning application for a proposed eco-settlement development that would be sited on the outskirts of Glandwr. The research proposal aimed to hear the feelings and needs of the local people who were opposed to the development and to consider whether such opposition was motivated by an underlying fear of change within the community or conflicting ideologies in terms of lifestyle. What has emerged are the thoughts and feelings of individuals that are richly diverse, varied and changing, there is no one particular generally shared experience that stands out as a core opposition to the scheme. The individuals that have united under the banner of 'Dim Lammas' do so for a myriad of different individual reasons. Thus, in meeting this somewhat obvious reality in hindsight, this research situates itself firmly within the 'empirical fact of universal individuality' (Rapport, 2002 b: 10). The fieldwork I have undertaken and write up here attempts to eschew generality and abstraction (*ibid*: 7) whilst concurrently aims to write within an implicit acknowledgement of the paucity of venturing to understand the perspective of another individual, as Hirsch (1988 in Rapport 2002 b: 12) states:

> '[T]he distance between one historical period [one cultural perspective] and another is a very small step in comparison to the huge metaphysical gap we must leap to understand the perspective of another person in any time and place'.

As my fieldwork has unfolded a significant pre-occupation has been with the tension of how then to communicate my experiences with integrity for all involved and do so whilst

meeting the criteria of an academic endeavour. How to write up my experiences without resorting to generalisations and yet convey something that has the possibility to contribute to new understanding? Explicitly mindful that:

> 'Universally there are individual actors accruing the experience of individual lives and it is an obfuscation (at best) to tie these experiences back to, and view them by way of, a causal metaphysic of generalisation and impersonalisation' (Rapport, 2002 b: 10).

The reality of my experiences includes the fluid and changing nature of feelings, meanings and day-to-day discourse within a small community. This presents a significant challenge to anything I might choose to write within this text. Whilst I may preface my writings following Robert Ingersoll as 'I do not pretend to tell what is absolutely true, but what I think is true' (in Wilson, 2000: 24), 'what I think is true' is clearly a contextualised moment, complete with my own cultural baggage of the moment. It is apt to change or develop at any given time and the tension lies in how to convey this in the craft of writing, how to write in a way that the reader is supported to remain engaged to criticise and question, that makes the time, place and authorship explicit in the text; that the text remains implicitly a 'process'. As Clifford states:

> 'The writing and reading of ethnography are overdetermined by forces ultimately beyond the control of either an author or an interpretive community. These contingencies–of language, rhetoric, power, and history–must now be openly confronted in the process of writing. They can no longer be evaded. But the confrontation raises thorny problems of verification: how are truths of cultural accounts evaluated? Who has the authority to separate science from art?

> realism from fantasy? knowledge from ideology. […] In cultural studies at least, we can no longer know the whole truth, or even claim to approach it (1986: 25).

Thus beginning with a general introduction of the proposal for an eco-development and the emergence of the Dim Lammas committee I will go on to provide a detailed overview as to the fieldwork experience, along with the aims, objectives and methods. Whilst findings, theoretical considerations, interpretations and conclusions will follow, there are a range of broader issues that have emerged for me in the context of undertaking this research that I also feel an imperative to address as part of it. Included then within this write up are my responses to the anthropological endeavour and the production of knowledge as a whole, questions in relation to applied anthropology and advocacy, and the looming reality of the global context in which Lammas emerges: predicted significant environmental change (Fields, 2009; Lovelock, 2007 & Armstrong, 2009) including the possibility of 'a global catastrophe, mass extinction's and hardship beyond our imagination' (Milton, 2002: 1).

Equally I want to draw a parallel between the possibility for the feelings and needs of those uniting under a Dim Lammas campaign to be heard, and the current political planning climate which, I suspect, allows little scope for the needs and aspiration of proposals such as Lammas to 'be heard', this notwithstanding the global environmental context. Whilst planning departments and policy making agencies are now developing processes that attempt to accommodate an array of 'cultural' diversity and difference amongst people using the department (Umemoto, 2001), the needs of people wanting to develop and build what would are considered as 'alternative eco-dwellings' have yet to be embraced at any meaningful level. Low impact dwellings remain at present a radical holistic approach concerned with personal and emotional sustainability that challenge

the fundamentals of house building and the present planning system (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2008). As such Lammas are significantly marginalized.

i Background to the Lammas development and the Dim Lammas committee

Sustainable development, though historically poorly defined, has been a key goal of the UK Government planning agenda since the early 1990s (Murdoch 2000: 517) however, planning regulations have made no provision for dwellings defined as low impact developments. As such planning for such developments has generally been retrospective, marginal and often involving long and difficult disputes (see for example 'that round house' & Tinkers Bubble) and with an arbitrary approach where regional and local domains have tended to 'go their own way' in response to local need and interpretation of sustainability (Murdoch, 2000: 514). Responding to this unsatisfactory approach The National Assembly for Wales determined a definition for sustainable development in 2002 that as: 'promoting development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means that we should treat the Earth as though we intend to stay' (Parry 2000). Pembrokeshire county council responded to this with the introduction of a new policy attempting to embrace low-impact developments. Planning Policy 52 low impact planning policy 52 (Joint Unitary Development Plan 2006) has been adopted to accommodate low impact developments on rural sites if certain criteria can be met (Pickerill & Maxey, 2007: 18). Such criteria includes that residents can show that they will derive seventy five percent of their basic needs from land-based activities (Maxey & Pickerill, 2007: 35).

Inspired by a dream of west Wales carpenter Paul Wimbush, Lammas was formed in 2005 and is dedicated to promoting low impact development throughout the UK as one pathway towards sustainable development (Pickerill & Maxey, 2007: 18). Lammas aspires to create opportunities to enable people to live "a lifestyle that can be maintained over generations, which instead of using the earths' resources can add to the earths' resources by way of biodiversity and soil fertility" (Wimbush, 2007). In particular, responding to the new Pembrokeshire planning policy 52 Lammas have applied to develop a settlement of 9 eco-smallholdings, a campsite and a community hub building on the outskirts of the small Pembrokeshire village. This is a unique undertaking. If planning permission is granted Lammas will be the United Kingdoms first planned Ecovillage development and thus a blueprint that could be used as the basis for other similar schemes throughout the United Kingdom (Pickerill & Maxey, 2007: 19).

Adopting a highly professional approach and determined to change the perception of "low impact dwellings as 'hippy' dwellings" (Barkham, 2007), Lammas is clear that the project is not about opting out of society, whilst Lammas will generate their own electricity and get water from local springs, residents will nonetheless have mortgages and have to pay council tax (Barkham, 2007). The proposed project site is Pont y Gafel farm on the outskirts of Glandwr, 4km south south east of Crymych near the boundary with Carmarthenshire. Lammas' main aim is to 'facilitate individuals (and families) to live a low impact lifestyle in the company of others

illustration 1 Planned site of Lammas

who share their values' (Maxey & Pickerill 2007). Combining a traditional smallholding model with the latest innovations in environmental design, green technology and permaculture, Lammas equally aspires to be wholly integrated into the local community, firmly believing that the project could bring a new lease of life to the area (www.lammas.org).

For some of the local people of Glandwr however, the proposed Lammas development has generated significant suspicion and opposition. Whilst there is a general understanding and acceptance of the concept of low impact dwellings from many of the local indigenous peoples (Pickerill, 2006: 2), there nonetheless remains significant opposition to the Lammas proposal amongst some local residents (*ibid*). Some residents have felt very angry about the scheme (Pickerill, 2006: 1) expressing a lack of understanding as to 'what Lammas hope to achieve by putting the clock back some five hundred years or so as a solution to a twenty-first century global energy and resource problem' (Wilson, 2007). 'What sort of people will be living there and what sort of houses they will be living in?' asks one area resident (Living on the future 02: 2007). Concerns include issues of traffic and vehicle access; noise, pollution and congestion; questioning the need for a community hub; financial long term viability of the project; visual and economic impact and disquiet about preferential treatment in relation to planning, regulations and bureaucracy (Pickerill, 2006: 3-5). Further, some objections relate to the impact of Lammas as a whole within the area, the lack of local community involvement, along with a perception that the project will create more English immigration (Maxey, Pickerill & Wimbush, 2006: 32).

In the summer of 2006 the Lammas committee invited local people to a public meeting in a barn on the proposed site as an opportunity to input ideas and reassure locals that

their concerns would be listened to (Pickerill, 2006:1). Clearly for many people the meeting served to generate more feelings of anxiety and a cross section of local people were motivated to engage in social action as response to the perceived threat from Lammas (Murphy in Davies and Jones, 2003: 105). The Dim[1] Lammas committee was formed in autumn 2006. Whilst Lammas have sought to both listen and respond positively to the stated concerns of some members of the local community, developing a Welsh language policy, improving the traffic reduction policy and undertaking a local study of the local economy to ensure that Lammas can be complimentary to existing business for example (Pickerill & Maxey, 2007: 18), suspicion and anti Lammas feelings nonetheless remain high amongst some of the local people.

Lammas maintains their desire to be inclusive of the local community and to listen to the concerns of the people (Pickerill & Maxey, 2007: 18) however, it is also clear that local people feel that their voices have not been fully heard (Wilson in Shaw, 2008). Equally feelings of frustration and anxiety have been exacerbated by the introduction of planning policy 52 itself which residents were not aware of until the Lammas project was proposed (Wilson in Shaw, 2008). Local opposition to Lammas has been effective, and formed part of the decision for the original planning application in October 2007 and re-submission at a later date being refused permission. Consequently both local people and Lammas have endured an extended period of liminality (Turner, 1995) with tensions and anxieties remaining.

[1] 'No'

ii Context and aims of Dim Lammas as a focus for study

My connection with Lammas began two years ago when a friend travelled to Glandwr to explore the scheme and was surprised to see and experience the level of anger and opposition expressed towards Lammas within the village. I was intrigued at the time as to why people would object to what I perceived as the general and environmentally positive ethos of Lammas. Lammas is an inspirational project which The Design Commission for Wales describes as 'a benchmark for environmental rural regeneration' (Design Commission for Wales, April, 2008); they are inevitably laying the groundwork for potential future developments and at a personal level I feel fully supportive of the aims and ethos of the Lammas development as a whole. My interest in conducting this research was therefore driven by a wish to understand why people feel differently about the proposed scheme, what the feelings and emotions were underpinning the conflict and anger that has emerged in the space of perceived difference (Milton, 2002). I had a real wish to more fully grasp the needs of Dim Lammas in order to try and gain an insight to their perspective.

My initial questions centred on whether opposition to Lammas was expressive simply of a conflict in ideologies and perceptions of lifestyle, or were there more general and deeper concerns that had yet to be fully addressed. I have also been interested in examining how people feel heard and how conflict is bridged. A further consideration emerged in the midst of the research, that of to what extent the concerns of Dim Lammas are reflective of more general experiences shared by groups facing the imposition of change and the effects on individuals, community cohesiveness and the process of transition and adaptation. For example a BBC opinion poll (Farming Today

this week, 19th July 2008) suggests that the lack of affordable housing is considered the greatest threat to the future of the countryside, ahead of Climate Change and the rising cost of food, however when developers actually propose an affordable housing scheme one director stated: 'village after village change their minds' (*ibid*). The proposed Lammas development is unprecedented, and as such it has become a uniquely important and controversial scheme that raises a number of issues. Planning laws and housing need, responses to environmental change and concerns, contested ideologies, identity, boundaries and belonging (see Cohen, 1982 and Cloke et al. 1997) are all raised as aspects of the project within the backdrop of increasing global climate change (http://gcmd.nasa.gov/).

Common with most anthropology this research has focused upon understanding difference. Clearly there is a lack of understanding, empathy and willingness to support the Lammas development from some of local people of the area. Lammas have stated their desire to be inclusive of the local community and to listen to the concerns of the people (Pickerill & Maxey, 2007: 18) and have perhaps yet to have developed a real understanding and empathy for the experiences of the local community when confronted with a new and totally different kind of settlement within their midst. It is clear that some residents have genuine questions and concerns in relation to the aspirations and intentions of Lammas that extend beyond the bounds of mere 'nimbyism'. Notions of Community studies, identity, the Welsh-English dichotomy, and responses to environmental concerns and global climate change are themes that have inevitably permeated this topic, however my main interest has attempted to focus on exploring how the imposition of change affects individuals, community cohesiveness and the process of

transition and adaptation, along with the role of communication, feelings and emotions and how people are heard in negotiating change (Milton, 2002; 2005 & Ingold, 2000).

II FIELDWORK

illustration 2 Image of Glandwr

Having planned to spend a three-week period living in the village with my family and conducting participant observation, my first reconnoitre to Glandwr revealed a need to explore things differently. The village has no real central point given the relatively recent closure of the school and post office, there was no local campsite, and I could not envisage a space for us to stay in which we could make good contacts with the local people in a way that was both affordable and would support us all as a family and my research.

I made a decision to instead visit the area as often as possible, arranging over night accommodation for short periods if needed. My initial foray into the fieldwork landscape began with seemingly chance encounters and conversations that merged into my attendance at a local village fundraising tea-party and duck race and a significant immersion within the web of social relationships in the village where some of the small-scale interactions through which life is lived was tangible (Josephides, 2005: 71). I experienced an ease and friendliness between people throughout the afternoon, expressed as warm greetings, shared jokes and general conversations. People were happy to introduce themselves to me and spend time connecting and sharing with me about general aspects of life and it was clear that many people within the village and surrounding areas had come together and worked hard to create a shared experience

with the intention of fundraising for the local church. It was clear that people of all ages had contributed to the event, by donating prizes, bringing plants and cakes for sale and by generally joining in. As an observer at this event I gained a brief sense of the interconnections of friendships and relations within the village and surrounding areas. The local vicar Roger introduced himself to me and asked what I was doing there, explaining my wish to look at local opposition to Lammas, I also enquired about possible camping spaces in the area. A general 'banter' with Roger pursued, which ended with Roger goading the owner of the house, with comments and gibes that suggested I was 'pro' Lammas. Roger's aside to me was 'mention Lammas to him and he'll turn ten cartwheels' (Roger in Shaw, 2008) said with a very broad grin, though also relaying a sense as to some of the feelings some people had in relation to Lammas.

The connections, conversations and ideas that began from this first visit determined the nature of the research that has followed. Specifically it was through this visit that I gained the awareness that some local people who were part of the Dim Lammas committee attended church each week and that there was a small-unadvertised Bed and Breakfast place just outside the village. I determined my next trip would be an overnight stay at the Bed and Breakfast following with attendance at the Sunday morning service at Llanglydwen Church just outside of Glandwr. I shared my intentions with Ewan Wilson and was surprised and pleased when Ewan and his wife invited me for coffee after the Sunday morning service. They had also invited two other couples that were willing to share with me some of their feelings in relation to Lammas.

My initial introduction of myself to Dim Lammas took place in Ewans' kitchen in a bustle of people arranging themselves around a big wooden table as coffee was being brewed and crumpets toasted. In response to being asked 'So what are you doing here'? I

Illustration 3 Ewans home in Glandwr

began to explain that I was undertaking my dissertation research as part of my studies towards a degree in anthropology, to which one person interrupted me saying '…I'm not interested in these long words, what are you actually here for, what are you doing here? There was a sense that people were wary of my presence, with a lack of trust in my intentions and a question about my integrity, whether perhaps I was in fact really a representative of Lammas in some way.

This initial meeting did in fact end feeling very positive for me. We sat together for nearly three hours as I attempted to fully listen to some of the concerns that were raised in relation to Lammas and share something of myself. As I sat and listened and reflected back some of what I heard, the conversation deepened and I felt the beginnings of an openness towards and trust in my presence there which has helped shape the foundations of our continuing relationship and sharing (Hollis, 1998: 1-12). In particular it was in the event of my sudden realisation at the end of the visit that I had completely forgotten to pay for my Bed and Breakfast accommodation the night before and my consequential embarrassment and blushing as I 'blurted' my error out loud that I felt more fully forged a connection between us. The experience of me as vulnerable and visually blushing in this moment of having made a mistake elicited a considerate and supportive response where I imagine that I was seen in some way as 'genuine' and therefore somewhat more approachable (Svasek, 2005: 17). Equally the situation was funny, a humorous 'gaffe' on my behalf at which we all laughed, creating a common

ground of communication and a release to any tension that may have built during our conversations about Lammas (Driessen, 1997: 231).

This thread of humour has permeated the whole of my fieldwork experience in a myriad of ways, helping to facilitate and forge a deepening connection (Rappoport 2005: 8) and emerging as a vital element of our day-to-day interactions (Billig, 2005: 200). On reflection, notwithstanding my own apprehension in requesting people's willingness to share with me, I have come to appreciate that my presence enabled people to speak out and be heard about their concerns in relation to Lammas in an independent way, to acknowledge this was an opportunity for people to express some real concerns they felt in relation to Lammas that had not really been felt as answered or acknowledged.

My experiences of fieldwork have included attendance at the local Church of England in Wales at Llanglydwen where I have participated in number of different services including Holy Eucharist. This experience has proved surprising, perplexing and enriching as I have come to appreciate the welcome, acceptance and consideration of me from the congregation at the church. My pre-conceived ideas about Church life have been significantly challenged, which I have enjoyed, and some of the sermons and prayers have resonated deeply. I have been deeply appreciative of the 'anthropologist' in me that 'allowed' for me to simply absorb the whole process, to be present and observing, rather than reacting and judging. Whilst there remains much in the readings and prayers that I find difficult personally to

Illustration 4 Llanglydwen Church near Glandwr

accommodate I have benefited from the connections made with people there, alongside developing an enhanced ability to be more fully accepting of others and different beliefs. In re-appraising my views in relation to the Church and sharing this with a member of the congregation I was also reminded that generalisations on the whole serve us poorly, that my experience was in of course an individual experience in relation to this particular church and congregation, and that it may or may not be reflective of other church congregations. This was a salient moment for me, a deep connection of the tendency to 'jump to conclusions' and over generalise about so many things. This awareness has sat strongly within me as I continue to meet new situations and reflect on the thoughts and connections that arise as I experience things and to spend time noticing rather than judging or compartmentalising things.

An on-going challenge for me has been to sit and take the time to fully write up my notes and give the necessary space for full consideration and reflection of the various and many conversations and sharing's I took part in. In part this was an aspect of balancing the needs for fieldwork with the needs of family and other work. The tension of trying to create time for fieldwork, leaving early in the morning to drive to Glandwr to attend a church service not knowing whether anyone connected with Dim Lammas would also attend that day, and just going with acceptance and trust that it was all a part of the process of my responsibility to the research and something I wanted to do anyway. On many occasions I would feel the need to drive straight home, to get shopping and be back to spend time with the family, though on some occasions I would stop the car in a quiet place on the road en-route to sit and write in my journal, always frustrated when I missed this out and the notes would be written later. There were also financial considerations to meet as well as childcare commitments to balance and I struggled at times to meet these in a way that honoured all involved.

After a period of about four months I asked to meet both with Paul Wimbush as the founder of Lammas, and the owners of the farm of the proposed Lammas development. In both cases it became apparent to me from what people had shared with me that there were a range of mis-understandings, or simply lack of clear information in relation to the perceptions of some of the local people about what Lammas were doing as well as some of the perceptions Lammas had about the experiences of the local people. It feels important to contextualise this statement, as Herzfeld argues,

> 'Anthropology is often about misunderstandings, including the anthropologist' own misunderstandings, because these are usually the outcome of the mutual incommensurability of different notions of common sense – our object of study' (2001: 2).

Spending time with individuals and groups at different times created different insights, awareness's and connections, only some of which would have been shared by another anthropologist undertaking the same project, or by the people I was listening to and sharing with. Whilst the anthropologist undertaking participant observation may be well placed to notice and explore

> '…those vital differences and diversities (between ideals and practices, between appearances and actualities, between sayings and doings, between the sayings and doings of different individuals or of the same individual at different times) (Rapport, 2000 b: 7),

it remains the individual bringing all of 'themselves' to a given moment that continues to shape the space in which interactions occur and who then ascribes the experience

within the written text or a future shared conversation. Stories and anecdotes shared with me both from those connected with dim Lammas and Lammas were perhaps inevitably mediated through me in a variety of arenas. I found myself sharing with both groups different aspects of life unseen and not known by each other. One particular comment shared with me that went some way to being an expression of 'common' ground (as I 'interpreted' it to be), with people within Dim Lammas, I then chose to share on one occasion with some of the individuals connected to Dim Lammas. I found myself both shocked and surprised yet also enjoyed the interaction when this anecdote was shared publicly at the re-submission of the planning application. As far as I can interpret the 'use' of the comment spoken was an attempt to bridge some kind of divide that endeavoured to support a connection between some of those within Dim Lammas and Lammas.

At this particular meeting I saw people from both sides connecting through shared conversation and sometimes a shared hug, and I heard two local people invite one or two of the members of Lammas to 'come round for a cup of tea'. This seemingly contrasted significantly from attendance at the last planning meeting where a couple of people within Lammas told me that they had felt sad when as the last planning committee ended they had tried to connect with people of Dim Lammas and felt no conversation or connection was reciprocated. Bridges did seem to be forged at this meeting with some individuals within Dim Lammas expressing ambivalence in relation to Lammas, and one individual commenting that the refusal of planning permission on that day was a 'shallow victory' (Shaw, 2008: 88). For others there were comments that they were not as 'against' the project as it might appeared but that they felt 'constraints' that situated them within a particular perspective that was not wholly held at the individual level (*ibid*: 82). It was also following some of the connections at this meeting that Paul's

wife chose to accompany me to one of the church services. For myself I was left feeling shocked and surprised at the planning process itself. From my experience in attending the planning committee I could envisage no possibility at this time that a scheme like Lammas, that challenges so many aspects of the notions of 'acceptable' house building and living along with an attempt to do so within present dominant planning policy and procedures (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2008: 3), could gain any kind of real consideration, regardless of any local opposition.

Fieldwork itself has not felt fully satisfying for me as I would have ideally wanted to spend much more time involved within the local community. In reality I would have enjoyed being able to find a way to live among the community imagining that in this context my connections and awareness would have had the potential to be significantly enhanced. I remain feeling frustrated by the level of time I felt able to commit to the work and recognise that this was of detriment to my overall experience. I am also keenly aware of opportunities that I did not follow up, either through inexperience, decisions and choices in how to use my time, or simply through lack of thorough research practice. For example it was almost at the end of my fieldwork when reading in more detail through a Lammas document I noted an item in the report that stated that a number of people who had attended the meeting in 2006 proposed t had ticked 'yes' to being contacted to talk in more detail as to their views on the proposal (Pickerill, 2006). Whilst I am aware that in part this omission was potentially due to my commitment to maintain a distance with Lammas itself during the time spent connecting with the people of Dim Lammas, I nonetheless feel sad that I noticed this too late for me to adequately follow up.

III METHODOLOGY AND ETHICS

Participant observation posits the anthropologist as immersed within the life of the 'locals', so much a part that 'local' people can carry on their lives as usual (Eriksen, 2001: 25-26). In reality however the anthropologist remains an 'instrument' of investigation where each and any moment may be recorded and analysed. At the heart of the anthropological endeavour is the individual anthropologist one of whose primary tasks would appear to be to 'work themselves into the confidence of significant individuals who have the required information and elicit it from them' (Hendry and Watson, 2001: 1). Thus emerge some of the moral and ethical challenges of anthropological fieldwork. How does one determine 'significant individuals' and what happens to the contributions or voices of those on the social margins and those that sit at the fringes of fieldwork, equally how do we ensure voices that have spoken are not muted in the text (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983)? Further, what is communicated, direct or otherwise, is clearly not a neutral action, the 'data' that emerges in each moment is as much a product of how I bring my embodied self (Bourdieu, 1977) and my questions or thoughts to the encounter or conversation as it is of any answers or insights I may receive (Gouin, 2004: 27): 'methodologically anthropologists cannot avoid the intrusion of their own selves' (Cohen, 1995: 5).

The anthropological encounter as a 'performance' of everyday life (Schechner, 2003: xvii) enacts a dance in which we share with one another multiple aspects of 'selves' and where power relations are fluid (*ibid*: 28 & Hastrup 1992: 118), yet it remains the anthropologist that acts as translator or interpreter of the event (*ibid*). How then to maintain 'power with' rather than 'power over' (Rosenberg, 2003) within the researcher-

researched endeavour as the notes are analysed, written and produced by the anthropologist? Whilst a reflexive approach to ethnographic writing implicitly recognises the 'need to explore the ethical, political and epistemological dimensions of ethnographic research as an integral part of producing knowledge about others' (Marcus, 1994: 392), the data represented in the text nonetheless remains the story that I tell of the encounter (Gouin, 2004: 28).

Acknowledging the embeddedness of myself within the research and the interpretations (Watson, 1987: 32) and explicitly sharing myself in the fieldwork landscape (Gouin, 2004), along with attempting to give a direct 'voice' in the text to some of the people with whom I have lived the fieldwork encounter goes some way to metering the discomfort of 'researching' people, which has resonated for me with Maton's notion of the 'symbolic violence perpetrated by the observers objectifying gaze' (2003: 55). Whilst the Ethical Guidelines for Good Practice (Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth; 1999) provide a clear outline from which to enter fieldwork, the task of acting with intellectual and personal integrity along with honesty and authenticity in ones role as an anthropologist nonetheless remains for me a personal daily tension regardless of any particular methodological foothold. Following Okely, I would argue that 'the emotional and personal cannot be so easily separated from intellectual endeavour' (1992: 9), and thus throughout this research process and in the writing of the text this tension continues to underpin and refine my thoughts, intentions and actions.

My initial research contact was with Lammas who were wholly supportive of my proposal to explore the feelings and needs behind local opposition to the development. Contact

later by telephone in March 2008 with Ewan Wilson, a member of the Dim Lammas committee was greeted with consideration and courtesy whilst at the same time Ewan was explicit in vocalising both the apprehension and significant suspicion he felt some people would have about my intentions. The conversation revealed quickly the political nature of the project and the levels of anxiety experienced by some local people. In response to my question that I was intending to undertake research in the area and was interested to hear how local people experienced the idea of Lammas the reply was '…well it's horrific, I know people who are not sleeping because of it…' (Shaw, 2008). Ewan said at the time that he would talk with me, but that he did not know if anybody else would. Specifically, he shared that local residents had had experience of people from Universities coming to do what they imagined would be independent research, only to discover that the researchers seemed to be part of Lammas. Clearly then I immediately met with an ethical challenge, how to meet my own need to enact this research, along with my need to be respectful and considerate of the needs and feelings of the people I really wanted to hear from (Pottier, 1986: 20) given the general lack of trust and anxiety that existed?

As with Pieke, I have experienced significant instances of serendipity as a somewhat indefinable, yet tangible methodological quality throughout my research (in Dresch et al: 2000: 130). As a creative tension amidst the structure and aims of the research I now recognise serendipity has shaped this work since its inception, informing the exploration of events, playing a significant part in directing focus and attention (*ibid*) and maintaining a flow and possibilities at moments of difficulty such as my surprise when hearing that people from Glandwr may not be willing to engage with me. At this point I had neither met any of the Lammas project members nor visited the planned site, and so on hearing the deep anxiety expressed by the resident I decided to postpone my planned visit to the

Lammas organisers and commit myself to first try and connect to the people that had formed Dim Lammas.

Expressly mindful of entering fieldwork as a woman (Bell et al 1993), with my own bias and assumptions, along with an awareness of the challenges and issues involved with fieldwork 'at home' (Agar, 1980; Hammersley & Atkinson 1983; Saunders, 2001; Colic-Peisker, 2004; Okely 1996) I thus attempted to situate myself within the community and landscape of Glandwr in a way that supported people to feel at ease to fully share their experiences and feelings in relation to Lammas. Here, the 'role' of anthropologist has directly contributed to a broad perspective within the fieldwork landscape that acknowledges 'seeing' is an act of choice, that 'the way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe' (Berger, 1972: 8), and therefore a potent reminder to choose to look at a wider picture than I might normally 'see', appreciating that this will equally come to bear in what I say and write (Stoller, 1989: 39). Within this context then the embarrassment experienced by one Dim Lammas member at a meeting as he talked about another member who he felt had seemingly '…insulted just about every group they could' (M in Shaw, 2008) was completely dissipated for me by the nature of my role and my commitment therewith to remain open to everything I encountered.

Prior to entering the field I participated in a weeklong intensive Welsh language course as a commitment to acknowledging the strong indigenous Welsh population in the area I would be in. Whilst this did not meet the possibility to converse in Welsh I felt that my willingness to attend was experienced as a positive contribution for some people in Glandwr and that these very beginnings of understanding Welsh has supported my connections in the field, especially during church services where I was just about able to pronounce and sing some of the Welsh hymns. Fieldwork itself was conducted over

twenty-three separate day visits to the area and six overnight stays throughout May to December 2008 and for the most part this was carried out on an conversational basis without formal note-taking. This was a deliberate choice within the specific context of some of the residents within Glandwr feeling anxious and concerned and viewing my presence with suspicion: 'a mystery person' (Rapport, 2002: 302). One local resident referred to me 'tongue-in-cheek'…as the spy from Lammas…' (B in Shaw, 2008) and whilst this quickly moved into a consistent and enjoyable banter whenever we met, note taking continued to feel completely inappropriate and a potential barrier to developing a meaningful connection (Trosset, 1993). This response feels a legitimate professional or methodological decision, however in reality I equally acknowledge this choice supported me at a personal level in helping to assuage my on-going discomfort in being seen as 'researching' people in this informal setting. Similarly I chose not to take any photographs and all photos within this research are courtesy of local residents or taken from respective web pages.

Visits to Glandwr have incorporated leafleting throughout the village (appendix i) to publicise my research and request a structured interview with anyone that was willing, formal interviews with ten people which included note taking at the time that had been negotiated as part of an interview process (Hockey, 2002), numerous visits to church, attendance at a local Christian festival, informal conversations in shops and outside the church, and informal visits to the homes of two local couples in particular where we spent many hours drinking coffee, eating toast and sharing stories, experiences and feelings. Efforts to incorporate and hear a large number of local people have been difficult and sometimes unsuccessful. Following up leads to contact individuals by e-mail have led me to being challenged. One local resident asked to see my dissertation

proposal before they would decide whether or not to talk with me. The reply was as follows:

> ‘Having read your proposal carefully I am not inclined to have a discussion with you. As a sociologist I was concerned about some of your research approach including your reliance on documents generated by Lammas supporters as apparently neutral evidence; 'loaded' language and the number of assumptions that you made about non supporters not understanding Lammas proposals and being worried about change - assumptions that not only show your bias - which you have acknowledged - but which are also patronising - which I am sure is not your intention. The people who have serious and deeply considered concerns about the viability of the Lammas project are as diverse as any other group’ (F in Shaw, 2008).

The reality was that the space between submitting my proposal in March and my more recent burgeoning connections with people in Glandwr was significant and my experiences within fieldwork have had a profound impact on me challenging some of my own pre-conceptions and developing my critical thinking. In re-reading my proposal before sending a copy I had already touched some of the flaws and assumptions I had made and I was feeling a little sad and concerned as I realised that some of what I had written at that time was clearly not relevant. In the end my thought was to accept that it was simply my first attempt at a research proposal and that it would inevitably contain many flaws and that this is an integral part of the research process. My reply to this resident included:

> ‘Much has changed for me from the minute I have had some direct contact with individuals in Glandwr. I have fully appreciated and valued my time with numerous people within Glandwr and have grown to really like and respect the individuals I have spent time with. I have been more than welcomed and I have been touched by this, and my experiences have made a significant impact on me contributing to a different outlook. I have a clear recognition that the concerns of people are genuine and varied and that there are some real and important questions in relation to Lammas that have yet to been felt as heard or answered by the Lammas committee. These questions go far beyond the bounds of any simple notions about fear of change or concerns about people who are 'different'' (Shaw, 2008).

Significant questions have remained throughout the fieldwork experience (Eriksen, 2001: 27). The primary almost daily questions being: ‘what am I doing here? (Cornett, 1995) Why does this have any relevance? Isn’t everything I am learning simply obvious? And how can I justify the imposition of myself within a group of people based on my own need to understand. What is my purpose and how can I act with integrity when imposing myself in this way (Cornett, 1995 and Lareau, 1989: 198)? In particular on my first visit for coffee after church with a group of six local residents I experienced the tension of really wanting to be able to be both approachable and honest, when that honesty may have led people to have a lack of trust in my intentions. I remain sympathetic to the aims of Lammas and outside of University I live what may be determined as an ‘alternative lifestyle’, where my children are home-educated and where we choose to not watch television, eat organic food generally without sugar, and I use the somewhat unusual name of Gayano. Anyone of these aspects of my life may have

proved barriers to inclusion within the community of Glandwr at our initial meeting, yet I found this a personal challenge:

> '…I feel a strong awkwardness in coming in and "interfering", though E sought to reassure me, being clear that it would be like the papers not reporting certain situations. I remain very mindful of my impact, I am un-invited here and concerned to be acting with integrity…' (Shaw, 2008).

Feelings of nervousness, of being a 'nuisance', saying the 'wrong' thing at the 'wrong' time and not asking enough when the opportunity arises have permeated my interactions and I have felt a discomfort in the 'stirring up' of people's feelings on a matter that is clearly very difficult and full of the unknown for some. Contentious feelings have included my complete resistance to labelling anyone an 'informant' (Peirano, 1998: 105), feelings of concern in relation to 'now I am here, how do I leave'? and a struggle to grasp fully my place in the midst of opposing views. How is anthropology ethically applied? And is this part of my task (Strathern and Stewart, 2005: 1-2)?

> 'Today I felt at times out of my depth – I am sad that things feel as challenging as they do for people. What is my role…I am not here as a mediator! This is NOT what I am yet I can feel my desire to support people to get clear about what is happening on each 'side' […]. How do I get to hear other voices and is this important? Do I need to hear a lot of voices…is this about numbers of people or is it enough to listen to those who clearly feel aggrieved and struggling' (Shaw, 2008: 7-8 and Appadurai, 1988: 17)?

Thus this research is highly reflective of a sense of interconnectedness of self and 'field'; the people, places and ideas (Unnithan-Kumar, 2006: 129) and where Hsu's notion of 'participant experience' (2006: 149) rather than participant observation, resonates more easily with my perceptions of life in the field, and meters somewhat my discomfort in the notion that 'one human being should assert his or her superiority over the other by making the other an object of observation' (Hsu, 2006: 149). The impetus for this research was to try to hear the voices of the people within Glandwr that are against the Lammas development, thus it is these voices that intrinsically shape the text whilst also being directly heard within the text (Davies, 1999: 215). Notwithstanding this impetus I acknowledge and take responsibility for my own authorial voice that transcribes and interprets the fieldwork experience, and what emerges is a deeply personal reflective analysis of my endeavours (Coffey, 1999: 136). I make no claim to 'know' or 'understand' the individuals that I have spent time with, each voice remains partially expressed to me and transient, thus the text simply reflects my own inevitably subjective experience and account (Pottier, 1986: 20) of some of the 'spaces' that people have been willing to share with me (Hastrup, 1995: 157).

IV A RESPONSE TO THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ENDEAVOUR AND WHAT KNOWLEDGE CAN I CLAIM?

The first few chapters of this research have provided a general overview of the background, methods and aims of my work. The following chapters will elucidate my findings, contextualise the work within the wider theoretical framework in which it is situated and communicate the development of my own ideas, interpretations and conclusions. However, the further I have delved within the academic discipline of anthropology and the fieldwork endeavour itself I find myself increasingly uncomfortable with the concept of myself as an individual anthropologist producing something that could be laid claim to as 'knowledge' about 'others' and before presenting my findings I want to give voice to my discomfort. In part I see this emerging through my own 'academic naivety'.

As a student in my late forty's studying at the turn of the new millennium, with no prior knowledge or insight to the world of academia and who has 'stumbled' into studying anthropology, my engagement with and enduring concept of anthropology has been that of a disciplinary perspective that stems from a core moral commitment to grapple with the tensions that arise when confronting 'others' who live 'differently'. Implicit within the anthropological endeavour for me, is the willingness to meet local understandings and the 'indigenous point of view', wherever this is found, with respect and openness (Herzfeld, 2001: 26) rather than with moralistic judgments (Rosenberg, 2005). Thus I have personally come to understand anthropology as offering a unique and positive contribution to gaining insight into the myriad of diverse and creative ways in which groups of humans and non-human animals live together within any given environment at

any given time. The anthropological disciplinary framework has enabled a creative and exploratory process for me that has on goingly challenged my own pre-conceived ideas and thus offered me the possibility to reveal aspects of myself to myself as simply holding culturally embraced and embodied viewpoints about the world in which I live which in turn have contributed to increased personal agency in how I relate to difference.

Anthropology through its distinct participant observation fieldwork methodology requires the academic fieldworker to confront the inevitable feelings of discomfort when meeting difference, requesting of the anthropologist to 'live through' this transitional, liminal space and emerge with new perspective and understanding. As the experience is written up and reaches now very diverse audiences (Herzfeld, 2001: 27) anthropological scholarship, negotiating the advantages of 'both a pragmatic self-distancing and an ethical engagement that is also grounded in direct field experience' (*ibid*: 22) presents the opportunity for individuals to explore beliefs, judgments, feelings and emotions in relation to confronting and accommodating difference. This potential of anthropology, to generate a deeply reflexive and questioning perspective when confronting difference and the 'globalizing assumptions that increasingly dominate political decision-making' (*ibid* & Eriksen, 2006), is what I personally feel most thankful for. In reality of course, notwithstanding my personal idiom, anthropology is a relatively new academic discipline interwoven within a 'western' political academic quagmire and thus inevitably carrying its own associated 'cultural baggage'.

Born in the late nineteenth century in general terms anthropology focused upon 'the study of man' [sic] and in particular explored 'why other people and other societies were not the same as those of Europe' (Cheater, 1986: 17). Deeply historically contextualised anthropology emerged as a

> '… distinct discipline at the beginning of the colonial era, [that] became a flourishing academic profession towards its close, and throughout this period devoted itself to description and analyses "carried out by Europeans, for a European audience – of non-Europeans societies dominated by European power" (Asad, 1973: 15 in Peirano, 1998: 109). For a long time [it] was defined by the exoticism of its subject matter and by the distance, conceived as both cultural and geographic, that separated the researcher and the researched group' (*ibid*: 105 see Carrier & Said).

As anthropology has developed it is no doubt inevitable that the vagaries of an academic discipline striving to situate itself within the political milieu of change, academic funding, status, recognition, disciplinary boundaries and how and who determines such boundaries vie for primacy. Whilst not naive about the potential drives behind such rankling, as the debates and discussions in relation to notions of 'anthropology at home' (Peirano, 1998; Rapport & Overing, 2003: 23), or the place for non-human animals within the discipline (Noske, 1993 & Milton, 2003) for example endure, I confess to feeling both sad and frustrated.

I fully acknowledge that in order for the gifts of an anthropological perspective to have agency in the wider world it is necessary to gain 'a place at the trough' (Rorty, 1995: 35), to negotiate a voice within the institutions and structures that are already empowered to enact and be seen and heard in the wider world. However, as the debates as to the nature and role of anthropology as it develops and responds to an ever changing socio-cultural environment, and arguments about what constitutes anthropology and about it's generalised theories continue, the question that emerges for me is what feelings and needs are motivating any given position? What needs are being met for example when

anthropology as a discipline, through its individual actors, posit particular boundaries for human-animal interactions as legitimate foci within the anthropological endeavour. Within my own definition anthropology is about embracing, offering us the possibility of confronting all aspects of life through particularly strong exploratory lens that supports the acknowledgment of 'norms' as culturally created and absorbed, rather than representative of a given 'truth'. As Herzfeld states:

> 'While I am cautious about the risk of inflated ideas about what the discipline can do for the world at large, I would argue that – at least in the classroom, […] and in all other arenas of opinion formation to which anthropologists have access from time to time – there is great value in the destabilization of received ideas both through the inspection of cultural alternatives and through the exposure of the weaknesses that seem to inhere in all our attempts to analyse various cultural worlds including our own. We need such a counterweight to the increasingly bureaucratic homogenisation of the forms of knowledge […]. I would argue, furthermore, that the characteristic stance of this discipline has always been its proclivity for taking marginal communities and using that marginality to ask questions about the centres of power' (*ibid*).

It is here that I most celebrate the possibilities intrinsic within the anthropological perspective, as I understand it, that as Herzfeld suggests '…one of the most perverse strengths of anthropology [is] its capacity for even quite destructive self-examination [which] has provided a pedagogical tool of considerable value' (2001: 5 my italics). And echoing Rapport I see anthropology as very much 'alive', that:

> '…anthropology as a frame of mind, and as a fieldwork practice, is not so much a perversion of an everyday mind set as an exaggeration of one. People are all and always anthropologists in and of their lives, to a variable degree pondering their selves, their worlds and others. People are all and always engaged in ethnomethodolgy: in the creation of relatively stable sociocultural forms and meanings out of the fragments and randonmnesses of their experience (2000b: 7).

Thus notwithstanding an anthropological 'training' that encompasses methods and ethics, how to write a fieldwork diary, reflexivity, positioning and objectivity, gender and power and the like, as I enter into the process of writing up my findings I remain almost paralysed as to how to do this in a way that avoids generalisations, assumptions and judgements and yet reflects something of value to both the people involved and the wider academic community. In essence I recognize in part my discomfort in writing up my experiences arises from an almost hidden voice within that questions the academic process itself, as Sharman writes:

> 'At base, [ethnography] is a hegemonic project maintained by an academic discourse that operates only on the intellect—Platonic in its mistrust of the senses and emotions not because they are unimportant, but because they are dangerous and can too easily lead us away from enlightened– disinterested –rationalism' (2007: 119).

I write then against an increasing concern that, bound by my inevitable cultural conditioning and notwithstanding my sincere attempts at reflexivity, I can but end up perpetuating a particular academic construct.

Sharman argues for analyses to be written in the way that fieldwork is pursued, that this will produce 'richly textured evocations of experience' (*ibid*). Arguing for the repositioning of 'experience' as central to the anthropological project (2007) Sharman states that "doing" ethnography

> '…requires intimacy, vulnerability, warmth, and honesty. It requires a patient commitment to connect with our informants, our "audience" in the field, to build rapport and establish trust. It requires a practiced flexibility, willingness to borrow from foreign styles of communication, to meet our informants more than halfway. […] In the field, we must be willing, at all times, to stretch ourselves, to be uncomfortable (*ibid*: 119).

and suggests that

> '…too often we drain the life out of our research through our prose—the very life that made the research possible in the first place. The bone and blood of experience is laid down in black and white on the page—the flesh becomes word and we lose all of our senses. We become the brutish colonizer, demanding our readers to learn our language, to conform to an intransigent academic style that privileges intellectual over emotional commitment (Sharman, 2007, 119).

Whilst I am motivated by Sharman's rally to embrace emotional commitment, to write with 'dramatic form so as to produce an experience in which others can participate' (*ibid*), as a novice, researching within an explicit backdrop of 'the aim of ethnographic investigation is to find the general within the particular' (Hammersley, 2001: 16), I remain

deeply unclear as to how to proceed, and deeply wary of being able to produce anything that Rapport suggests can be seen as 'excellent science':

> 'What characterises the professional anthropologist, in short, is not something counter-intuitive so much as super-intuitive; an anthropologist at home in Britain has the potential to make quite excellent science out of his or her everyday commonsensical habits of querying, interpreting, empathizing with and ironizing sociocultural milieux' (Rapport, 2000b: 8).

If this is the case, how does one determine the qualities of being, or define notions of 'super-intuitive', when such a process remains a deeply individualistic interpretation of the same event? For example Rapport in The Body of the Village Community introduces us to 'Mary' and goes on to 'expound her views' he does not for the most part quote Mary, but tells us about her:

> 'In short, for Mary the arrival of the offcomers has made the otherness of the Church into something blatant, aggressive, even threatening. For if she does not now expressly support the coffee-mornings, and if she does not go about her Sunday farmwork quietly and unobtrusively, then far from respecting her hard work and her belief in it, far from appreciating her farm schedule and its demands, the churchgoers are likely to boycott her milk-round and threaten her business survival' (2000a: 300)

This passage to me appears highly problematic. The language reinforces moralistic judgements of others whose motivations or actual feelings we cannot be sure of, even if we are in situate, interwoven within the intricacies of dialogue, embodied communication

and context. Rapport makes a statement 'far from respecting her hard work', suggesting an ability to determine the motivations and assumptions behind people's reactions and responses to Mary. Thus the 'churchgoers' are identified and judged as 'not being respectful' of Mary's hard work. These are a group of individual churchgoers, whose connections, judgements and assumptions about Mary I would suggest, are fluid and changing within any given context. Again as a novice I am left pondering the production of theories, of 'knowledge' drawn from such a generalist perspective (Rapport & Overing, 2003: 25). How is our anthropological understanding of difference enhanced through the perpetuation of moralistic judgments of others? I fully engage with Rapport as he explicitly espouses the notion that

> 'The forms of sociocultural life are matters of creation, negotiation and contestation by (any number of) individuals who come together by way of them. Precisely how and what is interpreted in them is an individual matter, and, at least initially, a private one (Rapport, 2000a: 11),

however, in the passage about Mary he nonetheless appears to me to write as though interpretations are knowable by the 'other', and as Cohen

> '…states the issue badly: our experience of the frequency of misunderstanding and miscommunication among people who believe they know each other well should alert us to the extreme difficulty of interpreting correctly other people's meanings and intentions' (2002: 326).

Following Alfred Korzybski in Wilson, I would suggest this is a somewhat inevitable downfall of 'the historical logic of Aristotelian philosophy' as embedded in Standard

English (Wilson, 2000) which tends to carry an association of stasis with every ‘is’. Alfred Korzybski proposed in 1933, in Science and Sanity that we abolish the "is of identity" from the English language, and in 1949, D. Bourland Jr. proposed the abolition of all forms of the words "is" or "to be" and the Bourland proposal (English without "isness") he called E-Prime, or English-Prime (*ibid*). Thus ‘John is unhappy and grouchy’ becomes in E-Prime ‘John appears unhappy and grouchy in the office’. In the first example a "metaphysical" or Aristotelian formulation in Standard English becomes an operational or existential formulation when rewritten in English Prime (*ibid*). The implicit ‘constraint’ of using E-Prime then may facilitate a cautious approach towards ones perceptions and the susceptibility to judgements when writing (Wilson, 2000).

Marshall Rosenberg (2005) goes further, suggesting that our common language is developed on and consistently reinforces notions of a ‘domination culture’ whereby moralistic judgements of others permeate our day-to-day communication. Rosenberg sees conflict inevitable within such language and argues instead for a focus upon observation underpinned by an awareness of the feelings and needs that generate moralistic judgment. Rosenberg argues that there is a simple way (in principal accessible for everyone), of communicating and of entering into encounters with people that are different in a way that reduces the possibility for conflict if one stays connected to observation, feelings, needs and requests (*ibid*).

I explore these issues of language, writing, style, the deep propensity to lose the individual perspective in generalisations, and the questioning of the production of ‘knowledge’ then as a prelude to my attempt to write up my own experiences of ‘doing’ fieldwork amongst some of the local people of Glandwr and as a cautionary principle to underpin my reflections, ideas and conclusions. The essence of my research was to try

and hear the feelings and needs of people within the conflict and emotion that has arisen through the proposal for a local eco-development scheme. Implicit in this intention is the wish to avoid moralistic thinking and judgements about my experiences and concurrently to be able to write up my experiences in a way that has some meaning and value to all concerned, to be able to make a contribution that supports understanding and new awareness. As I attempt to negotiate this intention within the construct of producing a piece of academic work, and the inevitability of my own 'cultural conditioning' I remain uncertain as to how best I may fulfil this task.

V HEARING WHAT'S BEHIND 'NO' TO LAMMAS

Illustration 5 Image from the Dim Lammas web page

Whilst local opposition may be an inevitable part of any new proposed housing or general development scheme within a particular locale (Farming Today this week, 19th July 2008), Lammas is a unique and innovative scheme that hopes to construct low-impact dwellings from timber, cob and straw bales to be built on a Greenfield site (Pickerill & Maxey, 2007: 18). Popular perceptions often mark earth-sheltered eco homes as 'hippy' and the potential development of such 'hobbit' homes within a middleclass rural village could be experienced as 'matter out of place' (Douglas, 1966). The Lammas cooperative itself aspires to change this perception of low-impact developments as simply 'hippy dwellings': founder Paul Wimbush states, 'We want normal (sic) people to come around and say, "I could live like that" – they've got TV's and computers and they aren't toiling in the mud' (Barkham, 2007). For Lammas the scheme is not about opting out of society and there is a strong intention to take an integrated approach with a determination to contribute to the local community (Pickerill, 2006: 2). Given the unique and innovative nature of the scheme local residents have been faced with a very broad range of possible issues, challenges and questions in reflecting on their concerns in relation to Lammas.

Initial reading of some of the reports about Lammas (*ibid*) suggested that some of the concerns of the people of Glandwr centred on seemingly practical issues ranging from increased traffic to changes in the landscape for example. In my research proposal I suggested that underlying these concerns were possibly strong feelings associated with fear of change and a need for continuity and community cohesiveness. My fieldwork experience has revealed a complex web of different and varying feelings in relation to the scheme. It is clear that my earlier thoughts deeply over-simplified the experiences of the people I shared and connected with and listened to. The following statements emerged throughout my conversations with a number of different people and noted in my fieldwork diary over the course of my fieldwork. They are listed in no particular order and aim simply at this stage to give a general over-view as to the range of thoughts and feelings that emerge as a 'no' to Lammas.

> '…no-one came round to visit individually just to talk to people and explain what they were wanting to do' (p 6).
>
> 'Did Lammas write Policy 52 – there is a lot of mis-information about Policy 52?' (p 155 & 156).
>
> 'Lack of trust about the integrity of the Lammas committee – are they making a profit at the expense of naïve smallholders' (p 158)?
>
> 'The principle of the thing, why should they get permission when we can't' (p 158)?
>
> 'What happens if it fails' (p 147)?
>
> 'Who will control the campsite, who will monitor whether it is used correctly – what will happen if people come and stay and cause problems' (p 147)?

‘Do they know about animal passports and the levels of paperwork involved in moving animals’ (p 157)?

‘…can tell from the plans that they don’t know all the regulations…’(p 156.)

‘Will the site become a Brownfield site if it doesn’t work’ (p 147)?

‘What about the loss of a good food-producing farm’ (p 155)?

‘…independent experts needed, not people connected with Lammas, why haven’t they called in the soil association for them to do a report on the land’ (p 145)?

‘What happen to the shepherds and his rights’ (p 158)?

What will happen to the trees that have been recently planted along the drive up to the farm’ (p 147)?

‘…people will need cars in order to live there, more than they suggest. Work and school needs will require more than one car per family unit…’(p 74).

‘This can’t be done. You can’t live off five acres’ (p 158).

‘…the precedents that are being set…’(p 147).

‘…lack of general information, respect for local people…’(p 148).

‘Do they think the locals are just country bumpkins that can be walked all over’ (p 156)?

‘…don’t want to be preached at about sustainability issues, it is peoples own concern too…’(p 148).

‘Thoughts about the web site where they say they are going to the Welsh Assembly with ‘our planning’ officer, gives a different impression than what the local people have felt’ (p 6)

‘…acknowledging the desire for sustainability, but also the difficulty of heating homes and having enough food…’(p 7).

‘…fear of reduced house prices…loss of fifty thousand pounds anecdotally…’(p 8).

‘You can’t make a living from 5 acres…’(p 11).

‘…fear of second Tipi Valley…’(p 9).

‘Concern about security in the village, right now it is a really safe place and people can still leave things unlocked, the concern that if something should happen that locals would automatically blame Lammas, even if this wasn’t true, the impact within the village and building bridges would be difficult…(p 79).

‘…maybe not enough was done to give information, someone should have come into the village and talk to individuals and then asked, would you like to come and see the site and meet some of the people’ (p 79)?

‘…people imagining homes made from tarps etc…’(p 79).

‘…concern re Tony Wrench, he did his without planning, these are people who do things outside of the normal rules…’(p 79).

‘Planning did not do enough to let people know, more than a small notice was needed, they should have come down with the planning officer so that the planning department could explain policy 52, what on earth is Policy 52’ (p 77)?

‘…if you want to bring about change it takes two years’ (p 76).

‘…a need for more clear information, silence is a very dangerous thing, imaginations can run riot, information can act to empower people’ (p 75).

‘…if bridges not built equals possible problems later…’(p 75).

‘Lammas manipulating planning people – they know how to…’(p 154).

‘…sad, the project not handled well in terms of coming into the village’ (p 80).

‘…might be people living in buses, with Chimneys sticking out - lack of knowledge about what Policy 52 allows (p 77).

‘…too big – nobody has asked if this would be okay, or if we would mind (p 2).

‘…little connection from Lammas that hasn’t been felt as condescending or inappropriate and not open…’(p 5).

‘…the plot is not viable, questions about the way the land faces, written in the plans as south facing, but it’s not…’(p 6).

‘…no real concerns at first, but evolved through lack of good connections and communication and honesty…’(p 7).

‘…some people fear that Lammas will be full pot smoking hippies that don’t work’ (p 58)

‘…local surveys indicate around ninety per cent of local people against it…’(p 7).

‘…this beautiful food producing farm will be turned into a mud bath…’(p 11 & 156).

‘…if this gets permission what will happen in Pembrokeshire? So many more will come…’(p 155).

‘…weather, a big problem in this area, not like other areas of Pembrokeshire…(p 154).

‘…you can’t live the “good life”, it was a comedy programme…(p 155).

What is clear is that any sense of opposition to Lammas is a highly individually shaped and felt experience (Laing, 1967: 15 & Milton, 2002: 148) rather than any simple generic response of some members of a community confronting difference or change. Whilst there are questions that can be readily answered, for example the shepherd presently using the land for grazing will receive financial compensation, some statements are suggestive of feelings of frustration and indignation that may be arising from needs for respect and consideration, or feelings of concern arising from a need for trust and honesty (Rosenberg, 2005). Inevitably issues of communication, lack of information or mis-information and confusion form a significant part of the concerns expressed and have thus contributed to the levels of conflict underpinned by individual emotional responses that intrinsically shape the concerns and affect the outcome of any attempt to clarify details or fully hear any concerns (Svasek, 2005: 2). Lammas have made sincere efforts to share and communicate their vision through public meetings and a highly detailed web site (www.lammas.org), and have attempted to address any concerns that have arisen in the local community, however it is evident that many people have not gained the information or answers they might need in order to give insight or aid reassurance. It is clear that attempting to meet the needs of a myriad of voices poses significant challenges for any group or project. Part of the difficulty would appear to be that of disseminating the right information to people who have a need to know or understand, and ensuring that the message given out is the message that is heard (Rosenberg, 2005). This is inevitably a two way process.

It seems relevant here to contextualise some of the issues raised within the broader context of development proposals as a whole. I would suggest that a significant proportion of the statements listed above could be raised as concerns in relation to any

proposal for a development scheme, especially a scheme to be sited near a residential area. Issues connected with loss of, changes in and effects on landscape, the need for communication, trust in relation to planning laws and the integrity of the system that allows planning applications, discomfort experienced through imagining a 'precedent' may be being set by a given scheme, potential 'profiteering' at the expense of others, lack of local knowledge about planning laws and regulations, issues of control, safety, the need to feel that reliable 'expert' opinion is taken into account when a proposal is considered, insufficient information for those that need it, the need to have a voice and be heard in relation to concerns felt, lack of trust or knowledge about a given scheme and issues in relating to accommodating people who appear to represent 'difference' or diversity (Upreti & Van De Horst 2004, Hubbard, 2005, & Pendall, 1999).

This begs the question then as to what extent this research is simply about a more general question in relation to what happens when people are asked to potentially accommodate a change in their environment, specifically one 'at their doorstop'. Clearly there are multiplicities of issues that arise and are enacted at the very human face-to-face level, as well as within the context of changing political and cultural priorities, environmental issues, legislation, and planning policies when a development scheme is proposed. Specific to this particular scheme then, from the statements listed, are issues related to the aims and aspirations of Lammas, reflected in a concern that Lammas are simply ideological about the way they envisage living, lack of clarity about the planning policy 52, concern about people building outside of the law, a concern about whether Lammas have a real understanding as to the rules and regulations regarding the keeping and moving of animals, an initial propensity to generalise about the qualities within people who might choose to live in eco-dwellings, and a need for

acknowledgement and respect for the different ways people chose to engage with predicted environmental change. I would suggest that these are all issues that may be possible to talk about in ways that could create better understanding and minimise feelings of conflict and anxiety. In my experience, as I witnessed some of the connections and conversations made at the last planning committee meeting I attended, it felt apparent to me that there was scope for developing relationships. One person from Dim Lammas commented at the meeting – referring to Paul's wife – 'why didn't she come round to talk with us – I really like her', and two people invited her round to their homes for coffee.

In essence, what stood out for me both as heard specific comments and a sense of the implicit within general conversations was a feeling of sadness and frustration in the way the concept of Lammas was first communicated in the village. There are a number of people within the village that I spoke to who communicated to me that they were positive about the Lammas development and others who shared with me that they had neutral feelings, however a common thread remained, that of the need for clearer communication and personal individual and authentic contact from Lammas at a very early stage. Some people suggested that if one or two people had come round knocking on doors with an implicit willingness to give scope for people to think about, raise and discuss their feelings and concerns in relation to the project as a whole this, they thought would have been a beneficial way of starting to negotiate change and build connections and relationships between the local people and Lammas. I would again suggest that such a request would likely be echoed within any number of a group of individuals being asked to consider a new development scheme within a given area. Whilst a clear desire for 'better communication' has been expressed, it is also apparent

that the way we choose to communicate can help to both forge and strengthen or antagonise and diminish relationships (Rosenberg, 2005), that if some had come round to 'visit individually just to talk to people and explain what they were wanting to do' (Shaw, 2008: 6), this may or may not have been done in a way that was able to meet the needs of different individuals and thus reduce tension and conflict.

A further issue has been raised for me as I have reflected upon this process, that intertwined within the need for communication is I suggest an implicit awareness of the importance of 'place', where our relationship to 'place' is recognised as a 'critical element of our lived experiences' (Manzo & Perkins, 2006: 336). Such an approach recognises the

> '…unique qualities and meanings of the specific physical setting of the community [acknowledging that] our thoughts, feelings and beliefs about our local community places –what psychologist call "intra-psychic" phenomena – impact our behaviours towards such places, thus influencing whether and how we might participate in local planning efforts' (*ibid*).

Acknowledged here are the affective bonds to places that can inspire action 'because people are motivated to seek, stay in, protect, and improve places that are meaningful to them' (*ibid*: 347). Manzo and Perkins go on to argue that

> '…place attachment, place identity and sense of community can provide a greater understanding how neighbourhood spaces can motivate ordinary

residents to act collectively to preserve, protect, or improve their community and participate in local planning processes (*ibid*).

Whilst Manzo and Perkins write from the perspective of wanting to enable and encourage planners to perceive the nature and importance of place attachments and the impact this has on why people resist or support change efforts, I propose that this is an important concept to be considered here as well as within any new development schemes that are created and proposed. As Manzo and Perkins state:

> 'Community psychologists address community development, empowerment, and the social capital created by aggregates of people, but focus less on individual experience or place –based theories. Planners and community designers, while focusing on place, tend to examine neighbourhood-level dynamics and macro-structural forces –for example the political-economy –and do not often look at personal experiences of place and attachment. But all together, all of these perspective can provide a rich, holistic understanding of how to create and develop successful communises' (2006: 347).

Here then again is the acceptance of personal individual experience and feelings as integral to the negotiation of process and change within 'place'. That one may more readily foster participation by 'tapping into' the emotional bonds to place, that feelings about 'place' can be at the root of reactions that contribute to entrenched conflict and a negative response to a proposed development scheme (*ibid*). Such a concept for me personally resonates as completely evident, yet nonetheless at this junction I lack clarity

as to how to suggest these ideologies are enacted at a practical applied level. This especially so within development projects that are no doubt already constrained by competing forces and demands and where envisioning the possibility to encompass the 'community' at the level of the individual may be judged as a luxury that cannot be afforded (Manzo & Perkins, 2006: 347). As Manzo and Perkins caution however, there are many unseen costs of not engaging at the level individual experience and feelings (*ibid*).

VI COMMUNITY, IDENTITY AND CHANGE

At the outset conjecture within my research proposal proffered 'a fear of change alongside a need for continuity and community cohesiveness' as possibly underpinning anti Lammas sentiments. Equally I questioned whether opposition to Lammas was expressive simply of a conflict in ideologies and perceptions of lifestyle. In practice fear, concepts of 'community' or change, ideologies, identity and notions of lifestyle resonate as deeply individualistic; there is no one 'objective reality' in relation to these abstractions (Lysaght, 2005: 128). From the beginnings of my connections with people within Glandwr it became quickly apparent that my initial thinking had suffered severely from sweeping generalisations at many levels, as outlined in my previous chapter. Rapport suggests this is not uncommon:

> '…generalisation, 'impersonalisation', the conceiving, knowing and phrasing of the world and its features in terms which deny or devalue the individual, the particular and the personal in favour of the collective, the general, the impersonal, is ubiquitous. Where the discourse concerns folk constructing of academic, lay or expert […] there seems to be a common resort to the impersonalisation of generalisation' (1997: 12).

My thought processes have perhaps inevitably led me to explore aspects of 'community' and change alongside notions of identity and the basis of collective action. My experiences within Glandwr have certainly resonated as being part of a 'community', with people sharing social ties and cultural values that I both perceived, and heard explicitly

shared in conversation, as contributing to individual feelings of 'well-being' (Fog Olwig, 2002). The notion of 'community' however, is an enigmatic concept. Following Fog Olwig (2002) I would subscribe to the notion of 'community', or as she suggests 'shared fields of belonging', as imagined and shaped by individuals and collectivities, where personal inter-relationships alongside the sentiments and feelings generated, shaped and shared by the larger collective continue to maintain a fluid, dynamic process. Or more simply as Cohen suggests, 'community' is 'a way of designating that *some*thing is shared among a group of people (2002: 169 *italics in original*). This perceptible sense of 'community' among the people I met with, who were always welcoming and increasingly accepting of me, strengthened for me as my fieldwork progressed. I discerned this as result of the deeper connections forged through 'shared experiences, relationships and practices […] which were felt, embodied and "emplaced"' (Amit, 2002: 15).

Acknowledging then an appreciable, yet indefinable sense of the community I was immersed in, I want to explore the suppositions in relation to notions of identity and collective identity and action. My research proposal aimed to try to hear the feelings and needs of those who choose to engage in this particular collective identity. It is here that one may begin an exploration into what is it that has contributed to some people feeling strongly against the Lammas development, whilst others in the area would welcome the scheme (Milton, 2002). Dim Lammas comprises individuals that have 'hooked up' their individual selves to a broader collective group that opposes Lammas yet that group also accommodates the idiosyncrasies and demands of individual selfhood (Baumeister et al, 2000: 239). Elements of self and identity inevitably inform individual choice, feelings and motivations alongside a need for the expression of

autonomy and agency, and identity is considered an integral part of the development of a collective action group. Klandermans and de Weerd tell us 'that identity, injustice, and agency are three crucial concepts of the social psychology of protest' (2000: 68), whilst concurrently they concede that how the identity component is conceptualised and operationalised remains unclear and for the most part merely theorised with little empirical work from which to draw (2000). Gecas also points us to consider notions of identity as a basis for understanding groups:

> 'The concept of identity has become a fertile ground for understanding collective behaviour, personal experience, and the relationship between the self and society' (2000: 93).

Thus whilst notions of identity and how identity is shaped and expressed may be obvious considerations in relation to the individuals placing themselves within the collective identity of Dim Lammas, the concept of identity itself, as concerned in principle with who or what one is, remains a highly ambiguous notion which thus gives rise to a number of diverse meanings (Gecas, 2000: 93). Given this and within the relatively limited scope of this research then, focusing in detail upon notions of self and identity in theoretical terms as an aspect of opposition to Lammas would I suggest provide little insight into, or provide for the possibility of, acknowledging the emotions, conflict and anxiety aroused when meeting imposed change within a community.

It is clear that the individuals within Glandwr that have come together to form a distinctive 'group', an 'us': Dim Lammas, not 'them': Lammas (Bauman, 2001: 12) do so

from within a given shared social, cultural, political, economic and environmental context. This 'us', at the simplest level are people who are saying 'no' to the Lammas proposal, whilst the reasons that people are saying 'no' remain multifarious. My personal experience of Dim Lammas has been for the most part 'imagined' (McBeath & Webb: 1997: 255). I was told and have read about large numbers, in the ranges of sixty plus people that attended meetings; I have been informed that up to ninety percent of the village declared that they were against the proposal. I attended the planning committee alongside what I would guess was about a group of twenty people that may have identified themselves as Dim Lammas. I met with individuals in the village who positioned themselves as Dim Lammas and most often I met with a small group of four people all identifying themselves as Dim Lammas. Thus I have a clear 'sense' of a 'group', an affective sense of 'fellow-feeling'; an 'emotional/'feeling strand of solidarity' (*ibid*) expressed in opposition to Lammas. Dim Lammas then for me mostly represents a statement through which to unite, within which a number of individuals chose to place themselves at different times for very different, and again from personal experience, seemingly very fluid and changing reasons. This stated the group clearly had agency and were successful in actively affecting the outcome of the first planning hearing by rallying a great deal of support from people to write letters to the planning department requesting that the Lammas proposal be turned down.

What I would like to consider here then is the ways in which the Glandwr 'community' responded to this proposed and 'enforced' change, which perhaps may be equally reflective of other 'communities' facing change through a development proposal. Clearly the Lammas development scheme represented a significant potential disruption within the area of Glandwr, both to the established social networks and relationships and

to the environment as a whole. As news of the plans filtered through into the village, from what people have shared with me in the fieldwork endeavour and which has been outlined in the previous chapter, I am suggesting that a felt sense of a lack of communication, a lack of knowledge, potential misunderstandings alongside many feelings stimulated when people imagined what impact the development may have on the 'community' became the motivation for a number of individuals to come together to initiate 'action', to exert some kind of active, collective response (Baumeister, et al, 2000).

Dim Lammas clearly denotes a collective identity, a 'space' in which to encompass all those who say 'no' to Lammas. Whilst the motivations for those to identify themselves within the Dim Lammas group remain intrinsically personal and varied, the collective identity, which Klandermans and de Weerd argue is a pre-requisite for collection action (2000), is beautifully simple. Whatever individuals have been saying 'no' to, from my experiences I believe that for some at least this 'no' is not fixed, that for some there is a burgeoning sense of the possibilities of being open to both aspects of the Lammas scheme, and the recognition of the potential connections that could be made with some of the prospective Lammas residents. One resident commented '...well, if they can do this, then we will all be up there won't we, to find out their secret (F in Shaw, 2008). And some individuals have expressed a sense of acceptance along with the commitment to get on, that if Lammas do get permission to be developed then '…we will just get on with it, won't we' (Shaw, 2008)!

Inevitably the 'community' of Glandwr I would suggest now both implicitly and explicitly encompasses Lammas, the network of social boundaries and relationships have been

irrevocably altered: that change has already occurred and continues. The village have been the focus of media attention, research within the area focusing on businesses and environment, planning processes and reports, along with my own 'intervention' within the 'community'. Dialogue and connections between local people have also changed as alliances were drawn in relation to who was either for or against Lammas and friendships and relationships have had to meet the discomfort of differing views in relation to Lammas (Shaw, 2008). Whether Lammas is eventually given permission to be developed or not, the effects of the proposal are nonetheless fully embedded within the local 'community' and will continue to have impact within the community.

The experience for me then, has been one of incongruity, of sensing the reality of a social action group whilst in practice not experiencing the group as a 'whole'. Of hearing the fluidity of people's views and feelings about Lammas meander and change in response and reaction to day-to-day events, new information, personal reflection and differing life priorities. This brings me back to grappling with exactly what did I find in the process of undertaking fieldwork here other than a number of individuals who had shared, albeit different, concerns in relation to the Lammas proposal? My reflections bring me firmly to focus on two aspects: that of the individual (Milton, 2002 & Ingold 2000) and communication processes (Rosenberg, 2005 a). I am left tussling with quiet speculation as to whether coming back to individual feelings and needs and a communication process that implicitly supports this would create the environment in which people's needs to be heard, respected and considered for example, may really pave the way to negotiate and accommodate difference and change in a way that reduces conflict and anxiety. Rosenberg has developed a communication approach he calls Non-Violent Communication (NVC), that he suggests can be of real benefit.

> ‘NVC guides us to reframe the way we express ourselves and listen to others by focusing our consciousness on four areas: what we are observing, feeling and needing and requesting’ (2003: 12, for an example of such dialogue see Appendix ii).

Feelings and needs clearly change, often within moments. NVC encourages a willingness to stay with ‘what’s alive’ in each moment. In doing it aims to foster listening, respect and empathy and engender the possibility to respond, rather than react, in a way that supports building effective relationships, both personal and in the wider world.

As an ‘academic’ response I am guessing that this may appear perhaps as all too simplistic and ‘woolly’ (Hills, 2006: 142). I am mindful that much work across the anthropological academic discipline of late has embraced emotion and feelings (Milton, 2002, & Milton & Svasek, 2005 & Rapport: 1997) and has focused upon ‘… juxtaposing the individual to society in order to examine the nature of their relationship and our assumptions about it (Cohen, 2002: 324). Equally Rapport’s ‘…resolute insistence that the individual and individual creativity must stand at the centre of cultural interpretation and analysis’ (Cohen, 2002: 324), alongside the acceptance that feelings and ‘emotions are central to the production of ethnography, and vital to the functioning of social life in general’ (Svasek, 2005: 17), suggests such notions are now intrinsic to the anthropological endeavour. Nonetheless, I feel uncertain as to how such notions can be fully considered within the present academic framework. I am somewhat sceptical about the role of theorizing in relation to groups, societies, social ‘issues’, the ‘functions’ of any aspect of social groupings, ‘culture’ and the like as I am suspicious that we have a tendency to look to theories as a response or attempt to ‘solve problem’s’, some of which

may only be identified as a ‘problem’ within a particular socio-cultural milieu. For the most part I would suggest that such theories arise within a ‘cultural’ ideology that stems from and implicitly supports the notion of hierarchical structures and a domination ideology.

To theorize and have acceptance for example, about ‘place attachment’ (Manzo & Perkins, 2006) provides a clear impetus to embrace this concept within a given development project process, yet in essence we still have to meet ‘communities’ as numbers of individuals at which point theories may hold little ‘sway’. Does not the theory of place attachment simply alert us to what we might already know anecdotally; that people have strong feelings about all aspects of their lives including where they live. Does place attachment theory then, as may any other theory, simply point us in the direction of the need to meet people at the level of emotion and feelings, and for Rosenberg (2005 a), the level of meeting ‘needs’?

What became apparent to me through this fieldwork is that feelings and needs of the individuals under the Dim Lammas banner were often also shared by individuals of Lammas. For example, when I was with Paul Wimbush I shared that some people of Dim Lammas had talked about their concerns in relation to the proposed campsite (Shaw, 2008), how would it be monitored and how would they prevent people from staying for long periods for example? I experienced what I perceived as Paul empathising with these thoughts, that Paul was clear that these were issues to be grappled with and find solutions for. What I guessed I was hearing here was that both Lammas and Dim Lammas had shared needs such as security, safety, clarity and harmony.

My reflections then propel me to focus primarily on communication and language. The dominant language perpetuates a moralistic judgmental frame of mind with which we engage with the world that serves to maintain notions of 'right' and 'wrong', 'good' and 'bad' (Rosenberg, 2005 b). Such language is

> '…rich with words that classify and dichotomize people and their actions […] we judge others and their behaviour while preoccupying ourselves with who's good, bad, normal, abnormal, responsible, irresponsible, smart, ignorant etc. (Rosenberg, 2005 a: 16)

and which also perpetuates the concept of 'isness': thus 'Joe is a communist, the universe is a giant machine' (Wilson, 2000), and perhaps more pertinently people have 'place attachments', or 'reciprocity […] is essential for social cohesion (Simmel in Rapport, 2002: 320). I am left questioning theories that arise from and within a 'cultural conditioning' that prioritises domination ideology. When we look to accommodate difference are we not in part asking ourselves to recognise the propensity to moralistic judgements. Is it the espousing of a particular theory here that perhaps future Lammas style projects could adopt and utilise as part of the planning process to minimise conflict that I 'should' be striving to find. Or do I need to simply focus on my fieldwork experiences and personal awareness, which I interpret as people really wanting to be heard, to have their feelings and needs acknowledged. In essence then I am tentatively suggesting, based on what arises from my fieldwork, is that a communication process and the development of language such as NVC that eschews moralistic judgements and instead focuses on an intention to connect with the 'other' and gain understanding as to their feelings and needs may have served the local community of Glandwr and Lammas

well. I do so appreciating that such a notion may appear as simplistic, yet within the context of personally striving to develop such communication skills and experiencing the benefits of trying to relate in this way.

VII THE BROADER CONTEXT AND THE ROLE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Underpinning this research project has been a continual personal reflective odyssey in relation to the process of studying as a whole and undertaking a dissertation research project in particular. A myriad of reactions and responses have been stimulated throughout. Thus I have contemplated and questioned the anthropological endeavour and the production of 'knowledge' and contended the efficacy of theories fashioned within a 'cultural construct' that I experience as stemming from and perpetuating a hierarchical domination ideology. Cornett suggests that such musing is integral to a qualitative researcher:

> 'It seem that good inquiry is a reflective process wherein all questions, assumptions, methods and relations are considered grist for the deliberative mill of the researcher. Doubt and uncertain uncertainty are the fuel that drives the research. […] This messiness, soul searching, and sharing with the research community is certainly useful, in part, because it reveals that research is a journey that, while guided by the formal theory of research canons, is by nature fluid and troublesome…' (1995: 123).

My personal explorations have also deeply been embedded within the wider context: for me this process is on-goingly haunted by the enigmatic predictions in relation to issues such as global climate change, global oil depletion, and global economic depression: that as humans we face 'near inevitable environmental and social catastrophes' (Homer-Dixon, 2006, Fields, 2009, Lovelock, 2007, & Armstrong, 2009). This has been an

interesting and troubling juxtaposition for me as I have attempted to navigate my way through the academic process. The predictions in relation to changes in our environment, both 'natural' and cultural' and the social impact of such predicaments, at times generate feelings of deep sadness, despair and disempowerment in me; a lack of agency to really 'do' anything in the face of such potential enormous changes (Macy & Young Brown, 1998), alongside questioning prioritising an academic endeavour against this backdrop. Like Milton, I remain curious about

> '…how human beings, as individual organisms, come to think and feel as they do, not only about nature and natural things, but about whatever they encounter in their environment' (2002: 6).

Such deliberations have had a particular relevance here for me inasmuch that the Lammas proposal is a direct practical response of some individuals grappling with these wider issues. As Paul Wimbush argues:

> 'Scientists around the world are describing the time that we are now in as one of "global emergency". This work has been highlighted by the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change). In addition to this we are experiencing the economic implications of ever-dwindling natural resources, from oil to metals to timber and the ever-rising costs of food. 'Business as usual' is recognized as simply not an option for our society. All of these factors serve to highlight the relevance, viability and importance of innovative sustainable projects in pioneering sustainable lifestyles. (2009: 14).

Thus the impetus to create Lammas in part has been an attempt to provide one pathway towards more sustainable living (Pickerill & Maxey, 2007). Wimbush says he feels:

> '…called to create something more. I'm working with a group of people to establish a Low Impact Settlement here in Pembrokeshire. So what is this thing called low impact? What does that mean? Well I guess to me low impact means to live truly sustainably, so that your lifestyle can be maintained over generations. So that instead of using or consuming the earth's resources, you're actually adding to the earth's resources in terms of biodiversity and soil fertility and so on…' (2007).

A parallel has emerged for me then through my connections with Dim Lammas and Lammas. Whilst my aims within the research were to hear feelings and needs, and to give voice to people within Dim Lammas, it has become clear to me that Lammas themselves are a deeply marginalized group who are inevitably challenging the boundaries of debates in relation to autonomy and sustainability (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2008). Such groups are a traditional pre-occupation within anthropology (Herzfeld, 2001: 119). Thus acknowledging that whilst I may be stretching the research criteria apropos my proposal, I nonetheless feel impelled to incorporate here a brief exploration of the territory that Lammas navigates in their attempt to enact agency within the present hegemonic ideology.

Perceptual barriers, whereby Low impact dwellings can be seen as 'ghettoised subcultural spaces' (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2008), are exacerbated by planning policies that implicitly enact a dominant socio-political agenda often based upon an economic

model (Reeves, 2005). Other models for planning polices such as physical, environmental or social for example, prioritize different assumptions from which to make decisions, and thus inform different assumptions about the people, communities and environments in which planning is enforced (*ibid*). Emerging from within dominant hegemonic discourse such assumptions are apt to reinforce particular 'perceived' social 'norms' (*ibid*).

Lammas operates as a collective with a non-hierarchical committee and broader membership base with the aim of establishing an autonomous residential community that provides for all its own needs. It offers examples of self-managed socially accessible communities that challenge the norms of house building and pricing, and the existing planning system (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2008) and as such Lammas clearly challenge dominant values. Pickerill and Chatterton embrace Lammas within the concept of 'autonomous geographies':

> '…those spaces where people desire to constitute noncapitalist, egalitarian and solidaristic forms of political, social, and economic organization through a combination of resistance and creation' (2006: 730 & Chatterton & Pickerill, 2008).

Whilst Lammas want to create a sustainable lifestyle and to live in both affordable and ecological housing they want to do this 'within' the planning system, as opposed to going directly onto the land and building and seeking retrospective permission. The present UK planning approach is based upon sustainable growth whereby sustainable communities are seen as

> '…meeting the diverse needs of existing and future generations, their children and other users and contributing to a high quality of life and providing opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources [and] enhance the environment (Egan in Reeves, 2005: 64).

I suspect that the ideology of such discourse in practice is interpreted in a myriad of ways that I would suggest implicitly incorporate individual 'cultural conditioning'. Thus whilst the Lammas project came into being as a result of the emerging Policy 52 which was introduced to allow for the possibility of low impact developments and to allow people create sustainable lifestyles from the land (Wimbush, 2009), Lammas have nonetheless experienced the planning process as 'demoralizing, misleading and unduly delayed' (*ibid*).

My personal experience in attending the planning committee left me feeling frustrated. My from me experience there I interpreted the planning process as little equipped to meet a development scheme like Lammas, either at the level of being able to fully listen to and accommodate peripheral groups or innovative projects or to be able to fully support the local community and facilitate debate and dialogue. The Lammas committee themselves have been left questioning the planning system's ability and intention, notwithstanding the introduction of Policy 52 to support innovative sustainable proposals (Wimbush, 2009). Their request is for a

Illustration 6 Lammas 'wrapped up in red tape'

> '…review of the planning system so that sustainability be truly placed at its heart and a more flexible, open and empowering approach be adopted when dealing with grassroots and community based innovative projects (Wimbush, 2009).

I suspect that here too, sadly, as notions of sustainability, empowerment, grass roots and community remain wholly generalistic and open to very diverse interpretations, that such a request may provide little basis in practice from which to create a meaningful dialogue. I am left pondering about the potential for dialogue and shared understanding if there was a focus on feelings and needs and a language process that supports this (Rosenberg, 2005a), rather than a call to act upon generalization, which generate so many different assumptions. My thought here again is that such an approach is possibly readily dismissed as naive and overly simplistic. I am aware that there remains a propensity within a 'western' context to primacy the intellectual academic venture, prioritizing what is judged to be a 'rational objective' perspective (Rorty, 1995: 35-37) at the expense of emotions and feelings.

This brings me to back to an equally burning consideration throughout both the academic process and in particular my fieldwork, that of the value and role of anthropology and the notion of advocacy, as Kellet asks

> 'Is the role of the anthropologist to try to change the world or to 'merely' understand it? Can (and should) anthropologists act as advocates for the rights of people they study, or does this compromise their objectivity? […] What is anthropology for? Who is it for? (Kellet, 2009: 22)

There were a number of times within my fieldwork that I experienced a sense of being 'in middle ground': of having a broad perspective that accommodated the feelings needs and concerns of both Dim Lammas and Lammas that contributed to me feeling empathy with both perspectives. I have an appreciation of the complexity of feelings and concerns that the Lammas development has stimulated for some of the individuals living within Glandwr, whilst also being able to hear and empathize with the aims of Lammas and what I perceive as their genuine intentions to create a scheme that would fully embrace, contribute to and appreciate the local 'community'. I entered fieldwork with a curious and as far as possible neutral attitude and what has emerged for me is an overview and perspective of both Dim Lammas and Lammas. Such a position raised many questions for me in relation to how I perceived my 'role' and responsibilities.

As I sat and listened I recognized the possible 'inter-mediatory' aspect of my position. I was privy to what I experienced as possible mis-understandings, or simply assumptions drawn through lack of information or clarity, which left me feeling sad, frustrated and confused. What was 'appropriate' to share? I recognized that almost inadvertently I perhaps inevitably brought aspects of both 'sides' to the other. Some of the concerns raised by Dim Lammas with me were new to Lammas, some of the feelings and intentions of Lammas had not be known to Dim Lammas and I found myself 'filtering' aspects to each other as 'natural' within the conversational milieu. I experienced the tension of a real desire to support clarity and understanding, to effectively adopt a mediator perspective, whilst recognizing that was 'not my role'. That the very essence of mediation is an agreed process, with determined parameters that 'both parties' embrace and commit to, and this was not part of an anthropological fieldwork endeavour, nonetheless, I am conscious that my presence in the 'community' did facilitate different dialogues, conversations and understanding than if I had not been there. This was not

about anthropology as advocacy as it is clear that both Dim Lammas and Lammas are effective in gaining a voice and being empowered to act, however I did find myself wanting to advocate on behalf of both to the other.

Thus I was left to grapple with questions in relation to the purpose of anthropology and the nature of 'anthropological knowledge' (Moore, 1996) alongside deliberating if or how my anthropological endeavours could be 'applied' given a personal need for purpose and integrity. Integral to my choice for Dim Lammas as a research project was a need to be engaged with something that I perceived had meaning outside of my own need to complete a research project. In reality this need has not been met. The work I have undertaken is personally driven, not commissioned by Dim Lammas or Lammas and thus in principle the only 'legitimate' audience for this text is within the academic construct in which it has been initiated. Lammas have been supportive of the work and will receive a copy of this text. The people I have been with within Glandwr have not requested to read it, though I will make it available. Thus any 'insight' gained within the context of 'impartial participant observer' may or may not have the opportunity to be 'applied'.

I have what I perceive as insights or awareness that could contribute to facilitating greater understanding between Dim and Lammas and Lammas, yet at this conjecture there is no obvious pathway for me to tread with this. Mindful that I am a novice in these areas, with much to learn and that potentially any insights I may think I have might already have been taken into account. Perhaps my predicament is simply indicative of the continued discussions in relation to applied or academic anthropology. . It is clear that the insights that anthropologists gain can be of huge significance. Scheper-Hughes is highly motivated through her own experience to call for a

> '…new cadre of "barefoot anthropologists" that I envision must become alarmist and shock troupers – the producers of politically complicated and morally demanding text and images capable of sinking through the layers of acceptance, complicity, and bad faith that allow the suffering and the deaths to continue' (1995: 417).

There are many anthropologists who experience the challenges of difference and diversity circumstances that are not 'extreme', where the issues are not of life and death yet contribute to significant levels of anxiety and concern that impact day-to-day life. This brings me back to the role of anthropology. The move to 'applying' anthropological 'knowledge' remains a process within the discipline that itself generates conflict and dispute and historically

> '…applied anthropologists have not only felt invisible, […], but it was made clear to them in no uncertain terms that leading academics of the day had little sympathy with their project to use anthropology to solve problems in the real world' (Pink, 2006: 9).

Whilst the generalizations within this last quote suggest little to me in relation to exactly what the issues have been, and the concept of being able to 'solve problems in the real world' I see as problematic in terms of being potentially goal orientated, nonetheless I believe insight or 'knowledge' gained through an anthropological vista can be of significant practical application (Eriksen, 2006). Anthropological texts frequently enable 'others' perspectives to be seen in a fashion that can generate understanding, rather than confusion or judgment. Here cultural difference may be recognized as not ultimate or essential, instead as:

> '… a second-storey difference – a difference in aesthetic taste – which is epiphenomenal upon a foundational, individual, aesthetic consciousness and creativity' (Rapport, 2005: 204).

As I write the debate in relation to anthropology as applied or academic seems to me to be mute, whether practically and overtly applied the anthropological perspective I would suggest inevitably is 'applied' inasmuch that it impacts the wider sphere, that as a student of anthropology being taught anthropology, anthropological insights clearly affect and change my perspectives and highlight my 'belief' systems. The question then arises as to what extent and how such perspective or insight is enacted or received within the wider context. The people I met during fieldwork are all

> '…individuals making homes for themselves in a changing variety of cultural and social and personal spaces' (Rapport, 2005: 203).

As they do so they meet difference and diversity. The resources we have to grapple with such difference have on the whole I think been coloured by a hegemonic hierarchical domination ideology where such differences are often reduced to dualistic notions of right/wrong, good/bad. From my perspective within fieldwork, whilst such notions permeated the backdrop to conversations, I would suggest that the reality of people's experiences were very fluid. I witnessed what I perceived as

> '…individual consciousness that is responsible on an ongoing basis for formulating a whole diversity of categorical symbolizations. 'Culture' is never static, never coherent, never even consensual – however much fundamentalist

> and totalitarian efforts may be made to force it to be so – because individuals (together and apart) are forever recreating it (Rapport, 2005: 205).

That the voices behind Dim Lammas change; that Dim Lammas are individuals 'together and apart' in practice often renegotiating their individual priorities in relation to Lammas on probably a daily basis.

Whilst anthropological identities (Pink, 2006: 9), and notions about what anthropologists 'should' do or be (Kuznar, 1997: 201) are debated, I find myself returning to the primacy of the individual actor. Perhaps the process is always one of the individual anthropologist meeting his or her self in process. Built upon the foundations laid down by the Social Anthropologists Ethical Guidelines (1999) the roles, responsibilities, boundaries and agency both across the practice and theory of anthropology remain in negotiation within one's self. As I come to the end of this chapter I am left contemplating my personal perceptions in relation to what I have included as the boundaries of my 'role' as anthropologist here. In true reflexive fashion I am attempting to take a step back. Whatever my pre-conceived or recently shaped ideas about my 'role' have been it is clear that I am an individual with agency and as such can determine my own boundaries. I intend to consider now how I may stay engaged with Dim Lammas and Lammas that meets my need to contribute and engage with a project that has the potential for meaning in a wider context than just my own academic commitments.

VIII **CONCLUSION**

My conclusion draws me to reflect upon the anthropological endeavour as focusing upon difference, whilst also attempting to determine what is shared across peoples and 'cultures', what aspects of human life constitute as 'universal' (Eriksen, 2001). Contemporary anthropological analysis has fully embraced the role of feelings and emotions as intrinsic to the anthropological endeavour (Milton & Svasek, 2005). For Rosenberg human 'needs' are universal; that regardless of our differences expressed individually or culturally we all have the same needs to sustain life. Physical needs for air, food, water, and shelter, emotional needs for love, nurturing, fun and care for example. Difference emerges, he argues, in the strategies we develop both individually and culturally to meet these needs, and that it is through the different ways that we attempt to meet our needs that an array of feelings and emotions are stimulated and conflict is likely to emerge (2003).

A member of the Dim Lammas committee has recently conveyed to me:

> 'We are in the throes of Lammas-ing again as they have appealed to the Welsh Assembly and feelings are running high, there is an awful fear that we are going to bear the brunt of a social experiment and desire in certain area of administrations that they would like to be seen to doing something eco' (Shaw 2009).

I feel deeply sad that the levels of anxiety are so strong. Lammas themselves I perceive as open and committed to embracing the perspective of Dim Lammas. Conversations

with individuals within Lammas led me to feel they were genuinely surprised and saddened to hear the levels of anxiety experienced by people within Dim Lammas and would like things to be different. Equally Lammas live with their own levels of anxiety as they try to pursue an innovative venture that is taking huge commitment on every level to follow through. I am suggesting that anxiety has been exacerbated by the role of language and the use of words and that underlying the various emotions are shared needs for both Lammas and Dim Lammas. That both have needs that would include security, safety, understanding, respect, 'community', for example, that these are universal and if one could relate to another from the basis of shared needs, there may be a possibility to more readily negotiate the differing ways to get needs met (Rosenberg, 2005).

Whilst the committee member comments about 'an awful fear', I fully appreciate that to have suggested 'a fear of change', as a primary axis for opposition to Lammas, was a gross reductionism on my part albeit a seemingly colloquially acceptable notion (Rapport, 1997). Resorting to linguistic generalisations belied the uniquely personal lived experience, emotions, feelings and expressions of those people choosing in this moment to stand behind a 'Dim Lammas banner'. Focusing on the notion of 'fear of change' as a motivator for opposition to Lammas may simply have been a poor expression, one that perhaps attempted to act as an umbrella in which to encompass what I perceived as the range of feelings that may arise and which I would suggest many of us could imagine experiencing when confronting change. As I listened to people talking within Glandwr a 'fear' of the changes that Lammas would inevitable bring to the area was not explicitly spoken about. Instead individuals' conversations with me focused more on 'what if' and 'what will happen to' or 'why didn't they' type questions. The focus

on perceived anticipatory problems or areas of concern, what one might imagine happening 'if'...

Such thoughts and questions give little insight as to the feelings experienced within individuals. I do not find this surprising. I would suggest that on the whole that language and communication patterns often perpetuate ideas about rightness and wrongness, rather than focusing on communicating what we are observing, feeling and needing. Thus our language is peppered with words used to classify and dichotomise people and their actions, judging others and their behaviour, or judging ourselves and our own behaviour (Rosenberg, 2003). From my own experience I acknowledge that often when I have encountered people or behaviours that I didn't like or understand, I have often reacted, rather responded, thus I have seen them in terms of being 'wrong', rather than focusing on what I or they were needing.

If I imagined at the beginning of this process that I may have found a definitive 'reason' as to the impetus for some people within the Glandwr area to band together in social action it has been clear for some time that this would not be the case. What I met, was what I often meet in my day-to-day life and interactions, some of the pain and anxiety as diverse and different individuals and groups of individuals attempt to meet, share, embrace and accommodate uniquely differing perspectives and negotiate common ground. The 'no' to Lammas simply emphasises the individual, and the acknowledgement that as individuals we do have a need to be heard (Rosenberg, 2005). In being heard, from my experience, movement and change is possible with a greater ease and less anxiety. In being heard, from my experience, movement and change is possible with a greater ease and less anxiety.

As I reflect on my experiences of fieldwork I am conscious that I would have enjoyed having greater skills with which to support my ability to listen and empathise more fully with the individuals I shared time with. My experiences and consciousness of NVC have deepened over the last few months and I feel sad that this awareness was not more fully available during my fieldwork. In retrospect as I heard statements such as '...don't want to be preached at about sustainability issues, it is peoples own concern too...' (Shaw, 2008: 148), I would hope to be able to connect with this person with a dialogue such as the one outlined in Appendix ii, where I may have the skills to guess at what was the underlying feeling in this statement. Perhaps I might have asked 'are you feeling irritated and annoyed and needing some trust and respect that you also care about sustainability and the environment? Whilst the language may feel a little 'stilted' at this point, it nonetheless may be the beginning of a dialogue that connects and more fully hears what the person is saying in their statement. It may enable the possibility to gain a deeper awareness of what the person is feeling and needing, rather than perhaps to stay in a debate about whether an individual is, or is not, seen to be 'caring' about sustainable living.

I am suggesting developing, practicing and using language that implicitly supports connecting us with observations, feelings, needs and requests, is perhaps one route to reducing anxiety and conflict and to develop inter-connections that support people as they are confronting change and transition. Whilst practising NVC as a language, is I have found, a challenging and difficult endeavour, I have personally witnessed and experienced significant changes in relationships, connections and a capacity to resolve issues that suggest the use of such language is of immense value and can contribute powerfully to overcoming conflict.

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APPENDIX i Letter to Residents

An exploration of the impact of Lammas within

Glandwr and the local area

My name is Katherine Shaw and I am a mature student with the University of Wales Lampeter studying for a degree in Anthropology. As part of my studies I have to undertake a 20,000-word project. My proposal is to consider the impact of Lammas. I hope to gain insight and understanding as to the feelings, needs and experiences of individuals in the process of confronting the possibility of a significant change within their local community.

I have recently had the opportunity to meet with some local residents, however, I would like to talk with as many people as possible and so I am asking if you would be willing for me to visit you at a convenient time to listen to your individual experiences and feelings in relation to Lammas. My contact details are overleaf.

With many thanks,

Continued:

Katherine Shaw

Tel: 01558 650747

07933 743105

E-mail: nc273@lamp.ac.uk

I hope to be staying in or near Glandwr between the 20th and 23rd July and ideally would like to visit with people during this time. If you are happy for me to call by during these dates would you please contact me by telephone or e-mail in order for us to agree a time. Should these dates prove difficult I am also happy to come and visit at other times throughout the summer as can be conveniently mutually arranged.

I would like the opportunity to take notes if appropriate, though I am equally happy to engage in a conversation that is treated anonymously and not recorded in any way. Please be assured that anything shared with me would not be included in my project without first being granted permission to do so by the individuals involved.

APPENDIX ii Excerpt from 'Giving from the heart'

I was presenting Nonviolent Communication in a mosque at Deheisha Refugee Camp in Bethlehem to about 170 Palestinian Moslem men. Attitudes toward Americans at that time were not favorable. As I was speaking, I suddenly noticed a wave of muffled commotion fluttering through the audience. "They're whispering that you are American!" my translator alerted me, just as a gentleman in the audience leapt to his feet. Facing me squarely, he hollered at the top of his lungs, "Murderer!" Immediately a dozen other voices joined him in chorus:"Assassin!" "Child-killer!" "Murderer!"

Fortunately, I was able to focus my attention on what the man was feeling and needing. In this case, I had some cues. On the way into the refugee camp, I had seen several empty tear gas canisters that had been shot into the camp the night before. Clearly marked on each canister were the words "Made in U.S.A." I knew that the refugees harbored a lot of anger toward the U.S. for supplying tear gas and other weapons to Israel.

I addressed the man who had called me a murderer:

I: Are you angry because you would like my government to use its resources differently? (I didn't know whether my guess was correct, but what is critical is my sincere effort to connect with his feeling and need.)

He: Damn right I'm angry! You think we need tear gas? We need sewers, not your tear gas! We need housing! We need to have our own country!

I: So you're furious and would appreciate some support in improving your living conditions and gaining political independence?

He: Do you know what it's like to live here for twenty-seven years the way I have with my family—children and all? Have you got the faintest idea what that's been like for us?

I: Sounds like you're feeling very desperate and you're wondering whether I or anybody else can really understand what it's like to be living under these conditions.

He: You want to understand? Tell me, do you have children? Do they go to school? Do they have playgrounds? My son is sick! He plays in open sewage! His classroom has no books! Have you seen a school that has no books?

I: I hear how painful it is for you to raise your children here; you'd like me to know that what you want is what all parents want for their children—a good education, opportunity to play and grow in a healthy environment . . .

He: That's right, the basics! Human rights—isn't that what you Americans call it? Why don't more of you come here and see what kind of human rights you're bringing here!

I: You'd like more Americans to be aware of the enormity of the suffering here and to look more deeply at the consequences of our political actions?

Our dialogue continued, with him expressing his pain for nearly twenty more minutes, and I listening for the feeling and need behind each statement. I didn't agree or disagree. I received his words, not as attacks, but as gifts from a fellow human willing to share his soul and deep vulnerabilities with me.

Once the gentleman felt understood, he was able to hear me as I explained my purpose for being at the camp. An hour later, the same man who had called me a murderer was inviting me to his home for a Ramadan dinner.

—Marshall B. Rosenberg (Rosenberg 2003: 13-14)

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