CHAPTER 2

Uneven Surfaces

Bodily Engagements with the Postindustrial Wild

Hilary Orange

Michel de Certeau once wrote that: 'Stories about places are makeshift things. They are composed with the world's debris' (1984: 107). Places are also in themselves 'makeshift things', being formed of material provisionalities that have been mixed into cuts, builds, layers and jumbles, forming new connections and separations. In this chapter, I focus on the surfaces of postindustrial land in Cornwall, a southwestern region of the British Isles that was once important for tin and copper mining. Here, as elsewhere, surfaces have formed through the actions of geological, taphonomic and climatic forces, as well as through gravity and the actions of human and other species.

My interest in surfaces is not particularly unique. Alfredo González-Ruibal has pointed out that surfaces have long been of interest to artists, archaeologists, cultural geographers, urban explorers and photographers (2011: 166). A surficial interest is central to Edward Burtynsky's aerial photographs, showing landscape at scale impacted upon by industrialization and a concern with surfaces can also be found in the geographer Tim Edensor's writing on ruined industrial sites. He describes picking his way over the rubble, earth and brick of a ruin in Manchester, England (Edensor 2007: 227) and elsewhere notes that ruined spaces are 'full of random juxtapositions, clutter, obstacles, and numerous pathways' (Edensor 2005a: 834). On ruination, Rodney Harrison has argued that the archaeology of the recent past can usefully serve to shift attention away from the twin archaeological tropes of excavation at

depth and the study of ruination, with emphases on the abandoned, the unused and the dead, to instead look at the living surface (2011: 143–44). In recognizing the agency of humans and nonhumans, he writes on the potentiality of the surface as being 'a physical stratum that contains not only the present, but all its physical and imagined pasts combined' (2011: 154).

I find Harrison's argument persuasive. My research in Cornwall has focused on mining landscapes and my interest has been in how industrial landscapes are lived in and used – creatively, economically and politically in the period after industrial closure. As mining is indelibly linked to the notion of worked ground, it therefore seems entirely appropriate to more deeply consider body-surface interactions. An emphasis on the surface also importantly serves to redress a narrative and representational bias in Cornish heritage. Architectural icons, such as the ruined Cornish engine house and the chimney stack, are widely used as symbols throughout Cornwall to represent the industrial era (Orange 2012: 291; 2019), whereas the stuff underfoot, at times small, chipped, fragmented or merely dust, is part of the same histories of industrialization and deindustrialization, but is more readily overlooked – literally kicked away. While the ruined engine house is a visual icon, dispersed rubble and granite blocks as well as more recognizable industrial features such as copper dressing floors do not appear on the countless postcards that replicate ideas of what Cornish heritage is and is not.

Archaeology of the recent past and more-than-representational research share a common interest in the mundane and subaltern aspects of life (Cadman 2009; McAtackney and Penrose 2016). In this chapter, I will illustrate something of the ebb and flow of everyday life, partly as a rebuke to the notion of abandonment or ruination, by showing how people have variously moved across the surfaces of mines, including venturing just below the surface into mine workings. These areas sit cheek by jowl next to industrial settlements, and the phenomena of everyday routines may seem insignificant, but can nevertheless reveal how life takes shape and changes.

Hayden Lorimer has highlighted the importance of thinking through movement in landscape, the 'shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements' (2005: 84). Tim Ingold's perspective on movement in landscape is also relevant here. In *Being Alive*, he writes of returning to central themes in his anthropological work, of 'life as lived along lines, or wayfaring; the primacy of movement; the nature and constitution of the ground' (Ingold 2011: xii). A focus on movement, he goes on to say, creates a different understanding; rather than static environments, materials and people, the world, and people in the world can be understood in terms of processes of generation (2011: 12).

Joy Parr's work on the bodily adaptations to Canadian megaprojects is also an important touchstone. In *Sensing Changes* (2010), Parr delivers a

convincing case for paying attention to how the body adapts to environmental and technological change, one of her examples focusing on the residents of a new model town who relocated as a group after their former village was drowned by a hydrodam. In the new town, with its treeless environment and more uniform streets designed for motorized transport, residents relied more on their cars. In the old village, walking had been commonplace and ordinary. A mechanic, Joe Roberts, formerly walked to work, but in the new environment, where no one walked, he found that the residents were familiar, but there was no 'togetherness' (Parr 2010: 84). Arguing that people 'make sense' of their environments through their 'sensing bodies' (2010: 12), Parr makes a call for such 'embodied histories' that consider how changing environments and technologies are reflected in changing 'habits and practices' (2010: 3).

An interest in teasing out reciprocal arrangements between the body and the environment can also be seen in more-than-representational writing. Martin Müller writes: 'The relation between humans and their surrounding is thus a two-way street: Humans act as much as they are acted on' (2015: 410). Others have provided case studies that exemplify various aspects of reciprocity in relation to industrial bodies – for instance, Sefryn Penrose reports on the 'body events' that are implicated within industrial to postindustrial transitions from the assembly line to the fitness studio (2013), and Arthur McIvor's discussions on sick and injured bodies, caught up in the slow 'economic violence' of asbestos-related disease, are also relevant (2015).

Much of the content in this chapter is based on material drawn from walking interviews for research on residents' perceptions of the Cornish mining landscape (Orange 2012). Those taking part in the interviews were chosen through a process of snowball sampling, whereby contacts nominated and recruited others to take part in my research. The interviews were carried out in 2008 and 2009, and interviewees came from a variety of backgrounds, including artists, former teachers, retired miners, museum workers, bookshop owners, former policemen and government employees, amongst others. The interviewees chose where to meet as well as the route and the duration of the walk. The walks varied greatly in length, anything from one to four hours. Conversation was informal, although I had certain questions in mind, such as 'what is your earliest memory of this place?' and 'how has this place changed?' Largely, however, conversation took its own course and the narrative was often biographical.

A theme that emerged was of the 'wildness' of the mines in the 1960s and 1970s, and the opportunities for certain bodily experiences, particularly walking, play, resource acquisition, mineral collecting and waste disposal. Emma Waterton writes that 'it is the body that lies at the centre of memories' (2011: 354) and those I interviewed talked and gestured in more-than-representational terms as they described wilder postindustrial landscapes and

their bodily experiences therein. The 'wild', I suggest, captures something of the reciprocity of land and body, and I will explore this aspect further below. Returning to Parr, human bodies are contextually, spatially and temporally specific (2010: 2). Those I interviewed grew up in Cornwall in the 1960s and 1970s, and there is a clear generational tempo to the material that I present in this chapter.

Cornwall

Cornwall is a long peninsula of land located in the far southwest of the United Kingdom, surrounded by sea except to the east, where it borders the county of Devon. The region's mineralogical wealth is due to the eruption of molten granite into the sedimentary mud of slates and shales, known in Cornwall as *killas*, that were laid down and then lifted in the Carboniferous and Devonian periods. A spine of granite runs east to west through the region. In the west, metal veins formed within the fractures of the slowly cooling granite, while in the east, weathering carried ore nearer to the surface. Although tin, copper and arsenic were the principal minerals extracted during the industrial era, other minerals found in Cornwall include lead, zinc, silver, antimony, iron and manganese, together with lesser amounts of tungsten, cobalt, nickel, uranium, baryte, titanium and fluorspar (Barton 1965; Bristow 1993).

By the early eighteenth century, the Cornish mines deepened as surface deposits were depleted. Mining was aided initially by the introduction of gunpowder and then innovations in steam power enabled mine companies to deepen workings and increase production. By the mid-eighteenth century, around 340 mines were in operation in Cornwall, employing some estimated 40,000 people (Rowe 1953; Buckley 2005). Output in copper production peaked in the 1860s and then newly discovered minerals and fast-developing mines, most notably in Chile, South Australia, Michigan and Cuba, caused the copper market to flood and metal prices to crash. Afterwards, tin became Cornwall's principal product, but the markets continued to oscillate. By the 1890s, the situation was so dire that an estimated 200,000 miners and their families had left Cornwall to seek work overseas, a dispersion known as the Cornish Diaspora or the Great Emigration (Payton 2004). At the beginning of the twentieth century, a handful of mines were left in production, propped up after the Second World War by the International Tin Council (ITC), which controlled and stabilized the price of tin, but when the ITC collapsed in 1985, due to the rising interest in recycling and the use of alternative materials, mining in Cornwall soon ended. The last tin mine, South Crofty Mine in Pool, closed in March 1998.

In 1953, Rowe provided a contemporary account of an old mine, writing that 'gorse and heather were creeping over the unsightly heaps of "attles" and "deads" which the old miners had rejected and cast aside' (1953: 326). *Attles* and *deads* are Cornish terms for mine waste. At this time, mines had little economic purpose or further use. As the mines had largely operated in rural locations alongside small and medium-sized industrial settlements, there was little redevelopment pressure and while agrarian practices, such as animal husbandry, returned to moorland areas, the rough-ground coastal areas were unsuitable for agrarian purposes. After valuable materials were robbed out and then recycled, the mining areas were left alone to revegetate. As a result, Cornwall has good survival of industrial archaeology in relation to the mining industry; not just the sites of extraction, but also the foundries, industrial settlements, harbours and ports, the gardens and estates of Mineral Lords, the traces of transport systems and the remains of allied industries, such as dynamite works and arsenic production.

In the period after the Second World War, the mines came under the jurisdiction of Cornwall's local district councils, who often used them to accommodate travelling communities. Local people and farmers also used the mines as places to dispose of household and agricultural waste, mostly due to the lack of official waste disposal facilities in Cornwall until the 1980s (Orange 2012: 248–49). In the 1980s, factors coincided to focus attention on the old mines; statutory reviews and archaeological surveys were conducted, and government subsidies became available for moorland clearance and land reclamation (Thorpe et al. 2005: 18). Conservation and reclamation work ensued, dovetailing in with a growing national interest in preserving the remains of the Industrial Revolution, an emerging heritage industry in the United Kingdom being strongly supported by the policies of the Thatcher government in the 1980s (Wright 1985). Archaeologist Nicholas Johnson sets the scene, describing how 'quite suddenly over a period of less than a decade money that was not heritage inspired could be turned to heritage projects and there's literally an explosion of large projects as a result' (interview extract, 23 November 2006).

Industrial heritage was not welcomed by all. By the early 1990s, some in Cornwall were expressing concern about the consequences of heritage tourism and there was increasing talk of the Cornish landscape being at risk of themeparking or 'Disneyfication' (Perry 1993a: 58). The issue was, according to the historian Payton, that 'a hitherto wild, dramatic, inherently Cornish landscape was being sanitized and anglicized, made safe and familiar for Home Counties refugees' (2004: 284). The reference to 'Home Counties refugees' here referred to the increasing number of English tourists who had been coming to Cornwall since the 1960s, as well as increasing numbers of people relocating to the southwest to escape the so-called 'rat race' (Perry

1993b: 29, 39–40; Williams and Shaw 1993). Improvements to road systems had greatly aided car travel into the region, and traffic jams, holiday chalets and caravan parks became more commonplace (Perry 1993b: 40). In step with tourism, heritage projects gathered apace: Geevor Tin Mine in the far west of Cornwall reopened as a heritage attraction in 1993 and around the same time, the Mineral Tramways Project started work on creating around 60 km of trails in mid-west Cornwall, mainly using old tramway routes to link together mining sites (Cornwall Council 2019). In 2006, the scale and importance of the Cornish mining industry, including its global impact through the Diaspora, was acknowledged through a UNESCO World Heritage Site inscription. The Cornish Mining World Heritage Site, its popular title, is a serial site of ten landscape areas in Cornwall and west Devon. The Site covers some c. 200 square kilometres of land and is home to around 90,000 residents.

Botallack

The cliffs at Botallack are rarely busy. There are usually one or two cars in the car park, a few coast path walkers moving through the site, dog walkers and horse riders, but in poor weather the cliffs are often deserted. This is rough land and a coastal plain, with the Penwith moors rising close by inland. Sharpe describes the sounds of the area as:

> Waves breaking on high cliffs, seabirds, buzzards, jackdaws, ravens, wind, an occasional bus or tractor engine in the distance, small plane engines droning off St Just airfield and international jet planes on trans-Atlantic journeys five miles above. Occasional choughs these days. To the east, skylarks, wind dominate. Sounds created by people are rare. (2007: 19)

I reach the cliffs via the B3306 coast road and then drive slowly down a potholed track from the hamlet of Botallack. Botallack Mine is thought to be an amalgamation of several mines that operated intermittently on the cliffs from the early eighteenth century until the start of the First World War (Noall 1999 [1972]). These were submarine mines and a form of nascent industrial tourism developed in the early nineteenth century. Tourists paid to voyage underneath the seabed and a particularly vivid account of one journey is given in a 1824 guidebook:

> The workings of this mine extend at least seventy fathoms in length under the bed of the sea; and in these caverns of darkness are many human beings, for a small pittance, and even that of a precarious amount, constantly digging for ore, regardless of the horrors which surround them, and of the roar of the Atlantic ocean, whose boisterous waves are incessantly rolling over their heads. (Paris 1824: 133–34)

There are important sets of twentieth-century dressing floors at Botallack, an arsenic calciner and labyrinth, as well as various engine houses, including the picturesque winding and pumping engine houses belonging to Crowns Mine, that are situated at the base of the cliffs. In 1995, the National Trust purchased sections of the cliffs from Penwith Council and then carried out conservation work by decontaminating and consolidating the arsenic works and restoring the Count House, which now acts as a visitor information centre. A large gravel car park was also laid next to the Count House for visitors.

As water and gravity were used in the processing of the ore, the mines were set out geometrically through a series of terraces leading down to the cliffs. A wide and heavily trodden unmade path leads down from the car park to the Crowns Mine engine houses, while the equally well-trodden coast path cuts across the site, closer to the cliff edge. The rest of the site is characterized by small paths and shortcuts winding around and into the terraces and mining features. Other footpaths lead off into the surrounding landscape, away from the mines and cliffs to connect to hamlets and farming land, coves and earlier mine workings. There are paths that appear to go nowhere, disappearing over the cliff-line to embarkation points for quarried stone (Cahill and CAU 2002a: 15; Sharpe 1992: 90). Other routes turn out to be the remnants of leat systems (artificial watercourses) or are rabbit paths.

One morning, my walking companion was Adam Sharpe, who at the time worked as an archaeological advisor to the National Trust. Adam has an interest in mining landscapes and in 1992 compiled a comprehensive archaeological survey of the West Cornwall mining district (Sharpe 1992). I was curious about the paths and the lack of any 'Danger' signs on site, particularly given that some paths ran close to the cliff edge. I asked Adam why the paths were not surfaced. He responded:

> We get a lot of requests from people like the Coast Path Association, saying 'can you do something about the path surfacing' and we've taken the view that you might get someone who's jumped in the car in London or Birmingham, driven down here and stopped at a Happy Eater or something. If they got out and they got into a pristine car park and from that followed beautifully surfaced paths they would be led to edges of cliffs and in a way the sort of semi-hostile surfacing says the ground is rocky and uneven, this says to them 'look you've got to look after yourself here'. And it's fairly obvious it is a wild environment.

From this conversation, I realized that I walked around Botallack looking at my feet in order to be sure of where I was treading, and perhaps the 'semi-hostile' surfacing – walking eyes down – explains my particularly strong memories of surface textures and materials: concrete, blocks of granite, gorse, heather, bracken and grass, mud, slate and shales. The concrete dressing floors built in the twentieth century host grass and moss, but in comparison, the earlier dressing floors, where women and girls (the bal maidens) broke

Figure 2.1. View of red ground, Botallack, Cornwall, United Kingdom.
© H. Orange

rock on surface, are almost devoid of plant life as the ground is too contaminated by heavy minerals, arsenic and the effects of the leaching of sulphuric acid to support their growth (Sharpe 1992: 3). The surface is dominated by the colour red where the ground has been stained by iron oxide. Red is also the colour of the waste product from the mines.

Waste

Botallack is associated with waste in two ways: first, through the waste materials removed during mining and deposited in giant heaps on the surface;

and, second, through the practice of using mines as convenient places to dump rubbish. David James owned a café and bookshop in the nearby town of St Just in Penwith, and on a walk around Botallack, we paused to look down a mine shaft covered over with a grill. I asked David: 'What was this place like in the past?' He explained that there were once mine dumps at Botallack; great mounds of stone and gravel reaching 'about 15 or 20-foot high and there were a lot of them'. They were bulldozed, something he felt was 'industrial vandalism'.

Mines produced large amounts of waste through the extraction of ore and through the 'dead work', the development of shafts, adits, tunnels, ventilation shafts and levels that were required to access the ore. After primary crushing and sorting, the unwanted stone was moved from the dressing floors to the dumps, which then grew in height and mass (Sharpe 1992: 58).

In around 1980, Geevor Tin Mine opened a second milling plant and with advances in milling techniques set out to reprocess the mine waste in the surrounding area as reserves of metal remained in the dumps. Planning permissions were granted by Penwith District Council for several heaps to be removed in the district, meaning that the dumps would be flat-scraped. In June and November 1985, a local newspaper, the *Western Morning News,* reported on a protest from local people and environmentalists over the plans (Williams 1985a, 1985b). In the first report, the paper quoted Miss Jenny Wright of Newmill saying: 'The spoil heaps have become part of the local ecology with bushes, heath and hawthorn thicket growing … Our main concern is for the ecology and keeping certain areas unspoiled as natural areas. It is very popular with many local people for walking and riding' (Williams 1985a). In response to the protest, the Council stated that Geevor Mine was not only extracting the tin from the waste, but was benefiting the environment by removing an industrial scar, thereby returning the area its preindustrial condition (Williams 1985b).

The German term *Industrienatur* has no English equivalent, but is used to signify the regreening of industrial sites, including through managed rewilding initiatives, and in this example, the hybridized industrial-ecological habitats at Botallack led to a clash over economic, aesthetic, leisure and environmental values. The dumps were also popular with another group of people. They were a magnet for mineral collectors, a more popular pastime in the 1950s to the 1970s, carried out mostly by hobbyists who curated personal displays of different mineral specimens at home. At the end of a long walk around Botallack, as we headed back to our cars, Geoff Treseder explained that he first visited Botallack as a young man in the early 1970s, being drawn to the area because of the opportunity to collect minerals. He eventually moved to West Cornwall and got a job working underground at Geevor:

> One thing, I said I mentioned that I came here as an enthusiast in mining and I have a strong feeling that I'd be out and about looking on dumps and there'd be loads of people doing similar things. There were a lot more people coming in then who were interested in minerals, in particular, and people with a general mining history interest – much more so than today.
>
> If you think about it, it was harder to find out about things back then – there was no Internet. But I encountered loads of people. I spent a lot of time at Wheal Edward looking over the dumps out there and throughout the day there'd be a steady trickle of people who were either doing something similar or just had a vague interest – families out with hammers, but at the time things like mineral collecting were quite popular … Those that do collect now are pretty obsessed and will dig big holes in dumps, but what's lacking is that slightly more amateurish family outing – you'd hear it – you'd hear hammers beating on dumps and it wasn't unusual whereas now…

The removal of the dumps had a further consequence: there was no analogous surface feature that showed the scale and volume of the mine workings. The heaps were information dumps as William Old explained (interview extract, 3 September 2002). Mr Old was born in 1934:

> I do feel they could do with the Mine Tips back again sort of thing and explain what they were, I mean it would bring home to people that bit more of how much space must be under or was and is underground and when you consider all that mound of stuff taken out of the shaft.
>
> Now you can come along and show them the shaft, there's a hole in the ground and miles and miles of tunnels down there, and so forth and so forth, but they can look around and things are flat and clear, there's a little bit down there at Geevor a bit of sand and gravel and whatever but the actual quantities of spoil are gone.
>
> So there we are.

Aside from the mine heaps, now much reduced in scale, Botallack has a connection with another kind of waste – that of unwanted household and agricultural waste. David Kemp is a sculptor and assemblage artist who has a workshop on the cliffs at Botallack. For over twenty years, he has salvaged materials from the mining landscape to make large sculptural pieces. For instance, his series *Postindustrial Giants* dates from what he calls the Late Iron Age and makes connections between ancient metals, mythology and modern technology (Kemp 2014).

Walking around Botallack one morning with his dog, following a rabbit path through a buddle yard towards Kenidjack Head, David described the scene when he first took up residence in his workshop. The landscape, he said, was full of 'abandoned cars, the shafts and pits were filled with rubbish, modern stuff but also mining materials'. 'So when did changes occur? Was it when the National Trust arrived?', I asked. BAM! David clapped his hands together loudly: 'Yes. It was the decisive moment – that was when the landscape was cleared up.'

St Agnes

All of the mines in St Agnes, a pretty village on the north Cornish coast, had closed by the 1940s and tourism has been the main economic driver in the village since the 1930s. St Agnes has much to offer tourists: the village has a wide range of shops, pubs and galleries, some fine civic architecture, interesting views, and the sandy beach and waters of Trevaunance Cove attract families and surfers (Cahill and CAU 2002b). Sharpe describes the sounds of St Agnes as 'surf, seabirds, skylarks, families on the beach' (2007: 89). The village is an amalgamation of seven former hamlets – Churchtown, Peterville, Vicarage, Goonown, Goonbell, Trevaunance and Rosemundy – each with its own distinct character. Many small tin mines once operated in and around the former hamlets and as a consequence, mining features can now be found within the village itself, having been incorporated within postwar housing expansion.

Mine Shaft

In the 1960s and 1970s, the mines in St Agnes operated simultaneously as rubbish dumps and playgrounds for local children. I interviewed Clive Benney, a former police officer who grew up in the village. Sat in the living room of his bungalow, Clive recalled that the mine shafts were: 'The best thing you could have on your land … everything got tipped down there … rat poison, or anything that was a little bit iffy … then they'd just chuck it down the shafts.' It was 'something which went on from wartime', he said. The mine workings were particularly attractive to local children. Clive remembered playing 'war games' and scrambling round the holes and spoil heaps 'looking for old prams and things to make go-carts'. He told me about a day when he went up to St Agnes Beacon, a large granite boss that overshadows the village, and his mother came looking for him:

> We used to go up onto the Beacon and there were tunnels up there and you could go into these tiny holes and you'd crawl in and they'd open inside, and you'd go in with these bags of straw to sit on and candles and things like that. My mother came up one day trying to find me and she looked in and saw this hole and she had a fit and banned us from going up there again.

He conceded that as a child, he didn't see the mine workings as dangerous, but: 'Looking back now, if that entrance had caved in, we'd have never got out.'

John Sawle had lived in St Agnes all his life. He had worked underground at Geevor and Pendarves mines, and his family before him had been miners. At the time of my interview with him in 2009, he had been farming

for thirty years. John's family owned four acres of land on the Beacon and as a teenager he had explored the mine workings. He recounted going down shafts on ropes and rope ladders:

> Yes, when I was a kid and the mines were open then, they weren't plugged and in my teens we were going down shafts on a rope ladders and ropes and in one case we got down to a place called Warren Well at Newdowns Head at St Agnes. We got down to the sea cave at the bottom and that was probably about 150 feet. That was a hard rock shaft, but when the tide was in the waves would come into the cave and close the entrance of the cave and we had a blast of air up the shaft that would roll up the rope ladder. It didn't lift us, but it would roll up any rope that was below you and brought up any gravel and stone with it. They went up past you and the waves subsided and the gravel and stone would come down past you again. It was reasonably safe and we had cap lamps.

In 1979, a survey of disused mineshafts in the Carrick district, in which St Agnes is situated, counted 2,538 mineshafts. These posed a risk to the general public, as well as dogs and other animals that ventured into undergrowth. When government funding became available in the early 1980s, Carrick District Council launched Operation Minecap, a two-year capping programme running from 1983 to 1984, to make the shafts safe. An adapted capping device was used that allowed bats, a protected species, access to their roosts underground (Orange 2012: 250).

Clive felt that the potential risk had been overstated:

> You can understand if you drop a stone and you start counting and you think gee-whiz! After 15 seconds you think you've got a 300-foot mine shaft here and you might want to cap it, but these little grills appear everywhere, and you think surely there wasn't anything actually there that was a problem. But I don't know what their remit was. They might have been told anything that resembles a shaft put a cap on it.

Wheal Kitty

Wheal Kitty tin mine operated on the cliffs above Trevaunance Cove in St Agnes until 1930. After purchasing the site in 1997, Carrick District Council restored the engine house and the site today now operates as a small industrial estate, the Wheal Kitty Workshops. The guidebook writers Kenneth Brown and Bob Acton commented that the hard landscaping and car parking around the Workshops had 'totally destroyed' Wheal Kitty's mining character (2002: n.p.), but walking around the site, various local businesses were clearly attempting to make a success of their operations, including the local radio station Heart FM and the environmental charity Surfers Against Sewage.

I was at Wheal Kitty to meet Roger Radcliffe, who at the time worked for Carrick District Council and had been involved in the redevelopment of

Figure 2.2. View of Wheal Kitty, Cornwall, United Kingdom. © H. Orange

the site. After meeting in the car park, we walked to the northern edge of the car park and then went through a gap in the hedge that was marked by boulders, traffic cones and traffic signs as well as a handpainted wooden sign that read, in pink paint, 'LOONEY TUNES'.

A footpath led to a set of concrete dressing floors that were painted with graffiti. Teenagers were skateboarding. More yellow traffic cones, blue string and notices demarcated the edges of the floors: 'Be Nice We Are' one notice said. A small caravan was parked nearby with a plastic table and chair set outside the door, presumably someone living off-grid. We then continued down the footpath and through a large expanse of mine waste, red 'dunes' that were marked by the tracks of off-road bikes. The dumps were surrounded by rough ground that was punctuated by rusting barbed wire, scrap metal and mine shafts, one with a conical grill. It was a relatively barren area, aside from some clumps of gorse. Roger led the way to two memorial benches set next to the coast path overlooking Trevaunance Cove.

I started my recorder and begin the interview: 'It's Thursday the 29th of May 2008 and we're overlooking Trevaunance Cove up at Wheal Kitty. Hello Roger.' Roger began by telling me about his relationship with St Agnes:

> I'm the fifth generation of Radcliffes to live in St Agnes. I live on the outskirts of the village and I grew up at Wheal Kitty … Wheal Kitty was really where I had a tremendous childhood and we were just wild up here really. We ran wild, we enjoyed the place for what it was – a whole collection of abandoned mine workings which was just great for playing war and doing all sorts of things. So as kids one of the first things my mother did when we moved up to Wheal Kitty was to ask the local boys to show us all the mine shafts. I think the logic there was if we knew where they were then we would know where to be wary.
>
> …
>
> As kids we just played around here and had tremendous fun, and it was just part of an enormous playground that included the beach below. Today there are very few children that are allowed to use it in the way that we used it. Parents seem to be a lot more wary about letting their children run wild.

We paused to say 'Hello' to a walker and their dog and then I asked Roger: 'What has changed here?' Unexpectedly, he started talking about the benches that we were sat on and I realized why he had brought me to this spot:

> Seats, these damn seats! I really feel that we're trying to turn a lot of this landscape into a park and there's an awful example just down below us at Down Quay Gardens and it was somebody's bright idea, they're just misguided in my view. They seem to feel that providing seats is a good thing. More than that people like the idea of having memorials so this one is in memory of Mrs P … So we've got two things happening. It's turning what is a fairly wild edge of land, that's been tipped upon and turned over by mining, and has real natural character into something that has patio slabs in front of it and it's become a mixture of a park and a graveyard because we've got these memorials.
>
> I just find it depressing in two ways. I'm enjoying the seat right now and I'm grateful to sit down … but I do object to the number. They're about every 50 yards … I gather that the Improvements Committee and the local Council now actually looks after well over 130 seats. If you total up all the patio slabs and you were to patio over a piece of Cornwall with them all in one lump, you'd need planning consent. It would be a major planning application, or a very significant one in a local context. So that's one thing I dislike, well-intentioned gardening projects that are really impinging upon the natural environment. I do object to that. So that's one change.

Roger had a point about the benches. From our position on the cliffs, clusters of benches were visible in the cove. A short distance inland from the beach, I could see the stone benches in Down Quay Gardens, a paved public space with flowerbeds and some heritage interpretation boards. Looking westwards, following the coast path up the side of the valley, more benches were strung out. I knew that other benches continued further along the coast path, out of sight, but also positioned to overlook the sea. Benches have become an increasingly common feature in British parks and leisure locations (Maddrell 2013: 513) and as Williams (2017) has pointed out, memorial benches are often placed 'where the dead can acquire the best views out …

and where the living can too "share" this experience'. However, for Roger, they were an unwelcome intrusion into a 'fairly wild edge of land'.

Discussion

At Wheal Kitty, the postindustrial wild, as I am calling it, is a vestige that has survived due to its location on the edge of the village. Shoard (2000) has discussed the 'edgelands' and the 'promise' they offer for children, travellers, businesses, artists and others. In Cornwall, mines were engaged with as a form of common land that had freedoms of use, ranging from the functional (the dumping of waste) to the exploratory and the creative (play, the scavenging materials and the curating of mineral collections). Listening to my interviewees discuss their experiences, I am reminded of Shane Meadows' film *This Is England* (2006). Set in a Midlands town in 1983 against the backdrop of the Falklands War, the film portrays the indenture of an eleven-year-old boy into a skinhead gang and follows the gang's explorations around various derelict sites. Meadows' depiction touches on the notion of the nonconformist child as well as the child being somehow closer to nature (Nyack 2016). In contrast, however, I gained no sense that those playing on mines in Cornwall or indeed dumping rubbish on them were operating outside social norms. These were land habits, forms of bodily engagement that were once common. Waterton writes that nonrepresentational theories 'signal an intent to take very seriously the ways in which our bodies participate in the world that surrounds us' (2013: 67) and it is through such repeated movements that the body (and the mind) develops an attachment to place (Seamon 2014).

In relating their encounters and experiences, the word that was repeated was 'wild'. Various authors have previously set out the case that such transitional, liminal spaces, often found on the edges of settlements, are an important childhood resource. Keil (2005) has considered industrial fallow land in Germany, where wild urban woodlands are adventure sites for children who, unburdened by adult supervision, find a freedom of movement. When and where spatial codes are relaxed (Cloke and Jones 2005: 317), such land also provides adults with 'forms of alternative public life' (Edensor 2005b: 21).

As a local descriptor of bodily experience, I find the 'wild' interesting for two reasons. First, it signifies something of the reciprocity that connects the body and the environment. As Michael Carolan (2008) has suggested, we think with our bodies, in that our understandings of space are influenced by our embodied interactions with the environment. In Roger Radcliffe's words, the land was wild and he, as a child, ran wild, away from adult gaze. The body and the landscape were at this time constituted together by a certain

freedom, namely a reduction in regulation and surveillance. There is a boyhood bravado at their perceived lack of risk, but the boys succeeded in keeping themselves and each other safe. Keeping safe, Joy Parr suggests, is a matter of 'tuned bodily practice', especially in 'risky environments, made dangerous by the presence of potentially toxic technologies' (2010: 14) – or, in this case, the dangers of rock and cliff fall: the land itself had inherent dangers.

Second, the 'wild' circumvents any negativity implied by the words 'abandonment', 'neglect', 'wasteland', 'dereliction' and 'ruin' as well as any suggestion that industrial remains belong to difficult pasts that need to be remembered (or forgotten) for their association with economic and social decline, poor working conditions and labour exploitation (Cooper 2005: 167; Trinder 2000: 39–41). To Grunenberg, dereliction is synonymous with 'danger, delinquency, ugliness and disorder' (1997: 195) and in due course derelict sites can become a 'locus horribilus' within which a range of deviant acts can take place by 'undesirable' people. Dereliction can be a sign for waste, signifying an anti-social present and perhaps more importantly an uncertain future. However, through my interviewees' eyes, these were not difficult or problem areas that needed to be fixed; this was all the children and teenagers had known.

Perhaps one key difference is that mining areas in Cornwall were perceived and were used as land, not ruin. Edensor has written that: 'The ruin *feels* very different to smoothed over urban space, rebukes the unsensual erasure of multiple tactilities, smells, sounds and sights' (2007: 227, emphasis in original). I find it difficult to conceive of the Cornish mining landscape as 'ruin', as the word evokes feelings of claustrophobia, of walls, smothered sound, dark interiors and restricted movement. Rather, I suggest that in such postindustrial landscapes – without many walls and boundaries and open to the sky – it is the surface of the land that feels wild and unruly.

In closely examining surfaces, I also reject any notion that these sites have been 'themeparked' or 'Disneyfied'. Taken literally, 'Disneyfication'/'themeparking' would result in the land being surfaced anew with tarmac, paving, clipped grass and flowerbeds around fast-food franchises and entertainment complexes. Botallack and Wheal Kitty are not like that. Indeed, at Botallack, the wild is curated by the National Trust when they maintain the semi-hostile surfacing of the paths (for visitor safety). The wild does not mean that these landscapes are in any sense 'natural' or unchanged or that bodily engagements with them have not changed accordingly. Change came from the 1980s onwards, the decade within which the Cornish tin mining industry fully deindustrialized. Heritage, however, is only partly implicated in the changes that have occurred to these places. The removal of mine heaps and large amounts of rubbish as well as the mine-capping were also con-

sequent to improvements in technology and concerns over environmental management and rehabilitation, public safety and economics. The result is certainly a more leisure-orientated landscape that is safer for both residents and visitors. The land is also flatter and smoother. The rubbish and debris have gone, features have continued eroding to the ground, whether from human and nonhuman interventions, weather or gravity, the small stuff is kicked and trampled underfoot, and the mine heaps have been truncated or shaved from the surface. While it is difficult to criticize 'Operation Minecap' on safety grounds, the effect of the capping was not only to prohibit exploration, but to also seal off the interface between the surface and the subsurface. The mines no longer 'breathed' as teenagers no longer swung on ropes, as Roger Radcliffe explained:

> The way in which the land used to breathe is something you don't see anymore, which is quite interesting. In cold weather the moist warm air used to come up from the mine shafts and you could see the ground breathe. You could see the workings issuing forth this little delicate haze of moist air coming from underground, meaning that the warmer air rising out of the mines could be seen in certain conditions.

Ultimately, along with the resurfacing, some of the verticality in the mining landscape has been reduced in both directions towards ground level, and features that acted as powerful visual reminders of mining are now highly modified or absent. When bodies can no longer access the adits, tunnels, hollows and workings, imagination and interpretation are now needed to 'think down' to what lies beneath the surfaces of these mine sites and, in turn, certain kinds of bodily engagement, once common in the 1960s and 1970s, have largely disappeared.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how local people engaged bodily with the surfaces of Cornish mining land. The aim was to provide a nuanced discussion on postindustrial landscape, one that moves beyond iconic ruined structures to look instead more deeply at surface–body relations from a more-than-representational perspective.

These examples of life on the surfaces of mines show how place and bodies were caught up in reciprocal arrangements in the 1960s and 1970s. Local men who played on these sites in their youth, used the word 'wild' to describe a relationality of experience, from the present to the past. Wildness meant certain bodily freedoms and opportunities, before interventions were carried out for various reasons that led to more regulated and flattened

landscapes. Heritage was seen by some as an intruding form of human culture while industry had become naturalized. The postindustrial wild reflects a local perspective on everyday experience of place that carries with it senses of matter being in and out of place, home, identity and belonging.

In conclusion, deindustrialized landscapes are not static entities. As land and bodies shift and move new surfaces, new opportunities appear or cease to be, linked to generational change. Dewsbury has noted that more-than-representational theory has a characteristic presentism (2009: 322). In contrast, the postindustrial wild largely belonged to one generation in Cornwall. It denotes a kind of landscape and set of bodily experiences that were together for a relatively short space of time, an embodied history (Parr 2010) conditioned by the circumstances of gender, time and place. The skateboarders and caravan dwellers at Wheal Kitty are almost, but not quite, out of place in the village's creeping-outward urbanization and gentrification. However, one difference is that there are no children in Cornwall today who have seen a working Cornish tin mine. Time, of course, will move on and these postindustrial places will become something else entirely.

Hilary Orange is an archaeologist specializing in industrial heritage and the contemporary past, particularly on deindustrialization and the heritage of popular music. She is a Senior Lecturer in Industrial Heritage at Swansea University, Chair of the CHAT group (Contemporary and Historical Archaeology in Theory) and was, from 2016 to 2018, an Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow based at the Institut für soziale Bewegungen (Ruhr-Universität Bochum). Her main publications include *Reanimating Industrial Spaces: Conducting Memory-Work in Post-industrial Spaces* (2015) and the *Routledge Handbook of Memory and Place* (2019, with Sarah de Nardi, Steven High and Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto).

References

Published Sources

Barton, D.B. 1965. *A Guide to the Mines of West Cornwall*. Truro: D. Bradford Barton Ltd.

Bristow, C. 1993. 'Wealth from the Ground: Geology and Extractive Industries', in P. Payton (ed.), *Cornwall since the War: The Contemporary History of a European Region*. Redruth: Institute of Cornish Studies, pp. 98–134.

Brown, K., and B. Acton. 2002. *Exploring Cornish Mines, Vol. 1*. Truro: Landfall Publications.

Buckley, J.A. 2005. *The Story of Mining in Cornwall: A World of Payable Ground*. Fowey: Cornwall Editions.

Cadman, L. 2009. 'Nonrepresentational Theory/Nonrepresentational Geographies', in. R. Kitchen and N. Thrift (eds), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*. Oxford, Elsevier, pp. 456–63.

Cahill, N.J., and CAU. 2002a. *Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative: Botallack*. Truro: Cornwall County Council.

——. 2002b. *Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative: St Agnes*. Truro: Cornwall County Council.

Carolan, M.S. 2008. 'More-Than-Representational Knowledge/s of the Countryside: How We Think as Bodies', *Sociologia Ruralis* 48: 408–22.

Cloke, P., and O. Jones. 2005. '"Unclaimed Territory": Childhood and Disordered Space(s)', *Social & Cultural Geography* 6(3): 311–33.

Cooper, M.A. 2005. 'Exploring Mrs Gaskell's Legacy: Competing Constructions of the Industrial Environment in England's Northwest', in E.C. Casella and J. Symonds (eds), *Industrial Archaeology: Future Directions*. New York: Springer, pp. 155–73.

Cornwall Council. 2019. 'The Mineral Tramways Trails', Retrieved 24 March 2021 from cornwalls.co.uk/history/industrial/mineral_tramways.htm.

De Certeau, M. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dewsbury, J.-D. 2009. 'Performative, Non-representational and Affect-Based Research: Seven Injunctions', in D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang and L. McDowell (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Geography*. London: Sage, pp. 321–34.

Edensor, T. 2005a. 'The Ghosts of Industrial Ruins: Ordering and Disordering Memory in Excessive Space', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23(6): 829–49.

——. 2005b. *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality*. New York: Berg.

——. 2007. 'Sensing the Ruin', *The Senses and Society* 2(2): 217–32.

González-Ruibal, A. 2011. 'In Praise of Depth', *Archaeological Dialogues* 18(02): 164–68.

Grunenberg, C. 1997. 'Unsolved Mysteries: Gothic Tales from Frankenstein to the Hair-Eating Doll', in C. Grunenberg (ed.), *Gothic: Transmutations of Horror in Late Twentieth Century Art*. Boston, MA: MIT Press, pp. 213–160.

Harrison, R. 2011. 'Surface Assemblages: Towards an Archaeology in and of the Present'. *Archaeological Dialogues* 18(2): 141–61.

Ingold, T. 2011. *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. New York: Routledge.

Keil, A. 2005. 'Use and Perception of Post-industrial Urban Landscapes in the Ruhr', in I. Kowarik and Stefan Körner (eds), *Wild Urban Woodlands*. Berlin: Springer, pp. 117–30.

Kemp, D. 2014. 'David Kemp'. Retrieved 24 March 2021 from davidkemp.uk.com.

Lorimer, H. 2005. 'Cultural Geography: The Busyness of Being "More-Than-Representational"', *Progress in Human Geography* 29(1): 83–94.

Maddrell, A. 2013. 'Living with the Deceased: Absence, Presence and Absence-Presence', *Cultural Geographies* 20(4): 501–22.

Müller, M. 2015. 'More-Than-Representational Political Geographies', in J. Agnew, V. Mamadouh, A. Secor and J. Sharp (eds), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography*. Oxford: Wiley, pp. 409–23.

McAtackney, L., and Penrose, S. 2016. 'The Contemporary in Post-medieval Archaeology', *Post-medieval Archaeology* 50(1): 148–58.

McIvor, A. 2015 'Economic Violence, Occupational Disability, and Death: Oral Narratives of the Impact of Asbestos-Related Diseases in Britain', in S. High (ed.), *Beyond Testimony and Trauma: Oral History in the Aftermath of Mass Violence*. Vancouver: UBC Press, pp. 257–84.

Noall, C. 1972 [1999]. *Botallack*. Truro: Braford Barton.

Nyack, A. 2006. 'Displaced Masculinities: Chavs, Youth and Class in the Post-industrial City'. *Sociology* 40(5): 813–31.

Orange, H. 2012. 'Cornish Mining Landscapes: Public Perceptions of Industrial Archaeology in a Postindustrial Society'. Ph.D thesis. London: UCL. Retrieved 24 March 2021 from discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1417864.

——. 2019. 'Cornish Mining Heritage and Cornish Identity: Images, Representations and Narratives', in S. Berger. (ed.), *Constructing Industrial Pasts: Industrial Heritage Making in Britain, the West and Post-socialist Countries*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 107–27.

Paris, J.A. 1824. *A Guide to the Mount's Bay and the Land's End*. London, W. Phillips.

Parr, J. 2010. *Sensing Changes*: *Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953–2003*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Payton, P. 2004. *Cornwall: A History*. Fowey: Cornwall Editions Ltd.

Penrose, S. 2013 'Archaeologies of the Post-industrial Body', in P. Graves-Brown, R. Harrison and A. Piccini (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Contemporary World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 685–98.

Perry, R. 1993a. 'Economic Change and 'Opposition' Politics', in P. Payton (ed.), *Cornwall since the War: The Contemporary History of a European Region*. Redruth: Institute of Cornish Studies, pp. 48–83.

——. 1993b. 'Cornwall Circa 1950', in P. Payton (ed.), *Cornwall since the War: The Contemporary History of a European Region*. Redruth: Institute of Cornish Studies, pp. 22–46.

Rowe, J. 1953. *Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Seamon, D. 2014. 'Place Attachment and Phenomenology: The Synergistic Dynamism of Place', in Lynne C. Manzo and Patrick Devine-Wright (eds), *Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods, and Applications*. New York: Routledge, pp. 11–22.

Sharpe, A. 1992. *St Just: An Archaeological Survey of the Mining District. Volume 2: Site Descriptions*. Truro: Cornwall County Council.

——. 2007. *The Outstanding Universal Value of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape*. Truro: Cornwall County Council.

Shoard, M. 2000. 'Edgelands of Promise', *Landscapes* 1(2): 74–93.

Thorpe, S., D. Boden and B. Gamble. 2005. *Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape: World Heritage Site Management Plan 2005–2010 Summary*. Truro: Cornwall County Council.

Trinder, B. 2000. 'Industrial Archaeology: The Twentieth-Century Context', in N. Cossons (ed.), *Perspectives on Industrial Archaeology*. London: Science Museum, pp. 39–56.

Waterton, E. 2011. 'In the Spirit of Self-Mockery? Labour Heritage and Identity in the Potteries', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 17(4): 344–63.

——. 2013. 'Landscape and Non-representational Theories', in P. Howard, I. Thompson and E. Waterton (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 66–75.

Williams, A.M. and G. Shaw. 1993. 'The Age of Mass Tourism', in P. Payton (ed.), *Cornwall since the War: The Contemporary History of a European Region*. Redruth: Institute of Cornish Studies, pp. 84–97.

Williams, D. 1985a. 'Bid to Keep Mine Waste', *Western Morning News*. 19 June.

——. 1985b. 'Mine Dump Dispute Appeal Is Likely', *Western Morning News*, 4 November.

Williams, H. 2017. 'Commemorating People in a Postindustrial Landscape', *Archaeodeath: The Archaeology and Heritage of Death & Memory* 9 July. Retrieved 5 March 2019 from https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/2017/07/09/commemorating-people-in-a-post-industrial-landscape/.

Wright, P. 1985. *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain*. London: Verso.

Interviews

Terry Addicoat. Interviewed on 18 May 2008, St Just in Penwith.

Clive Benney. Interviewed on 29 July 2008, St Agnes.

David James. Interviewed on 14 May 2008, Botallack.

David Kemp. Interviewed on 7 May 2008, Botallack.

Roger Radcliffe. Interviewed on 29 May 2008, St Agnes.
John Sawle. Interviewed on 18 July 2009, St Agnes.
Adam Sharpe. Interviewed on 7 April 2008, Botallack.
Geoff Treseder. Interviewed on 10 July 2009, Botallack.

CAVA Oral Histories

Nicholas Johnson. Interviewed by Peter Fordham on behalf of the Cornwall Audio Visual Archive, 23 November 2006.
William Old. Interviewed by Fiona Young on behalf of the Cornwall Audio Visual Archive, 3 September 2002.